

Gate City Charter School for the Arts CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

Statement of Purpose:

The governing body of Gate City Charter School for the Arts believes that all persons employed by Gate City Charter School for the Arts, including members of the Board of Trustees, and any appointed persons, regardless of their particular job or role, have special legal and ethical obligations ensuing from two distinct disciplines: government service and education. The governmental dimension of these responsibilities imposes duties inherent in public service including the promotion and protection of public trust and confidence, avoidance of conflicts of interest and appearances of impropriety, as well as careful and informed management of the public funds. These duties must at all times guide the conduct of all employees who serve GCCSA. The educational responsibilities of each employee require that the educational and developmental interests of students must be of the highest priority. Employees should conduct themselves in a manner that promotes and supports the development of good character by teaching, enforcing, advocating, and modeling ethical principles.

Statement of Policy:

CORE PRINCIPLES

The first and greatest concern of the school shall be to promote Gate City's mission to work in partnership with the community to educate all learners in a safe environment. GCCSA is committed to providing individuals with opportunities to develop the skills necessary to become responsible citizens who are capable of pursuing knowledge independently and making well-informed decisions.

Employees are expected to acknowledge and accept responsibilities stated in this Code; as well as interpret and apply said responsibilities so as to create an environment that fosters public and collegial trust, personal and institutional integrity, high levels of competence and accountability and a positive atmosphere characterized by integrity, fairness, respect and caring. As such, in carrying out the functions of their position, all employees are expected to: a. Be honest; b. Treat all persons with respect; c. Take responsibility and demonstrate accountability for their actions; d. Strive to be fair in all matters; e. Pursue excellence; f. Obey all laws and regulations; g. Avoid conflicts of interest or any appearance of impropriety; h. Work in cooperation with others to protect and improve the School District community and advance the well-being of students; i. Represent the School in a manner that engenders public trust in its integrity and competence.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Honesty and Integrity

Employees must conduct themselves in a manner that engenders respect and justifies trust in their integrity, competency and devotion to the mission of the School. Employees shall

demonstrate personal trustworthiness by being honest and avoiding any form of falsification, misrepresentation, deception, or cheating.

Atmosphere of Integrity

Employees must strive to establish and uphold an atmosphere of integrity that encourages honesty and discourages all forms of dishonesty, deception, or academic cheating. Employees shall assure that all official actions affecting students and co-workers, including but not limited to the assignment of grades; conclusions and recommendations incorporated in formal assessments; determinations of eligibility for special programs; accessibility to particular classes, teachers and programs; and inclusion or exclusion from sports or other co-curricular activities, shall reflect adherence to the highest standards of integrity and fairness.

Fairness

Employees shall be fair, open-minded and impartial in exercising their authority. They shall strive to assure that all actions promote fairness and equity for all employees, students, and others affected.

Maintaining a Respectful Environment

The ability to resolve problems and work effectively as team members is often necessary to promote effectiveness. The cornerstone to a good working environment is respect. Employees shall strive to create and sustain a respectful, fair, and caring environment by treating all persons including other school employees, students, and parents with a high degree of respect by being civil and courteous and avoiding conduct that can reasonably be construed as abusive, rude, or inappropriate.

Exploitative or Abusive Conduct

Employees shall strive to protect and safeguard the physical and mental well being of all persons in the working environment. Employees shall treat students and other school employees with respect, never engaging in conduct that could reasonably be construed as exploitative, physically intimidating, discriminatory, harassing (in a sexual nature or otherwise), or abusive. Language that relates to race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, sex, or disability in a profane or joking way shall not be used in any job-related situation.

Candor Regarding Working Relationships

Employees shall demonstrate a high degree of accountability by being candid and forthright in giving timely, complete, and accurate information to help co-workers, Administration, and members of the School Board to make informed and intelligent decisions.

IMPROPER CONDUCT

Avoiding Appearances of Impropriety Regarding Public Power or Resources

Employees are entrusted with stewardship over Gate City Charter School for the Arts. In order to justify and maintain public trust and confidence in the integrity and competency of the school,

employees shall not engage in any conduct that involves misuse of funds, facilities, property, time, or other public assets.

Improper Use of Position

Employees shall use the authority, discretion, powers and resources arising from their public position only to advance public interests and not to attain personal or private gain or advantage for himself or any other person. In dealing with personal matters, school employees shall not use official letterhead, title, or badge, or otherwise refer to their position with the school to induce or intimidate persons to resolve disputes more favorably, provide preferential treatment, or give gratuities, discounts, and favors or provide other unwarranted personal or private benefits.

Unauthorized Use of Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Mailing Lists

Employees shall not use nor allow others to use for non-school purposes unless otherwise authorized, school equipment, supplies or mailing lists nor engage in or allow conduct resulting in the unauthorized use of any school resource. Except for occasional and limited personal use that does not interfere with the performance of official duties or create an appearance of impropriety, employees shall not use nor allow others to use school facilities, equipment, supplies or mailing lists for personal purposes.

Misuse of Time

The time and services of all employees during working hours are assets of the school that should be used only for school business. Employees shall avoid conducting personal business on GCCSA time.

Misuse of Personnel

Employees shall not direct, cause, induce or permit another school employee to perform personal services or confer a private benefit on school time.

Examination of Records

The school reserves the right to review records to determine abuse of privileges relating to the use of school-owned telephones, computers (including internet access), and copy machines.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Employees shall employ independent objective judgment in performing their duties, deciding all matters on the merits, free of partiality or prejudice and unimpeded by conflicts of interest or other improper influences.
- Employees shall not engage in conduct that constitutes a Conflict of Interest, which shall be defined as use by an officer or employee of the authority of his or her office or the use of any confidential information received through his or her employment for the private pecuniary benefit of the employee, a member of the employee's immediate family (which includes for the purposes of this Code of Ethics the employee's spouse, domestic partner, parent, sibling and child), or a business with which the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family is associated.

- Financial Interest. Employees shall not engage, or have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, in any business, transaction or professional entity, either as a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or manager in that entity which conflicts with or impairs the proper discharge of official duties.
- Contracting Decisions. Employees shall not recommend, vote or otherwise participate in the decision to make any contract valued at \$1,000 or more between the school and any business or entity in which the employee has a personal or financial conflict of interest. Employees shall be deemed to have a financial conflict of interest in a decision if it is reasonably foreseeable that the decision will have a material financial effect on: a. The employee's immediate family is distinguishable from its effect on the public generally; b. Any business entity in which the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family has a direct or indirect investment worth \$1,000 or more or in which the employee or a member of the employee's family is a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or holds any position of management; c. Any real property in which the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family has a direct or indirect interest worth \$1,000 or more; d. Any source of income for the employee or the employee's immediate family of \$1,000 or more. The employee who has a financial conflict of interest because of their relationship with a business must recuse him or herself from any decision concerning that entity including any decision to contract or not to contract with the entity and the administration of the contract.
- Personal Advertisements. Employees shall not advertise business or professional activities on school property or use school work hours, property, or services to perform or promote personal or commercial enterprises or to campaign or raise money for any candidates for political office.
- Employee Publications. Employees shall not participate in the review and approval of publications or materials for school purchase if the officer or employee is the author/editor of or has any financial interest in the sale of such publications or materials.
- Outside Income. Employees shall not accept any outside earned income in any situation where a reasonable person in the community could conclude that the receipt of the income would be inconsistent, incompatible or in conflict with their official duties.
- General Limitation On Solicitation. Employees shall not solicit, directly or indirectly any payments or other benefits under circumstances that would create in the mind of a fair-minded, reasonable person the belief that such payments or benefits were provided with the intent to improperly influence the employee's actions.
- Gifts and Gratuities. The acceptance of gifts, payments or other benefits from those with whom the school does business can be improper. A gift is defined as anything of value which is provided to the extent that payment or consideration of equal or greater value is not received in return including but not limited to, tickets to sporting or cultural events, items of food, meals, use of facilities, forgiveness of debts, interests in real property, investments, or merchandise, or a rebate or discount (unless the rebate or discount is normally given to any member of the public). Because the employee may be in the position to make or influence a decision to spend school funds, he or she shall not solicit or accept any personal gifts, favors or benefits of more than nominal value during a calendar year from any single person or organization that might benefit from the

decision. This provision does not apply to: a. Meals provided at an event at which the employee participates in a seminar or similar activity; b. Travel expenses and meals paid for by a local, state, federal, or foreign government agency.

Conflict of Interest Resolution.

In the event that a question of Conflict of Interest or the appearance of Conflict of Interest arises, the matter shall be referred to and investigated by Administration and/or the Board of Trustees, in consultation with legal counsel as required, who will report the results of the investigation to the Board of Trustees, with a recommendation as to how the conflict situation might best be resolved.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

Hiring and Promotion Decisions

The employees who are in a position to make or influence hiring or promotion decisions shall strive to select the person whose job-related competency and character most closely matches the need of the work site/district as demonstrated by qualifications, experience and work history and performance in the school's selection processes.

Voting Affecting a Close Relative

Employees shall not vote on any expenditure that would result in a direct financial benefit to an immediate family member nor participate in any discussions regarding that expenditure.

PROCUREMENT PROTOCOL

Employees must discharge their duties impartially so as to assure fair competitive access to school procurement by responsible contractors. They should conduct themselves in such a manner as to foster public confidence in the integrity of the school's procurement process.

Procurement Information

Employees who have access to confidential information relating to contracts, construction, or other procurement must maintain the confidentiality of such information and not disclose or use it for any purpose other than in the proper performance of the employee's duties.

Misrepresentations Prohibited

Employees shall not have official responsibility for a procurement transaction shall knowingly falsify, conceal, or misrepresent a material fact; knowingly make any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations; or make or use any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or entry.

Proscribed Participation in Procurement Transactions. Employees having official responsibility for a procurement transaction shall not participate in that transaction on behalf of the school when the employee knows that: a. The employee or a member of the employee's immediate family have a financial interest pertaining to the procurement; b. A business or organization in which the employee, or a member of the employee's immediate family has a financial interest

pertaining to the procurement; or c. Any other person, business, or organization with whom the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family is negotiating or has an arrangement concerning prospective employment is involved in the procurement.

Solicitation or Acceptance of Gifts

Employees having official responsibility for a procurement transaction shall not solicit, demand, accept, or agree to accept from a bidder, offeror, contractor or subcontractor any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services or anything of more than nominal or minimal value, present or promised, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value is exchanged.

Gifts by bidders, Offerors, Contractors or Subcontractors

No bidder, offeror, contractor or subcontractor shall confer upon any public employee having official responsibility for a procurement transaction any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit or money, services or anything of more than nominal value, present or promised, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value is exchanged.

Kickbacks Prohibited

It shall be a breach of ethical standards for any person to offer, give, or agree to give an employee to solicit, demand, accept, or agree to accept from another person, a gratuity or an offer of employment in connection with any decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, preparation of any part of a program requirement or a purchase request, influencing the content of any specification or procurement standard, rendering of advice, investigation, auditing, or in any other advisory capacity in any proceeding or application, request for ruling, determination, claim or controversy, or other particular matter, pertaining to any program requirement or a contract or subcontract, or to any solicitation or proposal therefore.

Contemporaneous Employment Prohibited

It shall be a breach of ethical standards for the employee who is participating directly or indirectly in the procurement process to become or be, while employed, the employee or agent of any contractor contracting with the School District.

IMPROPER CONDUCT REGARDING STUDENTS

Improper Influence

Employees shall not engage in nor cooperate with any conduct intended to improperly influence the actions, grades or assessments of any central, regional or local administrator, teacher, counselor, coach or other employee who makes decisions affecting students. For example, money or personal favors should not be offered in exchange for a decision affecting a student's grades.

Cheating and Improper Assistance

Employees shall not engage in nor cooperate with any conduct intended to improperly aid students in their performance on exams or participate in or allow actions designed to alter or falsify tests or grades.

Avoiding Appearances of Impropriety Regarding Students

Employees are entrusted with the physical and emotional safety and well being of GCCSA students. To justify and maintain this trust, the employee shall not engage in any conduct that is likely to create in the minds of reasonable, impartial observers the perception that a relationship or interaction with one or more students is abusive, exploitative, or otherwise improper. Dating relationships between employees and students are improper and are strictly prohibited.

Student Records and Personnel Files

Employees must not use or disclose confidential, private or sensitive information acquired in the course of official duties relating to student performance and records, personnel files or other school records except in the proper performance of the employee's job and in accordance with existing law and school policy.

REPORTING IMPROPER CONDUCT

Employees shall protect students and safeguard the public's trust by resolving any unethical, illegal or dangerous conduct observed or sensed by any employee. This obligation to report misconduct arises whenever the employee has personal knowledge that another employee's conduct constitutes: a. a violation of the law; b. gross mismanagement; c. a significant waste of funds; d. an abuse of authority; e. a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; f. other conduct that could injure the reputation of the school or subject it to liability. The employee shall not file frivolous or unsubstantiated complaints regarding misconduct of other employees, nor shall they abuse the process by which misconduct may be reported.

Reporting Procedures

The Director is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of suspected unethical, illegal or dangerous conduct observed or sensed by any employee.. If the complaint involves the Director, the complaint shall be filed directly with the Board of Trustees.

Prohibition of Retaliation

Employees shall not use or threaten to use official authority or influence to discourage, restrain or interfere with any other employee from reporting facts believed to constitute improper, unethical or illegal conduct nor shall they harass, punish or retaliate against any employee who has made a good faith complaint.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential Information

Employees shall abide by all laws and school policies concerning confidential information. Employees shall not disclose confidential information concerning property, personnel matters, or affairs of the school or its employees, without proper authorization, or use such information to

advance the financial or other private interests of the officer, employee or others. Nothing in this provision shall be interpreted as prohibiting the practice of "whistle-blowing."

Confidentiality of Meetings

Employees must honor confidentiality agreements and policies concerning the content and source of comments and actions occurring during staff, faculty, parent and Board of Trustees' meetings.

COMPLIANCE

Employees shall uphold all laws and regulations of the United States and the State of New Hampshire and all other applicable government entities, and the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the school.

ENFORCEMENT

Violations of this Code of Ethics may result in administrative or disciplinary actions including suspension or dismissal as well as referral to appropriate authorities for civil and/or criminal prosecution. Determinations made with respect to potential violations of the Code of Ethics and Conduct shall in no way preclude or replace any other any legal action or grievance.