



GREAT LAKES
LEARNING ACADEMY

Great Lakes Learning Academy School Handbook

2019-20

This student handbook is board approved. Revisions may occur as needed. The latest version of the handbook can be found on the GLLA School Website or by requesting a copy from the school.

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2 DISTRICT MISSION AND OVERVIEW

2.1 Mission Statement

The mission of Great Lakes Learning Academy (GL

LA) is to focus on empowering our students to achieve academic success while creating a community of respect and responsibility through an adaptive learning program.

Vision

Great Lakes Learning Academy engages students where they are on their academic journey and prepares them to be globally competitive for college and careers.

Values

Finally, the *values* of Great Lakes Learning Academy include safety, collaboration, communication, professionalism, academic success, high expectations, and a student centric approach.

3 SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND ROLES

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

A primary goal at GLLA is encouraging parent involvement. Select the link below to review a copy of GLLA's Title 1 Parent Involvement Policy and Compact developed as part of the Title 1 funding plan. Feedback is welcome; please send a WebMail message to the parent involvement coordinator at any time.

[GLLA Title 1 Parent Involvement Policy and Compact](#)

3.2 School Structure

In order to meet the needs of all of our students, GLLA provides two different paths for students. Our traditional path, for students in grades 6-12, offers a traditional schooling experience for students focusing on college and career readiness skills intended to prepare students for entry into post-secondary career or vocational training opportunities, military options, other traditional approaches to post-secondary options. Our second option is our alternative path for students in grades 9-12. With this option, high school students who have experienced significant barriers to success in high school will have an option for a more flexible and focused approach to their schooling.

Participation in the alternative path for students in grades 9-12 will be provided by request or assigned as appropriate for students who meet eligibility criteria, including:

- Student age outside typical grade level parameters by one or more years
- Student's age will put the student at risk for completing graduation requirements before they exceed allowable age parameters for enrollment
- Student is off cohort for graduation by more than a semester
- Student has failed 3 or more core classes
- Student was retained in grades 5-8
- Student enrolled late by greater than 45 days into the school year
- Student has dropped out of school for at least 1 semester

3.3 School Information

School Information	School Contact
School Phone Number	(517) 381 – 5062
School Fax Number	(517) 381 – 5090
School Address	2875 Eyde Parkway, Suite 200 East Lansing, MI 48823
School Hours	8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., M-F
Technical and General Support	800-382-6010
Superintendent	Heather Ballien
Director of Curriculum & Instruction	Brian Titsworth
Principal, Traditional Path	Jerry Sprouse
Principal, Alternative Path	Kelli Marcus
WebMail	All staff and support services are located in the Education Management System's (Connexus®) WebMail address book.
Board of Directors	Refer to the Board Info webpage for most current contact information.

The 2019-20 School Year Calendar

Aug 12, 2019	Teachers Report for the 2018-19 School Year
Aug 26, 2019	First Day of School
Aug 30 & Sept 2, 2019	Labor Day Holiday, No School for Students & Teachers
Nov 28 & 29, 2019	Thanksgiving Holiday, School Closed
Dec 23, 2019 – Jan 3, 2020	Winter Holiday, No School for Students & Teachers (school closed 12/24/18 – 1/1/19)
Jan 16, 2020	End of Fall Semester
Jan 17, 2020	Teacher Record Day, No School for Students
Jan 20, 2020	Spring Semester Starts
Mar 30 – Apr 3, 2020	Spring Break, School Closed
Apr 13 – May 22, 2020	State Testing Window (specific details to follow)
May 25, 2020	Memorial Day, School Closed
May 31, 2020	Spring Commencement Exercises, Charlotte Performing Arts Center, Charlotte, MI
June 1, 2020	End of Spring Semester, Last Day for MS and Standard Pace HS Students
June 2, 2020	Summer Semester Starts
July 30, 2020	End of Summer Semester, Last Day of School
Aug 2, 202	Summer Commencement Exercises, Charlotte Performing Arts Center, Charlotte, MI

3.3.1 Schedule Options for High School Students

GLLA high school students have the option of enrolling in a **Standard Graduation Pace**, an **Extended Graduation Pace**, or an **Accelerated Graduation Pace**. These options are described in the chart below and in the Required Instructional Hours section.

Graduation Pace Option	Description	Total Number of Credits per School Year
Standard Graduation Pace	Student participates in Fall and Spring semesters carrying full course load.	6.0 credits
Extended Graduation Pace	Student participates in Fall and Spring semesters taking fewer courses AND in Summer session carrying the remaining credits to meet full year requirements.	6.0 credits
Accelerated Graduation Pace	Student participates in Fall and Spring semesters taking a full course load AND in a Summer session carrying additional courses to exceed full year requirements.	6.5- 8 credits

3.3.2 Required Instructional Hours

All students must meet the Michigan minimum requirements of 1,098 instructional hours and a minimum 180-day school year.

For middle school students, this averages to 6.1 hours per day or 30.5 hours per week.

For high school students, how required hours are met will vary based on the pacing option selected.

Note that high school students will need to select one of the following pacing options:

Standard Graduation Pace high school students attend school for a minimum of 180 days, at 6.1 hours per day during fall and spring semesters, for a total of 1098 hours annually.

Extended Graduation Pace high school students attend school for 180 days, at 5.1 hours per day during the fall and spring semesters, for a total of 918 hours for the fall and spring semesters. Extended students then must also complete a 43-day summer session, taking two (2) courses at 2.1 hours per course per day (4.2 hours total, totaling 180.6 hours for the summer session), bringing their annual total to 1098.6.

Accelerated Graduation Pace high school students attend school for a minimum of 180 days, at 6.1 hours per day during fall and spring semesters, for a total of 1098 hours for the fall and spring semesters. Accelerated students then also take from one (1) to four (4) classes during the summer session at 2 hours per course per day. (Accelerated students must take at least 1 summer session course, and may not take more than 4). If Accelerated students average 2 credits (4 classes) per summer session, they may be able to finish high school in three (3) years.

Note: the hours noted above are the minimum hours required by the state. All students are responsible for mastering all material which may require additional time.

3.4 Enrollment, Withdrawal, and Transfers

During the enrollment process, students will need to commit to one of the three available scheduling options described above. The school will also request any copies of prior state achievement test scores, but will not require them as a condition of enrollment.

The following documents must also be provided for each student prior to enrolling students in GLLA:

- Proof of Residency
- Proof of Age
- Immunization Records

Maximum Age to Enroll

The maximum enrollment age of a student is determined by state law. The maximum enrollment age may also vary by student, dependent upon on the program in which a student is enrolled. In Michigan, the maximum age limits are:

- General education students who turn 20 on or before September 1st
- Alternative path students who have experienced significant barriers to their education who turn 22 on or before September 1st (note, students must meet strict criteria or will be subject to general education age maximum of 20 on or before September 1st)
- Students who receive special education and related services necessary to progress with their academic achievement who turn 26 on or before September 1st

Maximum age limits also apply to students who choose to re-enroll. For more information regarding the maximum enrollment age, please contact the school counselor or administrator.

Enrollment of Students Suspended/Expelled from Another School

Students who have been suspended or expelled from another school may not enroll in GLLA until their term of suspension or expulsion is over. This also applies to students who are in the process of expulsion from their previous school (i.e. Board recommendation has been made, but no board action has taken place).

3.4.1 Mid-Year Enrollment

Students may enroll after the start of the school year. -Once the district has reached their cap for enrollment, new applicants will be placed on a waitlist. Students will be removed from the waitlist and enrolled as space becomes available. Families should contact the enrollment team for details on the school's enrollment capacity at the given time throughout the application or inquiry process. Families enrolling mid-year are subject to all the same enrollment requirements as families that enroll prior to the start of the school year.

Additional Information

Students entering mid-semester submit report cards, progress reports and/or teacher notes from their previous school as part of the enrollment process. Great Lakes Learning Academy teachers review the student's work and progress up to that point in the semester, and enter an equivalent grade in to the Great Lakes Learning Academy grade book that represents the student's efforts at the previous school. That grade will be averaged in with the Great Lakes Learning Academy grades earned in that same semester.

Students entering after the beginning of a semester who have not been enrolled or attending classes at a previous school (and therefore do not have a current schedule to generate grades to be used for averaging) will be subject to enrollment in a reduced number of courses for the semester entering based upon the following schedule. Students will be given a full schedule for the next semester after enrollment.

2019-20 Enrollment Date	Weeks left in Semester	Number of Enrolled Courses
September 3 – October 4	13 – 17	6
October 7 – October 25	11 – 12	5
October 28 – November 8	9 - 10	4
November 11 – November 22	7 – 8	3
November 25 – December 6	5 – 6	2
December 9 – December 20	2 – 4	1

Enrollment after this date during fall semester will prompt students to be enrolled in spring semester due to problems with technology being ordered/delivered in a timely manner due to the holiday break and semester end date.

2019-20 Enrollment Date	Weeks left in Semester	Number of Enrolled Courses
January 20 – February 12	16 – 18	6
February 13 – February 28	13 – 16	5
March 2 – March 13	11 - 12	4
March 16 – March 27*	9 – 10	3
March 30 – May 22	Enrollment Freeze due to State Testing	
June 1	Last Day for Final Confirmation for 2019-20 school year	

*Enrollment after this date during spring semester requires students to attend our summer semester and will prompt students to be enrolled in summer semester course due to problems with technology being ordered/delivered in a timely manner due to the semester end date.

3.4.2 Dual Enrollment in another K-12 Program

Because the school is a full-time program, students may not be concurrently enrolled in another public school.

3.5 Mandatory Testing

All students at GLLA are required to participate in state testing.

Currently, this includes the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science & Social Studies, formative NWEA MAP, the College Board PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, or SAT, and the ACT WorkKeys.

All students in grade 6 & 7 will participate in:

- Formative Assessments given in September, January, and May of the school year
- State testing M-STEP for Language Arts & Mathematics

All students in grade 8 will participate in:

- Formative Assessments given in September, January, and May of the school year
- State testing – PSAT8
- State testing – M-STEP Science and Social Studies

All students in grade 9 will participate in:

Formative Assessments given in September, January, and May of the school year
State testing – PSAT9

All students in grade 10 will participate in:

Formative Assessments given in September, January, and May of the school year
State testing – PSAT

All students in grade 11 will participate in the following assessments:

Formative Assessments given in September, January, and May of the school year
MME which includes : SAT, WorkKeys, & M-Step (supplemental science and social studies test)

Students in grade 12 who did not take the MME in 11th grade will be required to participate in the MME in 12th grade.

More specific information about which tests will be administered and when will be posted by the principal once the school year is under way, including specific dates, required grades, and locations. Refer to the Michigan Department of Education’s website for additional information:

- [Michigan Educational Assessment Program](http://www.michigan.gov/meap) found on www.michigan.gov/meap
- [Michigan Merit Examination](http://www.michigan.gov/mme) found on www.michigan.gov/mme

4 ATTENDANCE

4.1 Marking and Verifying Attendance

Learning Coaches document student attendance in Connexus and the school verifies that the attendance records are accurate.

Connexus Attendance Codes and System Controls

The attendance codes will be implemented in the following manner:

Code	Definition	Who Records?	Who can edit code before lockdown?	Who can edit code after lockdown?
0 – 9	Hours of Schooling	Learning Coach, Teacher, or Assistant Principal (w/log note)	Learning Coach and Attendance Coordinator	Attendance Coordinator
E	Excused	Assistant Principal or Attendance Coordinator	Assistant Principal or Attendance Coordinator	Attendance Coordinator
U	Unexcused	Assistant Principal or Attendance Coordinator	Assistant Principal or Attendance Coordinator	Attendance Coordinator

Connexus Attendance Responsibilities by Role

Learning Coach (LC) Documents Attendance Hours

- The Learning Coach should indicate the number of hours per day (0-9) the student worked each week. Learning Coaches should refer to the Required Instructional Hours section of this Supplement for important information on minimum weekly required hours, and ensure students spend the required time in schooling activities.
- If the student is requesting an excused absence, the Learning Coach must send information about the reason for the absence to the school. If approved, the Assistant Principal or Attendance Coordinator will mark “E” in the attendance records. Learning Coaches should not mark “E” in the attendance records.

Attendance Coordinator (AC) Role

- AC regularly reviews all attendance records, and handles students in “Alarm” status (per the procedures set forth with the escalation system outlined below).
- Only the AC can make changes to Connexus Attendance System or Adjusted Attendance field after the lockdown. AC reviews the teacher or LC request(s), adjusts the records as necessary, and indicates such actions in the log. Teachers and Learning Coaches can request these changes via a new WebMail box for attendance changes.

Learning Coach Responsibilities

- **Record Hours of Schooling** - For each instructional day, Learning Coaches enter a 0 – 9 in Connexus to indicate the number of hours of schooling that occurred. They meet the weekly totals listed above to ensure compliance with state regulations. Learning Coaches may also ask for assistance from the school to enter attendance records if they are unable to access a computer on a given day, per the *Marking and Verifying Attendance* section of the General School Handbook.
- **Alert School of Excused Student Absences** – Learning Coaches cannot enter “E” attendance codes in Connexus. If a student is absent, the Learning Coach must send

information to the school about the absence, and the school determines if the absence can be classified as excused, per the guidelines ~~listed in the General School Handbook~~.

- **Complete defined school year** – Regardless of the number of hours of schooling a student may complete prior to the last day of the school year (as defined by the school year calendar in this handbook), students are required to meet the weekly required instructional hours up to and including the last day of the school year.

School Responsibilities

- **Review Attendance Records** – School Personnel monitor and review attendance records on a weekly basis. They remind Learning Coaches to enter hours of schooling for all days of the week. If a teacher has concerns about the validity of a student’s attendance records, he or she may place the student in an “Alarm” status, and contact the school’s designated Attendance Coordinator for further assistance.
- **Monitor Attendance Issues** – School Personnel monitor student attendance regularly. They contact families with low attendance rates, and work to help them stay in compliance. Attendance Coordinators also identify and record excused absences, and can alter Learning Coaches’ attendance records (with proper documentation), if necessary.
- **Maintaining the Integrity of the Attendance Data** – After the weekly records are reviewed by the teacher, the school locks system to prohibit further editing. Blanks in the attendance records are marked with an “L,” indicating that the record is locked for editing. Any requests for adjustments to the previously verified records must be submitted in writing to the school for review, approval and adjustment.
- **Official Attendance Record** – the Connexus attendance system is the record of Learning Coach documented attendance. It is however only one of many sources used to determine if a student is meeting the minimum instructional hour requirement. In certain cases, where it has been determined that a student has not completed enough work or that certain other program requirements have not been fulfilled, the attendance coordinator may invalidate the Learning Coach record resulting in sanctions up to and including withdrawal.

4.2 Attendance Status and Escalation System

Enrolled students are in one of three attendance statuses at all times:

1. On-Track
2. Approaching Alarm
3. Alarm

Each status is based on several criteria, as outlined in the General School Handbook, and is a combination of measures that indicate if a student is demonstrating adequate participation and attendance in the program. This not only includes the actual attendance hours recorded by the Learning Coach, but also lesson and assignment completion rates, and amount of communication with the teacher. Therefore, even though a Learning Coach may record a high number of instructional hours in the attendance records, if a student's work completion rates are not on track or if he or she fails to communicate on a regular basis with the teacher, he or she will be placed in an Alarm status. It is important to recognize that just marking proper attendance will not keep a student's attendance status On-Track.

When a student is in the Approaching Alarm status, he or she is in danger of being withdrawn. The school will work with the family to help get the student's attendance back on track. If these efforts fail, the student will be escalated to the Alarm status which could quickly lead to the student's official disenrollment.

4.3 Truancy

In order to maximize student learning, regular attendance is imperative. The GLLA program offers a great deal of flexibility about how many hours students spend each day on school work and on what days of the week they complete that work. Due to this flexibility, GLLA has zero tolerance for truancy. Caretakers are held legally responsible for ensuring that their students are fully participating in school. The information below is intended to help Caretakers understand how to avoid having their student be considered truant, and to understand the consequences of truancy.

In order to avoid truancy, the Caretaker must ensure that the following activities are taking place:

- The student completes all assigned lessons and assessments.
- The student participates in educational activities for an appropriate number of hours, as outlined in the *Required Hours of Instruction* section (Section 3.3.2) of this handbook, and the Learning Coach records these attendance hours in the Education Management System on a daily basis.
- The student is available for regularly scheduled telephone calls with teachers.
- The student attends all assigned LiveLesson® sessions.
- The student is able to demonstrate that he/she is doing his/her own schoolwork.
- The student completes mandatory on-line formative testing and in person state testing.
- The Learning Coach has communicated with the homeroom teacher in advance if he or she needs to deviate from the regular school calendar (for example, switching a vacation and school day).

If the student’s teachers become aware that the student is not fully participating in school as outlined above, the student will be marked absent at the teacher’s discretion. The principal, assistant principal, or advisory teacher may override the number of attendance hours previously entered by a Learning Coach, changing the attendance hours to a 0, if the student’s teacher(s) believe the student has not participated as required. These absences will be considered “unexcused.” The final decision about whether an absence is considered excused or unexcused will be made by the principal.

A “continuing truant” is a student who has 10 unexcused absences within a single school year. Students who are considered “continuing truants” may face disenrollment from GLLA.

Teachers will follow a protocol to work with a student and family that has not met participation expectations to attempt to get the student back on track. Students who do not successfully engage with their teacher or do not successfully complete expectations will be considered continuing truant and may be subject to disenrollment. For more information about the escalation process teachers utilize, please contact your teacher’s homeroom teacher.

Definition of “A Day of School” at GLLA

In order to be successful at GLLA, students must attend school regularly. Students and Caretakers should set aside time to work on classes in a quiet place where they can focus and be free of distractions.

Missing a day’s worth of hours in a week may be considered a day of unexcused absence if the student or Caretaker does not provide acceptable documentation to the school for those missed hours to be considered excused. For a middle school student, missing a day of school would be the equivalent of completing fewer than 24.5 hours of school in a week (30.5 hours per week are required). The following chart outlines the approximate amount of time each high school student can expect to spend in their courses per week to maximize their success. These guides are recommended averages, some students will need to spend more time, some less.

Graduation Pace Option	Recommended Hours Per Week	Recommended Minimum Hours per Week to avoid “missing a day of school”
Standard (fall and spring)	30.5	24.5
Extended (fall and spring)	25.5	20.5
Accelerated (Fall and spring)	30.5	24.5
Extended (summer)	21	17
Accelerated (summer – 1 course)	10	8.5
Accelerated (summer – 2 courses)	20	23.5

5 GRADING AND EVALUATION

National Honor Society

Students who are in good academic standing, have attended GLLA for at least one semester, and meet other requirements, may be eligible to join the National Honor Society. Please contact the school for more details.

6 HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Promotion

The following credits are required to be promoted from one grade to the next:

Classification	Grade	Minimum # of Credits
Sophomore	10	5
Junior	11	10
Senior	12	16

At the time of a student's enrollment, school counselors will establish estimated grade levels based on preliminary information about previously earned credits and/or number of semesters a student has attended high school. Student grade levels will be updated twice each year – once in the end of the spring semester and again at the end of the school year. The automatic adjustments are based on the student's earned and verified credits recorded in Connexus.

In certain situations, the counselor, in consultation with the student, Learning Coach, and/or school administrator, may adjust the student's grade to most appropriately match the student's current academic needs.

Graduation and Diploma Requirements

To be eligible to graduate and receive a diploma from Great Lakes Learning Academy, a student must meet **all** of the following requirements:

- Be enrolled at GLLA during the semester immediately prior to graduation, and **not** be full-time enrolled in any other school.
- Earn a minimum of 5 of the credits (or 10 courses) required for graduation at GLLA*, with at least 1.5 of these credits (or 3 courses) earned in the semester immediately prior to graduation.
- Earn a total of 22 credits (in specific areas and subjects as outlined in this Supplement)
- Complete required on-line formative and in person state tests or meet alternative requirements or standardized tests as provided by Michigan law and the school's authorizer.
- Meet any other additional graduation requirements required by the school or state.

**Credits earned at another Connections Academy school or schools may be included in this total, as these schools all use the same curriculum, technology, and instructional protocols as GLLA.*

A student with an IEP may receive a certificate of completion rather than a diploma.

Early Graduation

At the close of the second semester, the school principal, counselor, and other staff will review each senior's records to ensure that these students have completed all graduation requirements. The principal will then initiate the "withdrawal for graduation" process in Connexus for those students who have completed all requirements.

Students who have completed all graduation requirements at any time prior to the end of the second semester of their senior year may request early graduation by contacting the school principal. The principal and other appropriate school staff will then review the student's records to ensure that all graduation requirements have been met. After the principal grants approval for early graduation, he/she will initiate the "withdrawal for graduation" process. This includes marking the student's transcript to indicate graduate status. Once the student has graduated, the student will no longer be enrolled in Connections Academy and will not have access to Connexus.

Unofficial transcripts will be available to students via Connexus *as long as the student is enrolled in Connections Academy*, and official transcripts will be available at any time by contacting the school. Early graduates will receive their diplomas *at the end of the second semester*, when the rest of the graduating class receives their diplomas. Early graduates are welcome to join in any and all graduation activities offered by Connections Academy, but must inform the school of their desire to participate in graduation activities at the same time they request early graduation.

Area and Subject Requirements

Students must earn the following credits in the following areas and subjects in order to graduate:

Area	Subject	Required Credits
Mathematics	Algebra 1	1
Mathematics	Algebra 2	1
Mathematics	Geometry	1
Mathematics	One additional Math course during Student's final year of high school	1
English Language Arts	English Language Arts 9	1
English Language Arts	English Language Arts 10	1
English Language Arts	English Language Arts 11	1
English Language Arts	English Language Arts 12	1
Science	Biology	1*
Science	Physics or Chemistry	1*
Science	One additional Science credit	1
Social Studies	American Government	0.5
Social Studies	Economics	0.5
Social Studies	U.S. History and Geography	1
Social Studies	World History and Geography	1
World Language	Choice of World Language: Two years of SAME language	2*
Physical Education and Health	Physical Education	0.5
Physical Education and Health	Health	0.5
Visual, Performing, and Applied Arts	Any Approved	1
Electives	Any Approved	4
Total		22

*For students graduating in the Class of 2016 – 2020, alternative choices for some of the science and world language course requirements may be available. Students and Caretakers should consult with a GLLA counselor for applicable options.

Great Lakes Learning Academy uses a standard whereby one credit equals approximately 180 hours of instruction within a school year (sometimes referred to as Carnegie Units).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility

In order to be eligible for National College Athletic Association (NCAA) scholarships, students must meet certain academic and other requirements, including but not limited to taking NCAA-approved high school courses. Many of GLLA's core and elective courses are NCAA-approved; however, students interested in NCAA scholarships should contact their school counselor to determine an appropriate course schedule that will help them meet NCAA requirements. Students should also visit the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) for more information.

Grades and Grade Point Averages

Students must earn a 60% (D-) or better in a course in order to earn credit for it. Courses with earned grades below a 60% (D-) will not be awarded with credit, but will appear on student records and will be included in a student's grade point average (GPA). Grade point averages will only include graded courses; pass/fail courses will not be averaged into a student's GPA.

Grade	Grade %	Passing?	Non-Weighted	Weighted (Honors)	Weighted (AP)
A+	98 – 100	Yes	4.00	4.50	5.00
A	92-97	Yes	4.00	4.50	5.00
A-	90-91	Yes	3.67	4.17	4.67
B+	88-89	Yes	3.33	3.83	4.33
B	82-87	Yes	3.00	3.5	4.00
B-	80-81	Yes	2.67	3.17	3.67
C+	78-79	Yes	2.33	2.83	3.33
C	72-77	Yes	2.00	2.50	3.00
C-	70-71	Yes	1.67	2.17	2.67
D+	68-69	Yes	1.33	1.83	2.33
D	62-67	Yes	1.00	1.50	2.00
D-	60-61	Yes	0.67	1.17	1.67
F	0-59	No	0.00	0.00	0.00

Class Rank

Great Lakes Learning Academy will calculate the class rank for each high school student once per year, shortly after the conclusion of the school year. Students who have not yet successfully completed any high school courses for credit directly from GLLA will be excluded from the class rank calculation.

For the purposes of calculating the class rank, the student's cumulative GPA will be used, which may include weighted grades for Honors or Advanced Placement courses. Courses transferred in from other accredited institutions will also be included in the class rank as long as there is a grade assigned for that course.

The cumulative GPA is calculated to the thousandth of a point. Students whose class rank rounds off to the same thousandth of a point will be considered tied and will receive the same class rank. The ranking will compare students within the same grade level at the same school.

Release of High School Records

Connections Academy will provide educational records, including official high school transcripts, class rank, test scores, and letters of recommendation to third parties such as post-secondary institutions, scholarship committees, and/or potential employers, only with prior written approval from the student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s), or from the student if he or she is aged 18 or older or an emancipated minor.

In order to ensure that application deadlines are successfully met, we require advance notice of at least **10 working days for requests to provide educational records** to students, Caretakers, and/or third parties. We require **30 days' notice for letters of recommendation**. Note that class rank is only calculated at the end of the school year.

Requests for records should be made using the Authorization to Release Records and Letter of Recommendation form available in the Virtual Library under Forms, Colleges and Careers, or by calling the school counselor.

Prerequisites

Students must meet all course prerequisite requirements prior to registration in them. Prerequisites are listed by each course's overview in the course catalog.

Duplicate Course Work: Repeating a Course

A student may repeat a course in order to improve a grade with school counselor approval. The student's transcript and GPA will incorporate both occurrences of the course, and both grades. The repeated course will be counted as an elective.

Schedule Changes

Students may request changes to their schedules within the first two (2) weeks of the start of the fall or spring semester and within the first week of the start of the summer semester, or, if enrolled after this, within one (1) week of enrollment. To add or drop a course, a parent must make a request of the school counselor.

Transcripts

Students will be able to access ongoing information about their courses through their online grade books within the Education Management System. To request an official copy of a transcript, families must complete an *Authorization to Release Records and Letter of Recommendation form* (located in the Virtual Library) and submit it to the guidance counselor for approval and processing. Official transcripts are generated and submitted electronically to colleges/universities through Parchment (<https://www.parchment.com/u/registration/9401711/account>). Hard copy transcripts can also be sent. They will have official school signatures, raised seals, and are sent in a sealed envelope. Caretakers will be able to view a copy of the transcript through the Education Management System.

Credit from other Schools

As part of the enrollment process, families submit their students' most recent report cards and/or transcripts. Counselors analyze previously earned credits and determine which credits will transfer to the Great Lakes Learning Academy. The school counselor may require complete unofficial transcripts or complete end-of-year report cards before approving a student's grade level and course selection. Official transcripts are required within the first 30 days of school for final credit transfer approval and for final course approval. Upon graduation or withdrawal, the official Great Lakes Learning Academy transcript will display both the credits earned at Great Lakes Learning Academy as well as any transfer credits.

Credit for coursework completed in a non-standard school program

Students may request to receive credit for courses completed in previous educational settings other than fully accredited schools, including home school, non-accredited public, private, alternative or international schools. All credit from home school, non-accredited public, private, alternative or international schools will transfer in as Pass/Fail.

There are three options for requesting and being granted credit by GLLA for coursework completed in a non-standard school program:

1. **Assessment:** the student takes and achieves a passing grade (D-) on the Connections Academy exam(s) associated with the course. This may be the midterm and final exam or other proficiency exam as determined by the content area teacher. Alternatively, the student may take a state-approved standardized test. If the student achieves a score of "Proficient" or higher he or she is granted credit for that course. The test(s) must be taken in a school-approved proctored setting.
2. **Portfolio:** The student submits a portfolio documenting coursework, which may include:
 - Samples of prior work
 - List of texts used in prior courses
 - Artwork
 - Writing samples
 - Report card from prior school/home school

- Student Interview
- Other materials as requested by the school counselor

The portfolio is reviewed by each content area teacher. The content area teachers make final decisions about credit(s) to be granted for the student's prior coursework.

For example, a student who shows sufficient evidence of having successfully completed Algebra I, Geometry, English 9 & 10, Earth Science, Biology, U.S. History, Government, and French I & II, is granted credit by each content area teacher for each of the courses documented and is placed in Connections Academy at the grade level appropriate for the number of credits granted.

The school counselor and/or principal may review the student's portfolio along with the content area teachers, where applicable, but the content area teachers are responsible for determining if the student is indeed proficient in the specific subject and whether or not credit is to be granted.

3. **Competency:** Based on a portfolio of materials similar to, but perhaps less comprehensive than that listed in #2, the subject area teacher makes a decision about where to place the student. After the student has completed one full semester at GLLA, the student's progress in the Connections Academy course(s) is reviewed. If the student earns a passing grade in the Connections Academy course that follows a course taken in a non-standard school the first time it is taken, the counselor awards credit(s) for the course(s) taken in the non-standard school. This method of placement is only applicable to foreign language courses and certain other courses that occur in a clearly linear sequence.

Students may use any combination of the above-listed methods for requesting credit. For example, a student may choose option #1 for mathematics and science courses, #2 for humanities courses, and #3 for foreign language.

Path to Homeschool

Students seeking credit through the 'Path to Homeschool' must contact their counselor within two (2) weeks of receipt of notification that they have been placed in courses pending confirmation of homeschool credit. A plan, including due date, will be developed. Students who do not meet the agreed-upon deadlines may forfeit their ability to earn credits through the 'Path to Homeschool.'

Post-secondary Enrollment/College Courses

Families must consult with the school counselor for permission to earn high school credit for college courses taken while the student is still enrolled in GLLA. Students wishing to earn high school credit for college courses must have written approval of the school counselor in advance. The school counselor will work with the parent and student to determine the amount of high school credit that a college course could earn. Typically a 3, 4, or 5 credit college course will equate to .5 credit at GLLA. In order to receive high school credit for a college course, the student must pass the course with a grade of D- or higher and present an official transcript to GLLA.

Students who participate in dual enrollment courses through Great Lakes Learning Academy are required to provide an official grade report (transcript or other official document indicating successful completion of the course and grade received) upon completion of the course(s) taken. Letter grades from the dual enrollment course(s) will appear on the Great Lakes Learning Academy high school transcript.

Credit for Other Experiences

Many students are involved in activities outside their school experiences, such as: music, dance, and art lessons, foreign language instruction, and participation on athletic teams. While GLLA recognizes the value of these activities, they cannot be used to earn high school credit.

Testing Out

Great Lakes Learning Academy, in compliance with the Michigan Merit Curriculum guidelines, allows students to attempt to "test out" of high school courses in any credit area required for graduation. Testing out allows middle school and high school students to earn high school credit for a course if the student earns a qualifying score (78% or higher) on the testing out assessment(s) selected by GLLA. Students testing out will be required to demonstrate the same level of mastery of the course content as would be expected of a student completing the course. Testing out assessments are very rigorous and may include any or all of the following assessments normally required when taking the course: examination(s), written report(s), research paper(s), portfolio(s), and other assignments.

All testing out assessments will be proctored by GLLA staff, and the student requesting to test out must take the assessment(s) at the GLLA office in Okemos. Testing out sessions will be offered twice a year in August and January. Students wishing to attempt testing out must submit to the school the "Student Request for Testing Out" by June 30th for the August testing and by November 15th for the January testing.

The [Michigan Merit Curriculum Course/Credit Requirements](http://www.michigan.gov/mde), found at www.michigan.gov/mde, will be the guide for students who seek to review prior to the test. *No books or study materials will be provided by GLLA.* The following important conditions also apply to testing out:

- Students are allowed to attempt to test out of any high school course in any credit area required for graduation.

- Students may only attempt to test out of a course *once*. If the student does not pass the testing out assessment(s), he or she will be required to take the course in the traditional manner in order to receive credit.
- Students may *not* attempt to test out of a class in which they are currently enrolled.
- Students must have taken, or tested out of, any prerequisites for a course before they may attempt testing out for that course.
- Credit earned through testing out *will* count toward the credit requirement of a subject area and towards total credits required for graduation.
- Testing out credits will *not* be included in the computation of grade point average.
- Students interested in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility should *not* attempt testing out, as credit(s) earned by testing out will *not* be accepted by the NCAA Eligibility Center.
- Courses for which a student earned credit by testing out will be marked “TO” on the GLLA transcript.

Note: Caretakers and students should understand that valuable course content, information, and discussions are missed when testing out. This may have an impact on a student’s MME/SAT test scores. GLLA is not responsible for a student’s loss of eligibility for any programs and/or services that do not accept credit through testing out (e.g. NCAA).

Use of Seclusion & Restraint

In the event that staff members need to restrain and/or seclude students, it will be utilized in accordance with board policy, which is intended to:

- promote the care, safety, welfare and security of the school community and the dignity of each student
- encourage the use of proactive, effective, evidence and research based strategies and best practices to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviors, eliminate the use of seclusion and restraint, and increase meaningful instructional time for all students; and
- ensure that seclusion and restraint are used only as a last resort in an emergency situation and are subject to diligent assessment, monitoring, documentation and reporting by trained personnel

In furtherance of these objectives, the Academy will utilize Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students. PBIS implemented by the Academy will include socially valued and measurable outcomes, empirically validated and practical practices, systems that efficiently and effectively support implementation of these practices, and continuous collection and use of data for decision-making.

World Language Proficiency

A World Language Proficiency Assessment is available to students who believe they have command of a world language. Students can request taking a World Language Proficiency Assessment one time starting in grade 9 and through grade 10. This assessment would take place at the GLLA office. Passing the World Language Proficiency Assessment waives the high school world language requirement. Students do not earn credit. If a student has attended school in another country, where the language used for instruction in the school was the native language of that country, s/he may be eligible to waive the world language requirement.

Students should speak with their homeroom teacher and/or school counselor for more information.

Students Driving to Sanctioned Events

First and foremost, we highly recommend to Caretakers that students *not* be permitted to drive unaccompanied to Connections Academy sanctioned events (“Event(s)”) including MME/SAT testing. Preferred options include having Caretakers or designated adults drive and supervise students, or having students use public transportation options.

However, we recognize that in certain circumstances students may need or wish to drive to an Event without supervision from an adult. In order to be able to drive unaccompanied to a Connections Academy sanctioned Event students must meet the following guidelines:

- Must be 18 years of age. Where students are under the age of 18, even though states may permit minors to drive, an adult is required to supervise a minor at an Event.
- Must possess a valid driver’s license.
- Must have access to a currently registered, inspected, and insured vehicle.
- Must be a student in good standing, with good attendance, and with no disciplinary actions noted in the student’s file.
- Obtain School permission to drive unaccompanied to Events.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the student who attends an Event without a parent, legal guardian, or designated adult to do the following:

- Document parental permission to drive to Events for the current school year by submitting a completed and signed *Connections Academy Sanctioned Event Student Driving and Attendance Authorization* to the school (form available from the Virtual Library or the school).
- Document school permission to drive to Events by obtaining the Principal’s (or designee) signature on the *Connections Academy Sanctioned Event Student Driving and Attendance Authorization*.
- Obey all time schedules.
- Obey all school rules including maintaining acceptable attendance and disciplinary standards. If a student arrives late, privileges may be revoked.
- Adhere to school rules and procedures for Events.

Under no circumstances shall the school be responsible for students who make their own personal travel arrangements and/or are not accompanied by an adult. The conduct of unaccompanied student drivers at Events shall remain the responsibility of their Caretakers. If a student driving to or from an Event is involved in an accident, neither the school, its operator, or any other of its agents shall be liable for any injuries or damage; all liability rests with the student, his/her parent/legal guardian and/or any insurance maintained by the parent/legal guardian and/or the student.

Under no circumstances shall students drive other students to an Event. If a student or Caretaker nevertheless permits another student or students to ride with him/her, Connections Academy shall not be liable for any injuries or damage to any parties. The student, the student's parent/legal guardian, and/or any insurance maintained by the parent/legal guardian and/or the student, shall be responsible for any and all injuries and/or any damage that may occur.

Even if a Caretaker does grant permission for a student to drive unaccompanied, it is important to note that driving a car to an Event is a privilege for a student and not a right, and such privilege may still be denied or revoked by the school at any time. Safe driving practices must be adhered to at all times. Students who endanger other drivers, individuals, pedestrians, or property, and/or do not follow school rules and/or procedures for Events, may have their permission to drive unaccompanied to school Events revoked by the school. Furthermore, students may be reported to school authorities and, if warranted, may also be reported to the police for further action.

7 SERVICES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

7.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Eligible Students

Enrollment Requirements

At the time of enrollment, all Caretakers who indicate their students have special needs are asked to submit a copy of the student's most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP). It is important that the IEP is current and complete, and that any educational assessments and evaluation reports that support the IEP are also submitted.

All documents are reviewed by the Director of Special Education, and, if necessary, a member of the special education staff contacts the family to discuss specific student needs or to clarify the information.

The student's annual review date is noted. Once enrollment is complete the team begins to schedule IEP meetings, as necessary.

During the School Year

At the beginning of the school year, the special education team ensures that teachers have access to the student IEPs. The teachers are made aware of each student's special learning needs and are given guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations.

Conducting IEP Meetings

The special education team plans for and schedules all annual reviews and other IEP-related meetings. They contact families and establish mutually beneficial meeting times. Although typically held virtually, the IEP meetings occur in compliance with all state and federal laws.

Special Education and Related Services

According to their IEPs, some students qualify to receive special education and related services. Due to the virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the internet with real-time conferencing software. The IEP team ensures the service is provided in compliance with the IEP. The team locates and secures the provider and handles all contracting and financial issues.

New Referrals

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning and they may believe there could be a need for special education assistance. If this is suspected, the teacher will first help the Learning Coach implement a series of program modifications. If those documented strategies fail, he or she will then refer the student to the school's Student Support Team (SST). This team will meet and suggest additional strategies and considerations, and they will also work to gather more information about the student's learning history and profile. They may even consult with a member of the special education team. If after all the recommended strategies fail, the team (along with the Caretaker) will consider a referral to the school's special education team. Once the team receives the referral they will begin the process of determining if the student is in need of a special education evaluation, an IEP, and ultimately special education services.

7.2 Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 Eligible Students

Enrollment Requirements

Caretakers of students with Section 504 plans seeking to enroll in the school are asked to submit a copy of the Section 504 plan during the enrollment and academic placement process. When a student enters the School with a Section 504 plan developed by a prior school, the school will review the plan and supporting documentation and comply with Section 504.

During the School Year

At the beginning of the school year, the 504 Coordinator ensures that teachers have access to a student's 504 Plan. The teachers are made aware of each student's special learning needs and are given guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations.

Students who have Section 504 plans will participate in the regular education environment, with the use of supplementary aides and services. The regular education teachers (with the support of the Section 504 coordinator and/or special education staff) will implement the provisions of Section 504 plans. A case manager will be assigned to notify teachers about the accommodations and to assist with and monitor implementation of the Section 504 plan. Teachers will also have access to information as to accommodations and modifications on their home page.

Reevaluation

The School shall establish procedures for periodic reevaluation of students, consistent with the requirements of Section 504. Transitions from primary grades to intermediate grades, elementary school to middle school, and middle school to high school are often appropriate times to review and update a student's Section 504 plan. For students who enter the School with an existing Section 504 plan, the schedule for the reevaluation will be determined by the Section 504 coordinator based on the following: how recently the plan was developed, the appropriateness of the plan for the virtual school setting, changes to the student's impairment, etc.

Section 504 Accommodations

According to their Section 504 plans, some students qualify for accommodations and modifications to their educational program. Due to the virtual nature of the School, the services are typically provided virtually over the internet with real-time conferencing software. The 504 Coordinator ensures the service is provided in compliance with the student's Section 504 plan.

New Referrals

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning and they may believe there could be a need for accommodations and modifications, supplemental aides and services as required under Section 504. If documented strategies fail, the student will be referred to the school's Student Support Team (SST). This team will meet and suggest additional strategies and considerations, and they will also work to gather more information about the student's learning history and profile. They may even consult with a member of the special education team and/or Section 504 Committee. If all the recommended strategies fail, the team (along with the Caretaker) will consider a referral to the school's special education team and/or Section 504 Committee. Once the team receives the referral they will begin the process of determining if the student is in need of evaluations and a Section 504 plan.

Federal law requires GLLA to provide its students, regardless of disability, with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the school's education program. GLLA is committed to providing its students with equal access to its education program. We provide students with accessibility through resources tailored to each student's individual abilities and needs, including assistive technologies and individualized support.

If your student is in need of assistance in order to fully participate in GLLA's education program, please contact the school's special education coordinator or the school's 504 coordinator. You can also obtain 24-hour technical support by calling the Accessibility Hotline at 888-639-5960.

8 CONDUCT, DUE PROCESS, GRIEVANCE, AND COMMUNICATION

8.1 Bullying and Prohibited Behaviors

Great Lakes Learning Academy is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students, and encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing toward any member of the school community, whether by or toward any student, staff, Learning Coach, Caretaker, or other third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Examples of such prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, stalking, bullying/cyber bullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior; physical, verbal, and psychological abuse; and violence within a dating relationship. These types of behavior are forms of intimidation and harassment and are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether or not the target of the prohibited behavior are members of a legally protected group, such as sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, marital status, or disability.

The following definitions are intended to provide guidance in assessing whether a particular behavior is a prohibited behavior. They are not exhaustive in their scope and are not intended to replace the intuition of the individual. When in doubt as to whether or not a particular suspected behavior is a prohibited behavior, you are urged to rule on the side of caution and report your concerns to the appropriate authority, as provided for in this policy.

Harassment - any intentional behavior or course of conduct (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) directed at a specific person or group of persons that causes substantial physical and/or emotional distress or harm and is sufficiently severe, persistent, and/or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, and/or abusive educational environment for the other person(s) and serves no legitimate purpose.

Bullying – see definition below.

Cyber-bullying – see definition below.

Hazing – the use of ritual and other activities involving harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, intimidation, abuse or humiliation for the purpose of initiating a person or persons into a group, regardless of whether such person(s) consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue behavior(s) and action(s).

Intimidation – a course of behavior that instills fear or a sense of inadequacy.

Violence within a dating relationship - any behavior by a student exhibited towards that student's dating partner that is an attempt to gain and/or maintain power and/or control over a dating partner through violence, threats of violence, and/or physical, verbal, psychological, and/or mental abuse.

Sexting - knowingly using a computer, or any other device capable of electronic data transmission or distribution, to transmit or distribute to another minor any photograph or video which depicts nudity and is harmful to minors. Knowingly possessing a photograph or video that was transmitted or distributed by another minor as described above.

Prohibited behaviors include all of the above.

The school Administration (and School Board, if applicable) will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which (i) cause, threaten to cause, or, an objective and reasoned third-party would find was intended to cause, bodily harm or personal degradation, or (ii) creates, or an objective and reasoned third-party would determine was intended to create, an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for any student, staff member, member of the administration, parent or guardian, or other third-party.

This policy applies to all school-related activities and/or engagements, including, but not limited to, online school-related activities such as LiveLesson sessions, participation in clubs and activities, WebMail messages, text messages, discussions, telephonic communications, and message boards; and in-person activities, such as state testing, field trips, open houses, and any other in-person school-related activities on school property.

This policy also applies to those activities or engagements which occur off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, where an employee is engaged in school business, or where the prohibited behavior is facilitated through the use of any school property or resources.

Any student or student's Caretaker who believes that student, any other student, or other third-party, has been or is the recipient of any of the above-described prohibited behaviors should immediately report the situation to the school counselor, school principal or assistant principal, or School Director. The student may also report concerns to teachers and other school staff who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate school administrator or Board official (if applicable). Complaints about prohibited behavior against the school principal should be filed with the Connections Academy School Director or the Vice President of Schools, or the Board President (if applicable). Complaints about prohibited behavior against the Connections Academy School Director or the Vice President of Schools should be filed with either the Connections Academy Executive Vice President or the Board President (if applicable).

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is **required**, to report any situation that they believe to be prohibited behavior. Reports may be made to those identified above. If a student or other individual believes there has been prohibited behavior, he/she should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action. Any teacher, school administrator, or school staff member who does not timely make a written report of an incident of prohibited behavior shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process. All complaints about prohibited behavior shall be kept confidential and be promptly investigated. The school principal or appropriate administrator shall prepare a written report of the investigation upon completion. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether any prohibited behavior(s) were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action, shall be in the report. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report. When the target of the prohibited behavior is a student, the school shall provide that student with a written copy of the rights, protections, and support services available to him/her. If there is any evidence that the student has experienced physical harm as a result of the prohibited behavior, the school shall promptly communicate that information to the appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to, emergency personnel and /or law enforcement.

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, intimidation, bullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process. This may include up to expulsion for students; up to discharge for employees; exclusion for Caretakers, guests, volunteers, and contractors; and removal from any official position and/or a request for a Board member(s) to resign. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for employees will follow the procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for students will follow the procedures outlined in this Supplement.

When appropriate, the target(s) of the prohibited behavior (and/or such target(s) Caretaker(s)) shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and, when appropriate, that action has been taken. In providing such notification care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the accused perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, bullying, and/or dating violence.

If after investigation the act(s) of prohibited behavior by a specific student is/are verified, the school principal or appropriate administrator shall notify in writing the Caretaker of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in the notification.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of harassment, intimidation, bullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior will not be tolerated, independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of school policy, and suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as prohibited behavior. Making intentionally false reports about prohibited behavior will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

This policy shall not be interpreted as infringing upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by State or Federal law).

Complaints

Students and/or their Caretakers may file written reports regarding any suspected prohibited behavior by completing the *Report of Bullying, Aggressive, or Other Prohibited Behavior Form*, found in the Forms section of the Virtual Library, and sending this to the school. Such reports should be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the school principal for review, investigation, and action.

Students and/or their Caretakers may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be prohibited behavior(s) by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who received an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing by completing the *Report of Bullying, Aggressive, or Other Prohibited Behavior Form*, found in the Forms section of the Virtual Library. This written report shall be promptly forwarded by the school staff member and/or administrator to the building principal for review, investigation, and appropriate action.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The School will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Anti-Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy

“Bullying” means any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, cyberbullying, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more persons either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- A. Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more persons;
- B. Adversely affecting the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities by placing such student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress;
- C. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a person's physical or mental health;

- D. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

“Cyberbullying” means any electronic communication that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one or more persons either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- A. Substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more persons;
- B. Adversely affecting the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the school’s educational programs or activities by placing such student pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress;
- C. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a person’s physical or mental health;
- D. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Since “bullying” also includes “cyberbullying,” any reference in this policy to “bullying” shall also be deemed to refer to “cyberbullying.”

Bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited at school. “At school” is defined as on school premises, at school-sponsored activities or events, such as, but not limited to, state testing, field trips, and open houses, in a school-related vehicle, online school-related activities such as LiveLesson sessions, participation in clubs and activities, WebMail messages, text messages, discussions, telephonic communications, and message boards, where an employee is engaged in school business, or where the prohibited behavior is facilitated through the use of any school property or resources.

Bullying and cyberbullying that does not occur “at school,” as defined above, but that causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

Reporting and Investigating Reports of Bullying

Every student is encouraged to report any situation that he or she believes to be bullying behavior directed toward a student to a teacher, a counselor, administrator, or other staff member. Staff members shall report any reports made by students or situations that they believe to be bullying behavior directed toward a student to the school counselor, school principal or assistant principal or School Director. Complaints against the school principal shall be reported to the Connections Academy School Director or the Vice President of Schools, or the Board President.

Under state law, a school employee, school volunteer, student, or parent or guardian who promptly reports in good faith an act of bullying to the appropriate school official designated in this policy and who makes this report in compliance with the procedures set forth in this policy is immune from a cause of action for damages arising out of the reporting itself or any failure to remedy the reported incident. This immunity does not apply to a school official responsible for implementing this policy or for remedying the bullying, when acting in that capacity.

Retaliation or false accusation against a target of bullying, a witness, or another person with information about an act of bullying is prohibited. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as suspected bullying behavior. Making intentionally false accusations of bullying is likewise prohibited. Retaliation and making intentionally false accusations of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

All complaints about bullying that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated and documented. The school principal or designee is responsible for the investigation. If the investigation results in a finding that bullying has occurred, it shall result in prompt and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion for students, up to and including discharge for employees, and up to and including exclusion from school property for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

Where the investigation results in a finding that bullying has occurred, both the parent or legal guardian of a victim of bullying and the parent or legal guardian of a perpetrator of the bullying shall be notified promptly in writing. In addition, administrators investigating alleged bullying may notify parents of the victim or perpetrator of bullying sooner than the conclusion of the investigation if circumstances dictate such earlier notification.

The School shall document any prohibited incident that is reported and shall document all verified incidents of bullying and the resulting consequences, including the required notification of parents or guardians and any discipline and referrals.

The school principal is the school official responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

Confidentiality

The School will comply with all applicable laws regarding confidentiality of personally identifiable information within education records. In addition, the identity of an individual who reports an act of bullying or cyberbullying shall be and remain confidential. The school principal, or the school principal's designee, shall ensure that the name of an individual who reports an act of bullying or cyberbullying is withheld from the alleged perpetrator and the perpetrator's parent(s), legal guardian(s) and representative(s), and is redacted from any report of bullying or cyberbullying that is publicly disclosed.

Notification

This policy will be annually circulated to parents and students, and shall be posted on the school's website.

Reporting

As required by state statute, the school shall provide a report of all verified incidents of bullying and other required information to the Michigan Department of Education on an annual basis, according to the form and procedures established by the Department.

As required by state statute, the school's procedures with respect to bullying are contained within this policy, and thus no administrative guidelines accompany this policy.

8.2 Discipline and Due Process for Students

All students enrolled in GLLA are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules for the school, and Caretakers are expected to cooperate with the school staff in helping students to maintain this conduct. Student codes of conduct are set forth in this Supplement. .

Discipline Measures

There are three levels of disciplinary measures utilized by the school: 1) Warning, 2) Suspension, and 3) Expulsion. Each level has associated conduct breach definitions and corresponding disciplinary actions that may occur.

1. Warning

Students that receive warnings from the school will have a conference (via phone or in person) with their parent/guardian(s) and the school administrator(s), and the incident will be formally documented in writing and will become part of the student's permanent record. The student will not have a disruption in schooling and will not be removed from the class (Connexus).

Warnings are issues when a student demonstrates a breach of expected conduct, but not as serious as those listed under the suspension and/or expulsion categories in this Supplement.

2. Suspension

When a student is suspended, he or she is temporarily removed from class (Connexus) or a school sponsored program or activity. The length of a suspension is determined by the school administrator (up to 10 days at a time). A suspension will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

During a period of suspension as defined by the school principal, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of Connexus is restricted. Student access to WebMail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or all of Connexus may be revoked. In such cases where the student's access is completely revoked, the Learning Coach is responsible for logging on to Connexus and obtaining the student's assignments, responding to WebMail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his or her schoolwork during a suspension.

Violations that may lead to suspension include, but are not limited to, the following breaches of conduct:

- **Cheating on tests or daily work:** A student who knowingly participates in copying, using another's work, and representing it as his or her own (for example, students transmitting their work electronically for another student's use), or who provides other students with test answers, answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation.
- **Plagiarism:** A student's use of another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). It includes copying material from a book, copying-and-pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to help with coursework.
- **Unexcused absence:** An unexcused absence is the absence of a student due to truancy, illegal employment or parental neglect.
- **Illegal absence:** Illegal absences are unexcused absences by a student who is under the age of 17 who are absent from school due to avoidable absences, parental neglect, illegal employment, unapproved family vacations, and truancy.
- **Abusive conduct:** A student who uses abusive language or engages in abusive conduct in the presence of others either in person or electronically/virtually.
- **Bullying:** A student that repeatedly engages in negative actions against another student in an attempt to exercise control over him or her.
- **Harassment:** A student who demonstrates verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the school's programs that: 1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment, 2) unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational performance, or 3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.
- **Vandalism:** A Student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency(ies).
- **Theft and robbery:** A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the school of that property. The threat or the use of force or violence is considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.
- **Sexual harassment:** A student who subjects another to any unwelcome sexual advances including verbal harassment, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or suggestions, requests, or demands for sexual favors.
- **Violation of acceptable use policy:** Students who violate the acceptable use policy in one form or another are open to disciplinary action including suspension. This would include signing on as Caretakers.

3. Expulsion

When a student is expelled, he or she is separated from the school for an extended period of time, or permanently, for disciplinary reasons. An expulsion will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others, possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, under the influence of or possession of, or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia. Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

The school will not discipline students protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), or the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) unless the school complies with the requirements of those acts and state law.

Due Process for Students

The following actions will be conducted by the school, per each of the disciplinary measures as outlined below:

Suspension (up to 10 days)

An informal hearing will be convened with the student, Caretaker, principal and other staff members as appropriate. The principal will inform the student and Caretaker of the allegations and an explanation of the evidence that supports the allegations. The student will be provided with an opportunity to present his or her version of the occurrence. If the principal determines that the incident(s) justifies suspension, written notice will be provided to the student and his/her Caretaker. The student will be provided all due process as required by law.

Suspension of an additional 10 days, or an Expulsion

If the school determines that a student's conduct may warrant expulsion, the principal will provide written notice to the Caretaker of the student of his/her determination and the student's right to a hearing. Such notice shall include (1) date, time and location of hearing; (2) description of the incident(s) that is the subject of the hearing; (3) notice that the student and/or Caretaker have a right to review the student's school records prior to the hearing; (4) description of the hearing process and explanation of the consequences of an expulsion. At this hearing, the allegations and supporting evidence will be reviewed. The student shall have the right to present his or her version of the incident(s), call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses and be represented by counsel. After the hearing, the principal will make a recommendation for or against expulsion to the school's Board. Once the Board rules on the expulsion, the principal and/or the Board will provide notification to the student and Caretaker of the Board's decision and discipline determination. The decision of the Board is final.

8.3 Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and Cheating

GLLA requires students to complete all assessments (i.e. tests, quizzes, and quick checks) individually without the aid of, but not limited to: (a) the internet, (b) textbook(s), (c) a Learning Coach, (d) or other students unless the instructor provides instructions otherwise. In addition, assignments other than tests, quizzes, and quick checks must be the student's original work. In addition, Connections Academy requires the original work of all students and in so doing, prohibits plagiarism of the work of others. Students shall be expected to properly cite the origin of work that is not the student's own. If work content, other than commonly known facts, is not properly cited, attributed, or credited, the work may be determined to be plagiarism.

Students may not plagiarize in written, oral, or creative work. In general, plagiarism occurs when a student uses another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work and with the intention of passing it off as his or her own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). It includes copying material from a book, copying and pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to help with coursework.

First Offense

The first time a student is determined to have cheated or plagiarized the work of other(s), the student will receive a warning. The student will be required to resubmit the question/assignment (or similar question) with original work within a week. If a student chooses not to resubmit the work, the student will receive a failing grade for that question/assignment. A phone conference between the student, Caretaker, and teacher will be conducted.

Second Offense

The second time a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing, s/he will be required to redo the question/assignment. This is to be done within a week. The student will be required to redo the work without plagiarizing in order to proceed with the course. The student should reach out to their teacher if additional support or assistance is needed to appropriately complete the assignment. In addition, a phone conference will be conducted with the student, Caretaker, teacher, and counselor. The teacher will notify the appropriate administrator.

Third Offense

The third time a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing, a conference will be held with the student, Caretaker, teacher, and school administrator where a behavior plan will be developed to deter further plagiarism occurrences. The student will be required to redo the question/assignment without plagiarizing in order to proceed with the course. In addition, the third offense places a student in Step 1 (Warning) of the Discipline policy outlined in Section 9.3 *Discipline and Due Process for Students*. Such repeated offenses of plagiarism by a student may result in a recommendation by the principal that the student be determined to be a repeat violator of school policy and a disruption of school discipline. Such recommendation may result in a determination to suspend or expel the student.

8.4 Grievance Process for Caretakers

The school is committed to ensuring parent satisfaction, and takes its responsibilities for the provision of educational services to the student very seriously. These school responsibilities are set out in the Parent/Legal Guardian Agreement (PLCA) and the School Handbooks and include such things as: contacting the family regularly, delivering educational materials and equipment, and providing accessible support.

The school will also ensure the family and student adhere to their responsibilities stated in the PLCA and the School Handbooks, and when necessary, will discipline, disenroll a student, or take legal action against the family for a breach of the agreement or a school policy. Reasons for such disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to, failure to attend mandatory state testing, or failure to return materials. Great Lakes Learning Academy provides state-funded computer equipment and educational materials to families for educational purposes during the school year, and reserves the right to invoice or refer to collections those families who do not return equipment or materials in a timely manner at the end of the school year or upon withdrawal from the school.

Caretaker Remedies

If a Caretaker has concerns with the school's action or performance on any of the above-defined school responsibilities or disciplinary actions, he or she has the following remedies available:

Addressing Issues

For routine issues or for a first attempt at redress, contact General Information Services via phone at 1-800-382-6010 or via e-mail at support@connectionseducation.com.

For more serious issues and/or to address lack of resolution of the issue at lower level, a detailed grievance procedure has been set forth below. All grievance proceedings will be conducted in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the facts. If a hearing is required for grievance proceedings, the parties will be provided with all due process procedures as required by law.

Where a Caretaker feels that there has been discrimination on the basis of sex or on the basis of Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* of 1973 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, allegations of sexual abuse or any other misconduct on the part of the school or its employees, then the Caretaker must activate the grievance procedures set out below and can directly report the complaint to the Director of Schools.

If charges are brought against a student for a breach of the PLCA, which could result in a suspension of an additional ten (10) days or an expulsion, the due process procedures in the *Discipline* section of the handbook are to be followed.

Grievance Process

1. A Caretaker with the grievance must, in writing, report the dissatisfaction, and submit it to the student's teacher (or other appropriate Great Lakes Learning Academy staff member, as necessary). All parties involved must be appropriately defined, and the problem must be clearly outlined.
2. The recipient of the grievance must review the issue with his or her supervisor and respond to the parent within three (3) school days.
3. If the original recipient did not resolve the grievance, the Caretaker should request a meeting with the recipient's supervisor. The supervisor should investigate the matter, and schedule a meeting with the Caretaker, the student, if necessary, and any other staff member, if necessary, within five (5) school days.
4. If either party does not resolve this grievance, the Caretaker should then request a meeting with the Director of Schools. The Director will investigate the matter, and schedule a meeting within five (5) school days.
5. If a resolution was not reached at the above three (3) meetings, the Caretaker may request a meeting with the Superintendent, who will investigate the matter, and arrange a meeting within five (5) school days.

If the school has not been able to address the Caretaker's concern through the grievance process set out above, or if there has not been a prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint prohibited by Title IX and Section 504, the parent can contact ~~the parent~~ a member on the school's Governing Board. The Caretaker can also resort to contacting the Michigan Department of Education. Current contact information for Governing Board members is listed on the [school website](#).

9 EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

9.1 Technology Provided by Connections Academy

GLLA families may request one computer for the household. Consult the [Hardware and Connectivity](#) section of our homepage to find out what technology is provided by the school.

9.1.1 Use of Personal Equipment and Software

Great Lakes Learning Academy provides families the necessary equipment and software needed for students and Learning Coaches to do their day-to-day schoolwork. Families are not required to have additional personal access to equipment and software, but may use their own equipment and software if they meet the [minimum system requirements](#) detailed on the school website and in the School Handbook: General Portion.

9.2 Use of the Internet

Internet Subsidy

Each family that elects to receive an internet subsidy will be issued a mobile wi-fi unit that utilizes the T-Mobile cellular signal to provide internet access. The internet subsidy, or mobile wi-fi unit, is awarded on a per family basis, not a per student basis. Families wishing to participate in the internet subsidy program and receive a mobile wi-fi unit agree to be responsible for replacement costs of the unit should it be damaged or lost during the time it is issued to the family. The mobile wi-fi unit must be returned once the student is no longer enrolled. For questions regarding the internet subsidy, please contact the superintendent at 517-381-5062.

Internet Safety Policy

It is the policy of GLLA (the "academy") to:

- Prevent user access to its computer network to, or transmission of inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications;
- Prevent unauthorized access to and other unlawful online activity related to inappropriate material via the Internet;
- Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personally identifiable information
- Comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA") (Pub. L. No.106-554 and 47 USC 254 (h)).

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or “Internet filters”) shall be made available for all computers accessible by students and placed on the computers located at the school site locations. As required by CIPA, this blocking technology is applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography or any other material deemed to be harmful to minors.

Technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

To the extent practical, the school takes steps to promote the safety and security of users of Connexus when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and any other form of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by CIPA, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called ‘hacking’ and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

To the extent practical, the school, through its handbook, the Connexus Terms of Use and its staff, is committed to educating, supervising and monitoring the appropriate usage of Connexus and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, CIPA, the Neighborhood Children’s Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

The school will provide age-appropriate training for students and parents who use Connection Academy’s Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote Connection Academy’s commitment to the standards and acceptable use of Internet services, as set forth in the school’s handbook and the Connexus Terms of Use; and student safety with regard to safety on the Internet; appropriate behavior while online, on social networking websites, and in chat rooms; and cyber bullying awareness and response.

This Internet Safety Policy was adopted by the Board of GLLA at a public meeting, following public notice, on September 22, 2015.