Golden Valley Charter Schools
Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
9601 Lake Natoma Dr.
Orangevale, CA 95662

November 18, 2026

Board Meeting Access Information

Date:	*Wednesday, November 18, 2026*
Time:	*5:00 p.m.*
Primary Location:	***Golden Valley River School, Room 5, 9601 Lake Natoma Dr., Orangevale, CA 95662***
Remote Location:	*Golden Valley Orchard, Room 19, 6550 Filbert Ave, Orangevale, CA 95662*
Zoom Link:	*Topic: BOT Regular Meeting 2026.11.18* *Time: November 18, 2026 05:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)* *Join Zoom Meeting* *https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81758402687?pwd=JOvS4Y8f6pIbDdxDJSeqKf0krbfpaJ.1* *Meeting ID: 817 5840 2687* *Passcode: 791537* *---* *One tap mobile* *+16699009128,,81758402687#,,,,*791537# US* *Join instructions* *https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/81758402687/invitations?signature=21Src-mVeZfTrsyn1y_bXRePwk_P8spG063sqexG7zc*

This meeting is being conducted in person and will also be available to the public via teleconference through the Zoom platform.

Members of the public who wish to comment during the Board meeting may do so in person at the primary meeting location, a remote meeting location, or use the "raise hand" tool on the Zoom platform. Members of the public may also email their comments to the Board at bot@goldenvalleycharter.org; emailed comments will be summarized by the board chair. Individual comments are limited to three (3) minutes. The Board will limit the total time for public comment to fifteen minutes. The Board reserves the right to mute or remove a participant from the meeting if the participant unreasonably disrupts the Board meeting.

Disability Accommodations. A person with a disability may contact the central office at (916) 597-1477 or email the board at bot@goldenvalleycharter.org at least 48 hours before the scheduled board meeting to request receipt of an agenda and other distributed writings in an appropriate alternative format or to request disability-related modifications or accommodations, including auxiliary aids or services, in order to participate in the public board meeting.

Golden Valley Charter Schools
Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
9601 Lake Natoma Dr.
Orangevale, CA 95662

November 18, 2026

Regular Meeting Agenda

1. **Call to Order** – 5:00 p.m. *(K. Gerski-Keller)*

2. **Roll Call** – 5:00 p.m.
   Board Members: Katie Gerski-Keller, Meredith Willsen, Ekaterina Khmelniker, James Stark, Jessica Crew, Marcus Neal, Julia Koch

3. **Board Member Exigencies and Remote Attendance** – 5:01 p.m. (*K. Gerski-Keller)*
   Action: Shall the board approve any board members to participate in this board meeting from a remote location due to just cause exceptions per SB 707?
   Information: Members must publicly disclose at the meeting before any action is taken, whether any other individuals 18 years of age or older are present in the room at the remote location with the member, and if so, the general nature of the member's relationship with any such individuals; and ensure their meeting participation using both visual and audio technology.

4. **Flag Salute/Quote/Moment of Silence** – 5:05 p.m. (*K. Gerski-Keller)*

5. **Public Comment** – 5:06 p.m.
   This portion of the meeting is set aside for members of the audience to make public comments or raise issues that are not specifically on the agenda or for those that are on the agenda in areas of Board jurisdiction. Speakers are asked to keep comments respectful and focused on issues, not individuals. Please refrain from using names or identifying information when referencing students, staff, or families. Comments about specific individuals—especially students—should be addressed privately through the appropriate administrative channels. Disclosing confidential student information during a public meeting may violate federal privacy laws (FERPA). Additionally, members of the public are reminded that slanderous, defamatory, or disruptive comments may result in legal liability or removal from the meeting. The Board does not respond to public comment but may refer matters to administration for review.
   These presentations are limited to three (3) minutes and the total time allotted to non-agenda items will not exceed fifteen (15) minutes. The board will receive in person comments first, remote location comments second, and Zoom comments third.

6. **Consent Agenda –** 5:21 p.m. *(K. Gerski-Keller)*
   All items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered by the Board to be routine and will be enacted by the Board in one motion. There will be no discussion on these items prior to the time the Board votes on the motion unless a member of the Board, staff, or public request specific items to be discussed and/or removed from the Consent Agenda. If items are pulled for discussion, a separate vote will occur on the item(s). The Executive Director recommends approval of all Consent Agenda items.
   Action: Shall the Board approve the following items by consent?
   6.1 ***Shall the Board approve the 2025/2026 Education Protection Account (EPA) Resolution for Golden Valley Orchard School?***

6.2 ***Shall the Board approve the 2025/2026 Education Protection Account (EPA) Resolution for Golden Valley River School?***

7. **Minutes Approval** – 5:24 p.m. *(K. Gerski-Keller)*
   Action: Shall the Board approve the October 14, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes?

8. **Attendance Policy (Second Read)** – 5:25 p.m. *(J. Hoover)*
   Discussion/Action: Shall the Board approve the revised Attendance Policy for Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS)?

9. **Suspension and Expulsion Policy (Second Read)** – 5:40 p.m. *(J. Hoover)*
   Discussion/Action: Shall the Board approve the revised Suspension and Expulsion Policy for GVCS?

10. **Transitional Kindergarten Teachers Policy (Second Read)** – 5:55 p.m. *(J. Hoover)*
    Discussion/Action: Shall the Board approve the Transitional Kindergarten Teachers Policy for GVCS?

11. **Volunteer Policy (Second Read) –** 6:10 p.m. *(J. Hoover)*
    Discussion/Action: Shall the Board approve the revised Volunteer Policy for GVCS?

12. **Fiscal Oversight Updates for GVCS –** 6:25 p.m. *(J. Stark)*
    Discussion: Members of the Finance Committee will present to the Board of Trustees an update on fiscal oversight for GVCS.

13. **Faculty Reports** – 6:40 p.m.
    Faculty Chair Report, Orchard: Orchard Faculty Chair, Jordan Watkins, will present items of interest to the board. *(J. Watkins)*
    Faculty Chair Report, River: River Faculty Chair, Sarah Chase, will present items of interest to the board. *(S. Chase)*

14. **Executive Reports** – 6:50 p.m.
    Board Chair Report: Board of Trustees Chair, Katie Gerski-Keller, will present items of interest to the board.
    Executive Director Report: Executive Director, Jennifer Hoover, will present items of interest to the board.

15. **Closed Session: Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation** – 7:00 p.m. *(K. Gerski-Keller)*
    Discussion/Action: The board will go into closed session to discuss significant exposure to litigation pursuant to § 54956.9(b): 2 cases.

16. **Recitation of the Motto of the Social Ethic** – 8:00 p.m.
    The healing social life is found
    When in the mirror of each human soul
    The whole community finds its reflection,
    And when, in the community,
    The virtue of each one is living.

17. **Adjournment of the meeting** – 8:00 p.m. *(K. Gerski-Keller)*

2025-26 Education Protection Account (EPA)

Golden Valley Charter Schools, Orchard
6550 Filbert Avenue
Orangevale, CA 95662
(916) 987-1490

RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF
Golden Valley Orchard School

WHEREAS, the voters approved Proposition 30 on November 6, 2012, adding Article XIII, Section 36 to the California Constitution effective November 7, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of Article XIII, Section 36(e) create in the State General Fund an Education Protection Account to receive and disburse revenues as prescribed therein; and

WHEREAS, before June 30 of each year, the governing board of each local educational agency is required to determine and adopt the use of EPA funds for the subsequent fiscal year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Governing Board of Golden Valley Orchard School hereby determines that the Education Protection Account funds expected to be received for fiscal year 2025-26 in the approximate amount of **$59,092** will be used solely for instructional purposes and not for administrative salaries or other administrative costs.

In fiscal year 2024-25 the school received **$54,498** in Education Protection Account (EPA) Funding. These funds are expected to be spent exclusively on certificated teacher salaries. Final actual expenditures will be reflected in the school's annual EPA report and website posting once year-end financials are finalized.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a meeting of the Governing Board of Golden Valley Orchard School on _____, 2026.

Board Chair, Golden Valley Orchard School

2025-26 Education Protection Account (EPA)

Golden Valley River School
9601 Lake Natoma Drive
Orangevale, CA 95662
(916) 987-6141

RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF
Golden Valley River School

WHEREAS, the voters approved Proposition 30 on November 6, 2012, adding Article XIII, Section 36 to the California Constitution effective November 7, 2012; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of Article XIII, Section 36(e) create in the State General Fund an Education Protection Account to receive and disburse revenues as prescribed therein; and

WHEREAS, before June 30 of each year, the governing board of each local educational agency is required to determine and adopt the use of EPA funds for the subsequent fiscal year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Governing Board of Golden Valley River School hereby determines that the Education Protection Account funds expected to be received for fiscal year 2025-26 in the approximate amount of **$1,236,951** will be used solely for instructional purposes and not for administrative salaries or other administrative costs.

In fiscal year 2024-25 the school received **$972,276** in Education Protection Account (EPA) Funding. These funds are expected to be spent exclusively on certificated teacher salaries. Final actual expenditures will be reflected in the school's annual EPA report and website posting once year-end financials are finalized.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a meeting of the Governing Board of Golden Valley River School on _____, 2026.

Board Chair, Golden Valley River School

Golden Valley Charter Schools
Meeting of the Board of Trustees
9601 Lake Natoma Dr.
Orangevale, CA 95662

October 14, 2026

Regular Meeting Minutes

1. **Vice Chair Meredith Willsen called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.**

2. **Roll Call** –
Board Members Present: Meredith Willsen, Jessica Crew, James Stark, Marcus Neal, Julia Koch
Board Members Absent: Katie Gerski-Keller, Ekaterina Khmelniker
Guests: Brittany Galles, Jennifer Hoover, Becky Page (remote), Ryan Sutton, Mindy Kiel, Sarah Chase, Nikki Freitas

3. **Board Member Exigencies and Remote Attendance** –
Action: Shall the board approve any board members to participate in this board meeting from a remote location due to just cause exceptions per SB 707?
Information: Members must publicly disclose at the meeting before any action is taken, whether any other individuals 18 years of age or older are present in the room at the remote location with the member, and if so, the general nature of the member's relationship with any such individuals; and ensure their meeting participation using both visual and audio technology.

TABLED. NO ACTION.

4. **James read the Charity Virtue Card.**

5. **Public Comment** –
Bri D'Agostini made a public comment regarding Human Resources, staffing pertaining to Golden Valley Orchard School (GVOS) and appreciation to new board members.

Vice Chair Meredith Willsen closed public comment at 5:07 p.m.

6. **Minutes Approval –**
It was moved by James Stark and seconded by Jessica Crew that the Board approve the September 9, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes.

(Ayes: 5, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

7. **Declaration of Need** –
Nikki Freitas presented the Declaration of Need for Fully Qualified Educators. It was recommended that the Governing Board of Trustees approve the Declaration of Need for Fully Qualified Educators and authorize the submission of an application to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) for an Emergency Cross-cultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD) Permit for Alfred Lacoste.

It was moved by Julia Koch and seconded by James Stark that the Board approve the Declaration of Need for an Emergency Cross-cultural, Language, and Academic Development (CLAD)/English Learner Authorization Permit for Alfred (AJ) Lacoste for submission to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).
(Ayes: 5, Noes: 0, Abstain: 0)

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8. **Employee Benefit Contributions –**
Nikki Freitas presented employee benefit contributions for Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS) for the 2026-2027 school year. The 2026 benefits renewal is primarily driven by a 9.9% increase in medical premiums, resulting in an estimated annual cost increase of $39,271 (9.3%) if all current carriers were renewed as presented. GVCS will maintain CaliforniaChoice medical coverage while transitioning dental coverage from Mutual of Omaha to Aflac to help manage costs and streamline benefits administration. Voluntary life insurance will also be added to Aflac's employee-paid voluntary benefits offerings at no additional cost to GVCS. The recommendation is to maintain current employer contributions at $550 for employees, $600 for employees plus dependents, and $650 for employees plus family.

James asked about the cost difference between Mutual of Omaha and Aflac dental coverage. Nikki explained that Aflac offers improved coverage, both in-network and out-of-network, with the overall cost difference largely offset by the increase in medical premiums. Nikki also reviewed the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) benefits, explaining eligibility for employees.

Jessica asked about increasing tier contribution amounts when annual increases occur; Nikki explained that these amounts are unknown until the next year's annual increase amounts become available.

The board would like to inquire about any potential options for hybrid Medicare plans, dependent care, daycare, elder care and eligibility inquiries surrounding age brackets. Nikki advised she will investigate potential options and provide an update in a follow up email to board members. James also offered to connect with Nikki on FSA options for offset plans.

9. **Conflict Resolution Committee –**
Meredith nominated GVCS parent Jamie Larson to the Conflict Resolution Committee.

It was moved by James Stark and seconded by Jessica Crew that the Board approve to appoint Jamie Larson to the Conflict Resolution Committee for the 2026-2027 school year.

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 1, M. Willsen)

Meredith nominated GVCS faculty member Brianne Hanley to the Conflict Resolution Committee.

It was moved by James Stark and seconded by Jessica Crew that the Board approve to appoint Brianne Hanley to the Conflict Resolution Committee for the 2026-2027 school year.

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 1, M. Willsen)

Meredith Willsen withdrew from serving on the Conflict Resolution Committee for the 2026-2027 school year.

Julia Koch nominated GVCS board member Jessica Crew to the Conflict Resolution Committee.

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It was moved by Julia Koch and seconded by James Stark that the Board approve to appoint Jessica Crew to the Conflict Resolution Committee for the 2026-2027 school year.

(Ayes: 4, Noes: 0, Abstain: 1, J. Crew)

10. **Attendance Policy (First Read) –**
Jennifer Hoover presented the revised Attendance Policy for GVCS. Jennifer highlighted areas within the policy including:
    1. The process for students who are not in attendance at the beginning of the year
    2. An involuntary removal process
    3. Language regarding referral back to the district attorney
    4. Addition of vacation time and not school time
    5. Strengthened language surrounding independent study
    6. Multiple school enrollments
    7. A standard nondiscrimination disclaimer

    The following were recommendations for revisions to the Attendance Policy:
    1. Include the name of the form when referencing specific forms to submit, i.e. an independent study request form when referring to a short-term independent study approval

    Julia made a comment regarding if grammar or spelling errors are noted within the policy while under revision, to notify Jennifer with section and page numbers.

    TABELED. NO ACTION.

11. **Suspension and Expulsion Policy (First Read) –**
Jennifer presented the revised Suspension and Expulsion Policy for GVCS. Jennifer explained the majority of revisions include the following:
    1. Updating special education and 504 students for more clarification
    2. Clarifying members of the administrative panel and steps of the process
    3. Involuntary removal section

    The following were recommendations for revisions to the Suspension and Expulsion Policy:
    1. The board has a responsibility or a designee for the rehabilitation development plan – the designee is going to be the Executive Director (pg. 16, Step 9)
    2. Clarify authority section i.e. teachers, admin – (pg. 2)
    3. Adding 'vapes' to tobacco usage – Jennifer will double check Ed Code to see if this has been updated but believes it is clarified; this section was pulled from Ed Code (pg. 3)

    TABELED. NO ACTION.

12. **Transitional Kindergarten Teachers Policy (First Read) –**
Jennifer presented the Transitional Kindergarten Teachers Policy for GVCS. This has been an administrative regulation prior, but factors have changed and this now needs to be a board

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approved policy. Jennifer reviewed the professional experience equivalency requirements for Transitional Kindergarten (TK) teachers established under Universal TK. The proposed clarification outlines qualifying professional experience that may be used in place of the required early childhood education (ECE) coursework. Specifically, individuals with at least one cumulative year of experience working with preschool-aged children may meet the equivalent of the 24 ECE unit requirement. The experience does not need to be consecutive.

TABELED. NO ACTION.

13. **Volunteer Policy (Frist Read) –**
    Jennifer presented the revised Volunteer Policy for GVCS. Jennifer explained revisions include:
    1. Addition of mandated reporting training
    2. Additional language around registering visitors and guests
    3. Pedagogical reasons for waiting period – open to additional revision suggestions

    The following were recommendations for revisions to the Suspension and Expulsion Policy:
    1. Under definitions for volunteer training – mention vaguely that there's additional screenings or training requirements in addition to the background check
    2. Chaperone agreement being separate of the volunteer agreement – Jennifer will double check the title for the exact language of the form (Chaperone and/or Volunteer agreement)
    3. Youth volunteers – clarify that they must be adult age, clarify if an adult can bring their kids or other younger kids and/or babies. Jennifer will examine the Volunteer Agreement to clarify this piece

    TABELED. NO ACTION.

14. **Faculty Reports –**
    Faculty Chair Report, Orchard: Orchard Faculty Chair, Jordan Watkins was not present at the meeting and her board report stands in the Board packet.

    Faculty Chair Report, River: River Faculty Chair, Sarah Chase, presented items of interest to the board.

15. **Executive Reports** –
    Board Chair Report: Board of Trustees Vice Chair, Meredith Wilsen, presented items of interest to the board.
    Executive Director Report: Executive Director, Jennifer Hoover, presented items of interest to the board.

16. **The Board recited the Motto of the Social Ethic**.

17. **Vice Chair Meredith Willsen adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Brittany Galles.

_____ _____

Meredith Willsen, Vice Chair **Date**

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GOLDEN VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOLS

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Excused Absences for Classroom Based Attendance

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law or Board policy.

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness, including an absence for the benefit of the student's mental or behavioral health;
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer;
3. Medical, dental, ophthalmologic, or chiropractic appointments;
4. ~~Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family~~For purposes of attending funeral services or grieving the death of an immediate family member or a person whom a parent or guardian determines to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered immediate family, for not more than five days per incident. (Education Code § 48205(a)(4).)~~:~~

~~a. Excused absence in this instance shall be limited to one day if the service is conducted in California or three days if the service is conducted out of state.~~

~~b.~~a. "Immediate family" shall be defined as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/ daughter-in-law, brother, sister or any relative living in the student's immediate household.

~~5.~~4. Jury duty in the manner provided by law;

~~6.~~5. Justifiable personal reasons, when accompanied by a written request by the parent or guardian and approved by the Principal or his/her designee, including, but not limited to:

   a. Appearance in court
   b. Attendance at a funeral service
   c. Observance of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion
   d. Attendance at religious retreats
   e. Attendance at an employment conference
   f. Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization

~~7.~~6. Serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Elections Code § 12302.

~~8.~~7. Spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family, who is an active duty of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position.

Absences granted pursuant to this section shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Principal.

~~9.~~8. If a student is the custodial parent of a child, his/her absence shall be excused when the child is ill or has a medical appointment during school hours, including absences to care for a sick child for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor.

~~10.~~9. For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.

~~11.~~10. For the purpose of participating in a cultural (habits, practices, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people) ceremony or event.

11. For the purpose of a middle school or high school student engaging in a civic or political event (voting, poll working, strikes, public commenting, candidate speeches, political or civic forums, and town halls), provided that the student notifies the school ahead of the absence. A middle or high school student who is absent under this bullet is required to be excused for only one schoolday-long absence per school year. A middle or high school student who is absent under this bullet may be permitted additional excused absences in the discretion of a school administrator.

12.

A. For any of the purposes described in clauses (i) to (iii), inclusive, if an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, has died, so long as the absence is not more than three days per incident.

(i) To access services from a victim services organization or agency.

(ii) To access grief support services.

(iii) To participate in safety planning or to take other actions to increase the safety of the pupil or an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent relocation.

~~12.~~B. Any absences beyond three days for the reasons described in subparagraph (A) shall be subject to the discretion of the school administrator, or their designee, pursuant to Section 48260

13. Due to the pupil's participation in military entrance processing.

~~13.~~14. Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator.

~~Attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed four hours per semester.~~Attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed one schoolday per semester. (Education Code § 48205(c).)

Students absent for the reasons deemed "excused" shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit therefor. The teacher of

the class from which a student is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the student missed during the absence.

Method of Verification

When students who have been absent return to school, they must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Written note from parent/guardian, parent representative, or student if 18 or older;
2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
    a. Name of student;
    b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative;
    c. Name of verifying employee;
    d. Date or dates of absence; and
    e. Reason for absence.
3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method, which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. A written recording shall be made, including information outlined above.
4. Physician's verification
    a. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, School staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
    b. When a student has had 14 ~~0~~ absences in the school year for illness verified by methods listed in #1-#3 above, any further absences for illness must be verified by a physician.

Insofar as class participation is an integral part of students' learning experiences, parents/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours.

At the beginning of each academic year, notifications shall be sent to the parents/guardians of all students and to all students in grades 7 through 12, informing them that school authorities may excuse any student from school to obtain confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent/guardian.

Students in grades K-6 should not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent except in cases of medical emergency. Students in grades 7-12 should not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent except in cases of medical emergency or confidential medical appointments.

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Unexcused Absences/Truancy for Classroom Based Attendance

~~The Executive Director, or designee, shall implement positive steps to reduce truancy. Students who are habitual truants or habitually insubordinate or disorderly during attendance at School may be referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency.~~The Executive Director or designee shall implement positive and documented steps to reduce truancy, identify attendance barriers, and connect students and families with appropriate school-based and community supports. Any law enforcement or juvenile court referral must meet applicable legal prerequisites.

~~When the student's attendance problems cannot be resolved or the student and parent/guardian have failed to respond to directives to correct the problem, a student who has been classified as truant may be referred to the district attorney or probation officer for truancy mediation. Further, the School attendance review board or probation officer may request a juvenile court petition on behalf of the student.~~When attendance concerns are unresolved despite documented school-level supports, the School may make referrals to the legally authorized attendance review, probation, or truancy mediation process as applicable, consistent with Education Code §§ 48260–48263.5 and other controlling law.

~~A student's grades may be affected by excessive unexcused absences in accordance with Board policy.~~ A student shall not receive a reduced grade solely because of an excused absence. Any academic consequences associated with missed work must comply with Education Code § 48205(b), other applicable law, and Board policy.

1. ~~Students shall be classified as truant if absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year, or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on five occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. Such students shall be reported to the Director or designee.~~ A student is initially classified as truant after three full schooldays of unexcused absence, or three occasions of an unexcused tardy or absence for more than a 30-minute period during the schoolday, or any combination thereof, in one school year. (Education Code § 48260.) The School shall document each qualifying occurrence and report or refer the classification as required by law.

   The parent/guardian of a student classified as a truant shall be notified of the following:

   a. The student is truant;
   b. The parent/guardian is obligated to compel the student to attend school;
   c. ~~The parent/guardian who fails to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction of the law and subject to prosecution;~~That alternative educational programs are available or applicable educational setting;
   d. The parent/guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the student's truancy;
   e. ~~Alternative educational programs are available through the School;~~That mental health and supportive services may be available to the student and family.
   f. ~~The student may be subject to arrest by a probation officer, a peace officer, a school administrator, an attendance supervisor or his/her designee under Education Code section 48264 if found away from home and absent from school without a valid excuse;~~ That school personnel are available to meet with the student and family to develop strategies to support attendance;
   g. ~~The student may be subject to suspension, restriction or delay of his/her driving privilege; and~~That research shows missing 10 percent of school for any reason

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can make it harder to read by third grade, succeed in middle school, and graduate from high school; and

h. It is recommended that the parent/guardian accompany the student to school and attend classes with the student for one day.

2. Upon his/her first truancy, a student and, as appropriate, the parent or legal guardian, may be requested to attend a meeting with a school counselor or other school designee to discuss the root causes of the attendance issue and develop a joint plan to improve the pupil's attendance.

~~2.~~3. Before further escalation, school staff shall attempt to identify attendance barriers and consider, as applicable, illness, disability-related needs, housing insecurity, transportation, family circumstances, and other relevant factors.

~~3.~~4. ~~Upon his/her second truancy within the same school year, a student may be given a written warning by a peace officer. A record of the written warning may be kept at the school for not less than two years or until the pupil graduates or transfers from the school. If the student transfers from that school, the record may be forwarded to the school receiving the student's school records. The student may also be assigned to an after-school or weekend study program within the county. If the student fails to successfully complete this study program, he/she shall be subject to item #4 below.~~ Any further intervention, peace officer involvement, juvenile court referral, or court-imposed remedy shall be governed by applicable law, including Education Code § 48264.5, and may not be represented as an automatic School-imposed consequence.

~~4.~~5. ~~Upon his/her third truancy within the same school year, the student will be classified as a habitual truant and may be referred to, and required to attend, an attendance review board or a truancy mediation program established by the district attorney or the probation officer, or a comparable program deemed acceptable by the Director or designee. If the student does not successfully complete the truancy mediation program or other similar program, he/she shall be subject to item #5 below.~~ Upon the statutory threshold for habitual truancy, the School may refer a student to an appropriate school attendance review board or legally authorized mediation process after making and documenting the conscientious effort to hold the required parent/student conference. (Education Code § 48262.)

~~5. Upon his/her fourth truancy within the same school year, the student may be within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court that may adjudge the pupil to be a ward of the court. If the student is adjudged a ward of the court, the student shall be required to do one of the following:~~

~~a. Performance at court-approved community services sponsored by either a public or private nonprofit agency for not less than 20 hours but not more than 40 hours over a period not to exceed 90 days, during a time other than the student's hours of school attendance or employment. The probation officer shall report to the court the failure of the student to comply with this paragraph.~~

~~b. Payment of a fine by the student of not more than fifty dollars ($50) for which a parent or legal guardian of the student may be jointly liable.~~

~~c. Attendance of a court-approved truancy prevention program.~~

~~d. Suspension or revocation of driving privileges. This subdivision shall apply only to a student who has attended a school attendance review board program, a program operated by a probation department acting as a school attendance review board, or a truancy mediation program pursuant to subdivision (c).~~

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Reports

The Executive Director, or designee, shall gather and transmit to the Board the number of referrals and types of referrals made to the school attendance review board and the number of requests for petitions made to the juvenile court.

Process for Students Who Are Not in Attendance at the Beginning of the School Year

1. Students who are not in attendance on the first (1st) day of the school year will be contacted by phone to ensure their intent to enroll in the School.

2. If an enrolled student has not attended by the third schoolday and the School has received no response, staff shall document reasonable outreach, seek to verify the student's enrollment and circumstances, and provide appropriate attendance supports. Nonattendance or nonresponse alone does not constitute an affirmative voluntary withdrawal. Any School-initiated removal must rest on an authorized basis and follow the Involuntary Removal Process below.

Involuntary Removal Process

No student shall be involuntarily removed by the School for any reason unless the parent or guardian of the student has been provided written notice of the School's intent to remove the student ("Involuntary Removal Notice"). The Involuntary Removal Notice must be provided to the parent or guardian no less than five (5) schooldays before the effective date of the proposed disenrollment date.

The written notice shall be in the native language of the student or parent/guardian or, for foster or homeless youth, the relevant educational rights holder. For foster youth, notice shall also be sent to the youth's attorney and county social worker. For an Indian child, notice shall also be sent to the tribal social worker and, if applicable, county social worker. All persons entitled to notice and to invoke hearing procedures under Education Code § 47605(c)(5)(J) shall receive notice of those rights. The Involuntary Removal Notice shall include:

1. The factual and policy basis for the proposed involuntary removal.
2. An explanation of the student's basic rights including the right to request a hearing before the effective date of the action.

The hearing shall be consistent with GVCS expulsion procedures. If the student's parent, guardian, or educational rights holder requests a hearing, the student shall remain enrolled and shall not be removed until the School issues a final decision. As used herein, "involuntarily removed" includes disenrolled, dismissed, transferred, or terminated, but does not include suspensions or expulsions pursuant to the School's suspension and expulsion policy.

Upon a parent's or guardian's request for a hearing, the School will provide notice of hearing consistent with its expulsion hearing process, through which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence, and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses,

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and at which the student has the right to bring legal counsel or an advocate. The notice of hearing shall be in the native language of the student or the student's parent or guardian or, if the student is a foster child or youth or a homeless child or youth, the student's educational rights holder and shall include a copy of the GVCS expulsion hearing process.

The hearing shall be conducted by a neutral and impartial decisionmaker. A timely hearing request made by any person statutorily entitled to initiate the procedure shall prevent removal pending the School's final decision. (Education Code § 47605(c)(5)(J).)

If the parent/guardian is nonresponsive to the Involuntary Removal Notice, the student will be disenrolled as of the effective date set forth in the Involuntary Removal Notice. If the parent/guardian timely requests a hearing but does not appear at the scheduled hearing after receiving proper notice, the School may proceed with the hearing in the parent/guardian's absence and issue a final written decision based upon the evidence presented.

If as a result of the hearing the student is disenrolled, notice will be sent to the student's last known school district of residence within thirty (30) calendar days.

A hearing decision not to disenroll the student does not prevent the School from making a similar recommendation in the future should student truancy continue or reoccur.

Before considering attendance-based involuntary removal, the School shall review potentially protected reasons for nonattendance, including disability-related barriers, legally excused absences, homelessness, foster placement, and required IEP or Section 504 services or accommodations. Any required educational team review or evaluation shall occur before a decision that would circumvent applicable rights. The School shall not use attendance enforcement to deny a free appropriate public education.

Referral to the District Attorney

It is the School's intent to identify and remove all barriers to the student's success, and the School will explore every possible option to address student attendance issues with the family. For any unexcused absence, the School may refer the family to appropriate school-based and/or social service agencies.

A referral to the District Attorney, probation office, attendance review board, or juvenile court may occur only where authorized by applicable law and after the required statutory prerequisites, notices, interventions, and documentation have been satisfied. A missed School Attendance Review Team (SART) meeting alone does not automatically establish eligibility for a criminal referral. A school-level SART is distinct from a statutory School Attendance Review Board (SARB). The School shall document the particular statutory authority supporting any proposed referral. (See Education Code §§ 48260.6, 48263, 48263.5, 48291, as applicable.)

Vacation, Travel, and Extended Absences

Families are strongly encouraged to schedule vacations, recreational travel, and other discretionary travel during school breaks and non-instructional days. Vacation or discretionary

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travel, including domestic or international travel, is not considered an excused absence unless the absence independently qualifies as an excused absence under applicable law or is otherwise authorized by a school administrator.

A family anticipating an absence due to travel may request Short-Term Independent Study in advance in accordance with the Golden Valley Charter Schools Independent Study Policy and procedures. A request for Short-Term Independent Study does not guarantee approval. Approval shall be based on applicable law, the School's Independent Study Policy, the student's circumstances, and the School's ability to provide an appropriate independent study program.

Travel outside California or outside the United States does not, by itself, prevent a student from participating in an otherwise approved independent study program. Students participating in Short-Term Independent Study while traveling remain subject to all applicable independent study requirements, including completion and submission of assigned work and return to classroom-based instruction on the date specified in the independent study agreement.

A student will not be automatically disenrolled solely because the student is traveling outside California or the United States or because the student has reached the maximum duration permitted for Short-Term Independent Study. If a student remains absent after an approved Short-Term Independent Study period has ended, fails to return to classroom-based instruction as scheduled, or accumulates extended unexcused absences without an approved educational arrangement, the School shall implement appropriate attendance interventions consistent with this policy.

Continued nonattendance following such interventions may constitute grounds for involuntary removal when authorized by the School's charter, Board-approved policies, and applicable law. Any involuntary removal shall be conducted pursuant to the Involuntary Removal Process set forth in this policy.

Independent Study

All attendance for independent study programs shall be in accordance with current law, regulations, and the School's Board-approved Independent Study Policy.

Short-Term Independent Study is an educational arrangement and is not an excused-absence designation. Requests must be made and approved in accordance with the School's established procedures before the absence begins, except where otherwise permitted by law.

The School may establish reasonable eligibility requirements, procedural requirements, and maximum durations for Short-Term Independent Study consistent with applicable law. Approval of one period of Short-Term Independent Study does not obligate the School to approve additional or extended periods.

A student participating in Short-Term Independent Study is expected to return to classroom-based instruction on the date established in the independent study agreement. Failure to complete the requirements of the independent study agreement or failure to return following the approved

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period may result in attendance interventions and other action consistent with applicable law and School policy.

All attendance for independent study programs shall be in accordance with current law and regulations.

Multiple School Enrollments (Concurrent Enrollments)

California does not permit a student to maintain concurrent primary enrollment in more than one public school or educational program where such enrollment would result in duplicative enrollment or attendance reporting. Parents/guardians are responsible for promptly notifying the Charter School if a student enrolls in another school.

If the School determines that an enrolled student is concurrently enrolled in another public school in a manner inconsistent with applicable law or the School's admissions and attendance requirements, the School shall contact the parent/guardian to clarify the student's enrollment status. Any school-initiated disenrollment shall be processed in accordance with the Involuntary Removal Process in this policy, unless the parent/guardian affirmatively withdraws the student.

Non-Discrimination

These policies will be enforced fairly, uniformly, and consistently without regard to the characteristics listed in Education Code section 220 (actual or perceived disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Penal Code section 422.55, including immigration status, pregnancy, or association with an individual who has any of the aforementioned characteristics).

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GOLDEN VALLEY
CHARTER SCHOOLS

PUPIL SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY

I. Introduction

This Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy (the "Policy") for Golden Valley Charter Schools ("GVCS") has been established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students. When the Policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. At the same time, GVCS intends to provide effective interventions for pupils who engage in acts of problematic behavior to help them change their behavior and avoid exclusion from GVCS.

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently amongst all students. The Policy will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook and will clearly describe discipline expectations. The Student Services Coordinator shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline policies and procedures. The notice shall state that this Policy is available on request at the school office.

Discipline includes, but is not limited to, advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, detention during and after school hours, community service on or off campus, the use of alternative educational environments, suspension and expulsion. Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student. For purposes of the Policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of reasonable force necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

A student has the right to be free from the use of seclusion and behavioral restraints of any form imposed as a means of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation by staff. This right includes, but is not limited to, the right to be free from the use of a drug administered to the student in order to control the student's behavior or to restrict the student's freedom of movement, if that drug is not a standard treatment for the student's medical or psychiatric condition. School staff may use seclusion or a behavior restraint only to control behavior that poses a clear and present danger of serious physical harm to the pupil or others that cannot be immediately prevented by a response that is less restrictive. School staff shall avoid, whenever possible, the use of seclusion or behavioral restraint techniques.

School staff shall not do any of the following:

- Use seclusion or behavioral restraint for the purpose of coercion, discipline, convenience, or retaliation.
- Use locked seclusion, unless it is in a facility otherwise licensed or permitted by state law to use a locked room.
- Use a physical restraint technique that obstructs a pupil's respiratory airway or impairs the pupil's breathing or respiratory capacity, including techniques in which a staff member places pressure on a pupil's back or places his or her body weight against the pupil's torso or back.

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- Use a behavioral restraint technique that restricts breathing, including, but not limited to, using a pillow, blanket, carpet, mat, or other item to cover a pupil's face.
- Place a pupil in a facedown position with the pupil's hands held or restrained behind the pupil's back.
- Use behavioral restraint for longer than is necessary to contain the behavior that poses a clear and present danger of serious physical harm to the pupil or others.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom GVCS has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act ("IDEA") or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is accorded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education students except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. GVCS will follow Section 504, the IDEA, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA") and all applicable federal and state laws when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom GVCS has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according to due process to such students.

When a pupil's behavior impedes the pupil's learning or that of others, the IEP team shall consider positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies under 34 C.F.R. § 300.324(a)(2)(i). School personnel shall implement the pupil's IEP or Section 504 plan, consider whether a behavioral assessment or team meeting is appropriate when concerns arise, and document interventions. This provision does not prohibit lawful immediate safety measures or disciplinary action.

II. Suspension

A. Definition

Suspension is the temporary removal of a pupil from class instruction for adjustment or disciplinary reasons. Suspension does not mean any of the following:

- Reassignment to another education program or class at GVCS where the pupil will receive continuing instruction for the length of day prescribed by the Principal for pupils of the same grade level;
- Referral to a certificated employee designated by the principal to advise pupils;
- Removal from the class, but without reassignment to another class for the remainder of the class period without sending the pupil to the principal or designee.

Suspended students shall be excluded from all GVCS and School-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension.

GVCS shall consider suspension from GVCS only when other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct or where the student's presence would constitute a danger to persons or property or seriously disrupt the educational process.

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B. Authority

The Principal or his/her designee may suspend a student from class, classes or the school for a period not to exceed five days. The Principal or his/her designee may extend a student's suspension pending the final decision by the Board of Trustees of GVCS on a recommendation for expulsion. Such extended suspension should not exceed 10 days, unless specific procedural safeguards are met. Those are identified below.

On a recommendation for expulsion, the Board of Trustees may suspend a special education student being considered for expulsion in accordance with the laws relating to expulsion of special education students.

A pupil may not be suspended or expelled for any of the acts enumerated in this Policy unless the act is related to school activity or school attendance of GVCS. A pupil may be suspended or expelled for acts that are enumerated in this Policy and related to school activity or attendance that occur at any time, including, but not limited to any of the following:

- While on school grounds
- While going to or coming from school
- During the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus
- During, or while going to or coming from a school sponsored activity
- All acts related to school activity or school attendance occurring within GVCS

C. Grounds

The Principal may use his/her discretion to provide alternatives to suspension or expulsion recommendations that are age appropriate and designed to address and correct the student's specific misbehavior. Alternatively, students may be suspended or recommended for expulsion for any of the following acts (whether completed, attempted or threatened) when it is determined the pupil:

- Caused physical injury to another person or willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense
- Possessed, sold or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from an authorized certificated school employee, with the Principal or designee's written concurrence
- Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of, any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code sections 11053-11058 (including, but not limited to, opiates, hallucinogenic substances, stimulants, depressants and narcotic drugs), alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind.
- Unlawfully offered, arranged or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code sections 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented the same as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant

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- Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property
- Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property (as used in this policy, "school property" includes but is not limited to electronic files and databases)
- Possessed or used tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, betel and e-cigarettes, whether or not they contain tobacco. However, this section does not prohibit the use or possession by a pupil of his or her own prescription products.
- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity
- Unlawfully possessed or offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 11014.5
- Knowingly received stolen school property or private property
- Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e., a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm
- Committed a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code sections 261, 266c, 286, 288, 289, or former section 288a, or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code section 243.4
- Harassed, threatened or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness
- Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell or sold the prescription drug Soma
- Engaged in, or attempted to engage in, hazing. "Hazing" means a method of initiation or pre-initiation into a pupil organization or body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to a former, current or prospective pupil. "Hazing" does not include athletic events or school-sanctioned events.
- Engaged in an act of bullying. "Bullying" means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act originated on or off the schoolsite, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils directed toward one or more pupils that has or can be reasonably predicated to have the effect of one or more the of the following:
    - Placing a reasonable pupil(s) in fear of harm to that pupil(s)' person or property;
    - Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantially detrimental effect on the pupil's physical or mental health;
    - Causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with the pupil's academic performance;
    - Causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with the pupil's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Commented [JH1]: Under California Education Code, students may be suspended for vaping, but the applicable code section depends on whether the vape contains nicotine, THC (marijuana), or another substance.
Vaping nicotine: Education Code § 48900(h)
EC § 48900(h) identifies the possession or use of tobacco or nicotine products as grounds for suspension.
This includes:
- Possession of a nicotine vape or electronic cigarette.
- Using a nicotine vape on campus.
- Possession of products containing tobacco or nicotine.

Important distinction: A student does not have to be caught actively vaping. Possession of a nicotine product can independently establish a disciplinary violation.
The California Department of Education also clarifies that Education Code § 48901 prohibits electronic vaping devices that deliver nicotine or other vaporized liquids, even when the liquid does not contain nicotine.
Vaping marijuana or THC: Education Code § 48900(c)
EC § 48900(c) addresses students who unlawfully possess, use, furnish, or are under the influence of a controlled substance or intoxicant.
If a student possesses or uses a THC vape, this is generally the applicable suspension category.
This distinction is significant because violations under § 48900(c) are treated differently under the rules governing first-offense suspensions.

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- An electronic act, for purposes of the immediately preceding paragraph, means the transmission, by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone, or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager, of a communication, including but not limited to, any of the following:
    - A message, text, sound, video, or image.
    - A post on a social network Internet Web site including, but not limited to:
        - Posting to or creating a burn page. "Burn page" means an Internet Web site created for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed above.
        - Creating a credible impersonation of another actual pupil for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed above. "Credible impersonation" means to knowingly and without consent impersonate a pupil for the purpose of bullying the pupil and such that another pupil would reasonably believe, or has reasonably believed, that the pupil was or is the pupil who was impersonated.
        - Creating a false profile for the purpose of having one or more of the effects listed above. "False profile" means a profile of a fictitious pupil or a profile using the likeness or attributes of an actual pupil other than the pupil who created the false profile.
    - An act of cyber sexual bullying.
        - For purposes of this section, "cyber sexual bullying" means the dissemination of, or the solicitation or incitement to disseminate, a photograph or other visual recording by a pupil to another pupil or to school personnel by means of an electronic act that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the effects described above. A photograph or other visual recording shall include the depiction of a nude, semi-nude or sexually explicit photograph or other visual recording of a minor where the minor is identifiable from the photograph, visual recording or other electronic act.
        - Cyber sexual bullying does not include a depiction, portrayal, or image that has any serious literary, artistic, educational, political or scientific value or that involves athletic events or school-sanctioned activities.
    - An electronic act shall not constitute pervasive conduct solely on the basis that it has been transmitted on the Internet or is currently posted on the Internet.
    - A "reasonable pupil" means a pupil, including, but not limited to, an exceptional needs pupil, who exercises average care, skill and judgment in conduct for a person that age, or for a person of that age with the pupil's exceptional needs.
- Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property. For the purpose of this section, "terroristic threat" shall include any statement, whether written or oral, by a person who willfully threatens to commit a crime which will result in death, great bodily injury to another person, or property damage in excess of $1,000.00, with the specific intent that the statement is to be taken as a threat, even if there is no intent of actually carrying it out, which, on its face and under the circumstances in which it is made, is so unequivocal, unconditional, immediate and specific as to convey to the person threatened, a gravity of purpose and an immediate prospect

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of execution of the threat, and thereby causes that person reasonably to be in sustained fear for his or her own safety or for his or her immediate family's safety, or for the protection of charter school property, or the personal property of the person threatened or his/her immediate family.

- For students in grades 4 to 12, committed sexual harassment
- Caused or participated in an act of hate violence
- Carried, possessed, sold or otherwise furnished an electronic signaling device
- Committed vandalism/malicious mischief
- Violated academic ethics
- Falsified or misinterpreted notes or phone calls of parents or guardians
- Falsely activated fire alarm
- Habitually violated the dress code
- Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment
- Discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, and/or bullied any person or groups of persons based on the following actual or perceived characteristics: those set forth in Penal Code section 422.55, including immigration status, and Education Code section 220, disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or association with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. This policy applies to all acts related to school activity or school attendance occurring within the school.
- A pupil who aids or abets, as defined in section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person may be subject to suspension, but not expulsion, pursuant to this policy, except that a pupil who has been adjudged by a juvenile court to have committed, as an aider and abettor, a crime of physical violence in which the victim suffered great bodily injury or serious bodily injury may be recommended for expulsion.

A student in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 8, inclusive, shall not be suspended on the basis of having disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties (the "Act"), and those Acts shall not constitute grounds for a student enrolled in kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12 to be recommended for expulsion.

A certificated or classified employee may refer a student to school administrators for appropriate and timely in-school interventions or supports from the list of other means of correction specified in Education Code section 48900.5(b) for any of the Acts.

A school administrator shall, within five school days, document the actions taken in response to the referral identified above and place that documentation in the student's record to be available for access, to the extent permissible under state and federal law. The school administrator shall, by the end of the fifth business day, also inform the referring certificated or classified employee, verbally or in writing, what actions were taken and, if none, the rationale used for not providing any appropriate or timely in-school interventions or supports.

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A suspension or expulsion shall not be imposed against a student based solely on the fact that they are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from school activities.

~~The above list is not exhaustive and depending upon the offense, a pupil may be suspended or recommended for expulsion for misconduct not specified above.~~ Only misconduct identified in this Policy and authorized by the GVCS charter petition and applicable law may serve as grounds for suspension or expulsion. Behavior concerns not constituting a listed offense shall be addressed through appropriate non-exclusionary interventions and other lawful measures.

D. Procedures Required to Suspend

Step One

The Principal or designee shall investigate the incident and determine whether or not it merits suspension.

Searches: In order to investigate an incident, a student's attire,[1] personal property, vehicle or school property, including books, desks, school lockers, computers and other electronic devices, may be searched by a Principal or designee who has reasonable suspicion that a student has violated or is violating the law or the rules of the school. *Illegally possessed items shall be confiscated and turned over to the police.*

Step Two

Unless a student poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, a suspension will be preceded by an informal conference between the Principal and the student in which the student shall be orally informed of the reason for the suspension, the evidence against that student, the other means of correction that were attempted before the suspension and be given the opportunity to present informal proof of that student's side of the story. If the student poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, the informal conference will be held within two school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason, including, but not limited to, hospitalization or detention in a correctional facility.

At the time of the suspension, a GVCS employee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, by telephone, by email or in person to inform that person of the suspension and the reasons therefor and the employee may state the date and time when the student may return to school.

If a student is suspended without the informal conference, both the student and the parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, will be notified of a student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference.

[1] This does not include removing clothing to permit visual inspection of the under clothing, breasts, buttocks or genitalia of the pupil.

The parent or guardian of a student, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, shall respond without delay to a request from school officials to attend a conference regarding the student's behavior.

Penalties shall not be imposed on a student for failure of the student's parent or guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, to attend a conference with school officials. Reinstatement of the suspended student shall not be contingent upon attendance by the student's parent or guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, at the conference.

Step Three

The Principal or designee determines the appropriate length of the suspension (up to 5 days). When suspensions do not include a recommendation for expulsion, they shall not exceed 5 consecutive school days per suspension.

Step Four

The Principal or designee fills out a Notice of Suspension Form, a copy of which will be sent to the student's parent/guardian and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, and to the student. A copy of this form is also placed in the student's cumulative file at GVCS. The Notice of Suspension Form shall state the fact of suspension, its duration and the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may state the date and time when the student may return to school. The notice shall also state that if desired by the parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, a prompt meeting or hearing will be held at which the suspension may be discussed and at which the student may be present and afforded an opportunity to present informal proof of his/her side of the case. Additionally, if GVCS officials wish to ask the parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request the parent/guardian to respond to such requests without delay.

Step Five

The Principal or designee determines whether the offense warrants a police report. The Principal or designee will report certain offenses to law enforcement authorities in accordance with Education Code section 48902.

When the Principal or designee releases a minor pupil to a peace officer for the purpose of removing the minor from the school premises, the Principal or designee shall take immediate steps to notify the parent, guardian or responsible relative of the minor regarding the release of the minor to the officer and

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regarding the place to which the minor is reportedly being taken, unless the minor has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse. Education Code § 48906.

Step Six

The Principal may require the student and his/her parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, to sign a contract that states the conditions that the student is expected to meet while at GVCS. Copies of the signed contract are kept by the school and given to the parent/guardian.

Step Seven

Upon the request of a parent/guardian/educational rights holder/student, and for foster children, their attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, a teacher shall provide to a student in any of grades 1 to 12 who has been suspended from GVCS for two or more schooldays, the homework that the pupil would otherwise have been assigned. If a homework assignment that is requested and turned into the teacher by the student either upon the student's return to school from suspension or within the timeframe originally prescribed by the teacher, whichever is later, is not graded before the end of the academic term, that assignment shall not be included in the calculation of the student's overall grade in the class.

Special Education and Section 504 Student Suspensions

When suspensions involve special education students or students with a 504 plan, a manifestation determination meeting shall be held no later than the 10th suspension day (whether consecutive or cumulative for the school year). The Principal or designee shall notify the student's special education teacher or regular education teacher when the student's cumulative days of suspension for that school year reaches eight. That teacher shall promptly notify the Director of Special Education of the need for the manifestation determination meeting. The manifestation determination meeting shall include the LEA, the parent, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, and relevant members of the student's IEP Team or 504 Plan Team (as determined by the parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, and the LEA).

The student shall be treated as a general education student for disciplinary purposes, except to the extent that educational services must continue, if at the manifestation determination meeting the following are both determined in the negative, after reviewing all relevant information in the student's file, including the student's IEP or 504 Plan, any teacher observations and any relevant information provided by the parents: 1) the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability under the IDEA or section 504; or 2) the conduct in question was the direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the IEP or 504 Plan. If it is determined at the manifestation determination meeting that 1) or 2) is answered in the affirmative, the conduct is deemed a manifestation of the disability.

If the conduct is deemed a manifestation of the disability, the IEP Team or 504 Plan Team must conduct a functional behavioral assessment (or other appropriate assessment for the 504 student), create a plan and implement it, or if the plan is preexisting, review it and modify it as necessary to address the behavior.

In the case of a manifestation of a disability, the student will be returned to the placement from which he/she was removed, unless the LEA and parent agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan or updated 504 Plan. For special education and 504 students, a new manifestation determination meeting is required for all proposed suspensions exceeding ten cumulative days in one school year.

The special education student may be removed from school to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability if the student: 1) carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of GVCS; 2) knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of GVCS; or 3) has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of GVCS.

E. Appeal Process

~~A student or the student's parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, may appeal those disciplinary actions, other than expulsion, imposed upon a student for his/her GVCS related offenses. Appeals must be made first in writing at GVCS level and should be directed to the Executive Director within 10 school days of GVCS sending the Notice of Suspension Form to the parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, and the student. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the appeal with a written response within ten school days of receiving the written appeal. After appeal at GVCS level, if further appeal is desired, the student or parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, should appeal in writing to the GVCS Board of Trustees within 10 school days of the date of GVCS level written response and should direct it to the chairman of the board for final resolution within 15 school days. If any appeal is denied, the student, his/her parent/guardian may place a written rebuttal to the action in the student's file.~~

A student or the student's parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, may appeal disciplinary actions, other than expulsion, imposed upon a student for GVCS-related offenses.

Appeals must first be submitted in writing at the GVCS level and directed to the Executive Director within 10 school days of GVCS sending the Notice of Suspension Form to the student and the parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social

worker. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the appeal through a written response within 10 school days of receiving the written appeal.

Following the GVCS-level appeal, if further review is desired, the student or parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, may submit a written appeal to the GVCS Board of Trustees within 10 school days of the date of the GVCS-level written response. The appeal shall be directed to the Board Chairperson for final resolution within 15 school days.

The appeal review shall be limited to disciplinary records, documentation, and other information directly relevant to the specific disciplinary action being appealed. This may include the incident report, the basis for the disciplinary decision, relevant witness statements, applicable school policies, and any relevant prior interventions or disciplinary history of the appealing student, to the extent permitted by law. Information that is unrelated to the disciplinary action shall not be considered in determining the outcome of the appeal.

All appeal proceedings, records, and disclosures shall comply with applicable federal and state student confidentiality and privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and applicable provisions of the California Education Code. Personally identifiable information concerning other students shall not be disclosed to the appealing student or their representatives unless authorized or required by law. When relevant documentation contains information about other students, GVCS shall redact or otherwise protect confidential information as required by law. Access to records shall be limited to individuals authorized to receive the information for purposes of the appeal, consistent with applicable law.

If an appeal is denied, the student or the student's parent/guardian may submit a written rebuttal to the disciplinary action for inclusion in the student's educational record.

III. Expulsion

A. Definition

Expulsion means involuntary disenrollment from the charter school.

B. Authority

A student may be expelled either by the Board of Trustees following a hearing before it or by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of an Administrative Panel ~~to be assigned by the Board of Trustees as needed~~. ~~The Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense.~~ An Administrative Panel shall conduct the hearing and make findings and a recommendation to the GVCS Board of Trustees. The Board shall make the final decision regarding expulsion. An expulsion determination shall be made by the Board of Trustees after a legally compliant hearing conducted by a neutral and impartial Administrative Panel or another. The Panel shall issue written findings and a recommendation; the Board shall make the final expulsion decision. An individual who materially investigated, prosecuted, or recommended the charge shall not act as the neutral adjudicator. The Executive Director shall communicate and implement the Board's final decision.

When an expulsion hearing is conducted by an Administrative Panel, the Panel shall consist of at least three neutral and impartial members. Panel members shall not include a member of the Board of Trustees, the student's teacher, any individual who participated materially in the investigation of the alleged misconduct, or any individual who participated in the decision to recommend the student for expulsion.

At least one member should have experience in school administration, student discipline, or student services. The Panel shall be presided over by a designated neutral hearing chairperson.

Following the hearing, the Administrative Panel shall prepare written findings of fact and a recommendation regarding expulsion for consideration by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall make the final determination regarding expulsion.

The Board of Trustees, upon voting to expel a pupil, may suspend the enforcement of the expulsion order for a period of not more than one calendar year and may, as a condition of the suspension of enforcement, assign the pupil to a school, class or program that is deemed appropriate for the rehabilitation of the pupil [or other conditions such as good behavior, attendance, etc.]. The rehabilitation program to which the pupil is assigned may provide for the involvement of the pupil's parent or guardian in his or her child's education in ways that are specified in the rehabilitation program. A parent or guardian's refusal to participate in the rehabilitation program shall not be considered in the Board of Trustees' determination as to whether the pupil has satisfactorily completed the rehabilitation program.

C. Grounds for Expulsion

Category I Expulsions – Mandatory Recommendation for Expulsion

The Principal shall immediately suspend a student, and recommend for expulsion, a student who has committed one or more of the following acts:

- Possessing, selling or otherwise furnishing a firearm when a school employee verifies firearm possession, unless the student obtained prior written permission to possess the firearm from a certificated school employee, which is concurred in by the principal or his/her designee
- Brandishing a knife at another person
- Unlawfully selling a controlled substance
- Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery
- Possession of an explosive

Category II Expulsions – Recommendation for Expulsion Required, Unless Inappropriate Under the Circumstances

A student who has committed one of the following acts of misconduct must be recommended for expulsion, unless the Principal determines that expulsion should not be recommended under the circumstances or that an alternative means of correction would address the conduct.

- Causing physical injury to another person, except in self-defense

- Possession of any knife, explosive or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student
- Unlawful possession of any controlled substance, except for the first offense for the possession of not more than one ounce of marijuana, other than concentrated cannabis or for possession of over-the-counter medication for use by the pupil for medical purposes or medication prescribed for the pupil by a physician
- Robbery or extortion
- Assault or battery on a school employee

Category III Expulsions – Discretionary Expulsion Recommendation

In the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee, any act that warrants suspension may warrant expulsion. Additionally, a student may be expelled for misconduct that is not listed above if the acts disrupt and/or present ongoing health and/or safety concerns, or the student has repeatedly engaged in the misconduct.

In no event, however, will a student be expelled for disrupting school activities or otherwise willfully defying the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

Other Involuntary Removal

GVCS shall not involuntarily disenroll, dismiss, transfer, terminate enrollment, or otherwise remove a pupil for reasons other than suspension or expulsion except where authorized by the approved charter and applicable law. GVCS shall not encourage a pupil to disenroll because of academic performance, disability, attendance, or the pupil's receipt of special education services. Before an authorized involuntary removal, GVCS shall provide written notice at least five schooldays before the effective date in the parent's or educational rights holder's native language, or another required accessible form, specifying the reasons and right to initiate hearing procedures pursuant to Education Code § 47605(c)(5)(J). The notice shall also be provided to additional persons entitled to notice by law. If a hearing is timely initiated, the pupil shall remain enrolled until the final determination. The hearing shall be heard by a neutral officer and afford the pupil the statutory opportunity to present evidence and witnesses, confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and be represented by counsel or advocate. Before an attendance-related involuntary removal involving a pupil with a known or suspected disability, GVCS shall assess whether the circumstances trigger IDEA child-find, evaluation, IEP implementation, IEP-team review, Section 504 evaluation or accommodation, or other obligations; complete applicable required procedures; and document the individualized decision. Neither truancy nor disability-related attendance barriers alone dispense with those safeguards.

D. Procedures to Expel a Student

Step One

The Principal investigates the incident and determines whether the offense results in a suspension. If so, the Principal follows the procedures to suspend the student as outlined above.

Step Two

In the discretion of the Executive Director, a student's suspension may be extended pending expulsion. If such extended suspension exceeds 10 days, and for any suspension exceeding 10 days, the following procedures must be followed: 1) The Executive Director shall provide timely, written notice of the charges against the student and an explanation of the student's basic rights; 2) GVCS will provide a hearing adjudicated by a neutral officer within a reasonable number of days at which the student has a fair opportunity to present testimony, evidence and witnesses and confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses, and at which the pupil has the right to bring legal counsel. At this hearing, it will be determined whether the presence of the student at GVCS would cause a danger to persons or property or a threat of disrupting the instructional process pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

If the proposed extended suspension is under 10 days, a meeting is held within 5 school days of the student's suspension to extend the suspension. The student and his/her parent/guardian are invited to attend this meeting with the Executive Director or his/her designee.

At this meeting, the offense and the repercussions are discussed. An extension of the suspension may be granted only if the Executive Director or his/her designee has determined, after the meeting, that the presence of the student at GVCS would cause a danger to persons or property or a threat of disrupting the instructional process. If the student has committed an offense that requires a mandatory expulsion recommendation, this is discussed so that it is understood by all parties. The purpose of the meeting is to decide upon the extension of the suspension order and may be held in conjunction with the initial meeting with the parents after the suspension.

Step Three

GVCS shall send a letter to the student and parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, regarding the expulsion hearing. The expulsion hearing shall be held no later than 30 school days of the date that expulsion is recommended, unless a brief extension is requested by the student or his/her parent/guardian.

The letter shall be sent via certified mail to the student and parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, to the address reflected in the pupil's student file at least 10 calendar days before the date of the hearing. The letter shall notify the student and parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker, when and where the expulsion hearing will take place and the rights of the student with respect to the hearing, including:

- The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
- A statement of the facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
- A copy of GVCS's disciplinary rules relating to the alleged violation;

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- Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at GVCS to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;
- The opportunity for the student or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person and/or to employ and be represented by counsel or an advocate;
- The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
- The opportunity to present testimony, evidence and witnesses and confront and question witnesses who testify at the hearing; EC 47605(b)(5)(J).
- The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf, including witness testimony.

Step Four

The Executive Director shall maintain documents that may be used at the hearing and make them available for review by the student and/or parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker. These papers may include, but are not limited to, the following: A record of the student's attendance and grades, a record of previous infractions, a statement of the facts surrounding the case made by a principal; a statement of the facts surrounding the case made by a witness, a law enforcement agency's report and any other relevant matter.

Step Five

An expulsion hearing shall be held before the GVCS Board of Trustees. A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and a complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

While the technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the ~~GVCS Board of Trustees~~ Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense.

Findings of fact shall be based solely on evidence produced at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay evidence, although sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses who are determined by the GVCS Board of Trustees that disclosure of their identity or live testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

~~If, due to a written request by the expelled pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code section 48900, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public.~~

Allegations Relating to Sexual Assault or Sexual Battery

If, due to a written request by the expelled pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code section 48900(n), a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are no alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm, including, but not limited to, videotaped deposition or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing room by means of closed-circuit television.

In addition, in hearings that include allegations of committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery as defined in Education Code section 48900(n), evidence of specific instances, of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is to be presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the person conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence to be heard. Before the person conducting the hearing makes the determination on whether extraordinary circumstances exist requiring that specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct be heard, the complaining witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, guardian, legal counsel or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

Step Six

The decision of the ~~GVCS Board of Trustees~~ Administrative Panel shall be in the form of a written recommendation, with findings of fact, to the Board of Trustees who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The final decision by the ~~Executive Director~~ GVCS Board of Trustees shall be made within 10 days following the conclusion of the hearing, or within 40 school days after the date of the pupil's removal from GVCS for the incident for which the recommendation for expulsion is made. If GVCS Board of Trustees decides not to recommend expulsion, the pupil shall be reinstated and permitted to return to classroom programs. The decision not to recommend expulsion shall be final.

~~**Step Seven**~~

~~The Executive Director, or designee, following a decision of the Board of Trustees to expel a student, shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the GVCS Board of Trustees' findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian, and for foster children, their educational rights holder, attorney, and county social worker, and for American Indian children, their tribal social worker and, if applicable, their county social worker. The notice shall include the following:~~

- ~~Notice of the specific offense committed by the student;~~
- ~~Notice of the right to appeal the expulsion to the County Board of Education. If that Board does not hear such appeals, the student may submit a written objection and request for reconsideration to the school's Board of Directors within 10 days. Decisions of the Board of Directors shall be final.~~
- ~~Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status within the charter school~~

~~Within 30 days of the decision to expel, the Executive Director shall send written notice of the decision to expel to the student's district of residence, the County Office of Education and the charter granting district (if different than the student's district of residence). This notice shall include the student's name and the specific expellable offense committed by the student.~~

Step ~~Eight~~ Seven

Expelled students are responsible for seeking alternative education programs, including but not limited to, programs within the County or their school district of residence.

Step ~~Nine~~ Eight

The school shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the school site. Such records shall be made available for San Juan Unified School District's review upon request.

Students who are expelled from the charter school shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Board of Trustees, or its designee—the Executive Director, at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, a periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the school for readmission.

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be in the sole discretion of the Board of Trustees or its designee following a meeting with the Executive Director and the pupil and parent/guardian to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Executive Director shall make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees following the meeting regarding his/her determination. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon the school's capacity and any other admission requirements in effect at the time the student seeks admission or readmission.

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GOLDEN VALLEY
CHARTER SCHOOLS

TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS POLICY

Purpose

The Golden Valley Charter Schools ("GVCS") Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of ensuring that teachers assigned to Transitional Kindergarten ("TK") possess appropriate preparation and experience in early childhood education and child development.

The purpose of this policy is to establish the criteria by which GVCS may determine that a credentialed teacher's professional experience in a classroom setting with preschool-age children (ages 3-5) is comparable to the early childhood education or child development coursework required pursuant to Education Code Section 48000.

This policy applies to TK teacher qualification requirements associated with state apportionment and does not replace or modify credential requirements established by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing ("CTC").

Teacher Qualification Requirements

As a condition of receipt of state apportionment for TK pupils, GVCS shall ensure that a credentialed teacher who was first assigned to a TK classroom after July 1, 2015, satisfies at least one of the following requirements:

1. **Coursework**
   Completion of at least 24 semester units, or the equivalent quarter units, in early childhood education, child development, or a combination thereof, consistent with applicable state law.

2. **Child Development Permit or Early Childhood Education Credential**
   Possession of an applicable Child Development Teacher Permit or higher-level Child Development Permit, or an Early Childhood Education Specialist Credential issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

3. **Board-Approved Professional Experience Equivalency**
   Professional experience in a classroom setting with preschool-age children that GVCS determines and documents to be comparable to the 24 semester units of early childhood education or child development coursework described above, pursuant to the standards established in this policy.

Professional Experience Equivalency

For purposes of Education Code Section 48000(g)(4)(B), the Board determines that qualifying professional experience shall be considered comparable to 24 semester units of early childhood education or child development when the employee satisfies one of the following pathways:

A. **Full School Year of Professional Experience**
The employee has completed at least one full school year of substantially full-time professional experience working directly with preschool-age children (ages 3-5) in an instructional classroom setting.
Qualifying experience may include service as a credentialed teacher, lead teacher, assistant teacher, instructional assistant, or other instructional professional when the employee had regular and substantial responsibility for supporting the instruction, development, supervision, or care of preschool-age children.

B. **Equivalent Classroom Experience**
The employee has completed a minimum of 600 documented hours of direct instructional or developmental experience with preschool-age children in a qualifying classroom setting.

The experience may have been accumulated through more than one assignment or employer, provided that the total experience is verified and demonstrates substantial exposure to early childhood development and instruction.

C. **Combination of Coursework and Professional Experience**
When an employee has completed some, but fewer than 24, semester units of qualifying early childhood education or child development coursework, GVCS may recognize a combination of coursework and verified professional experience.

For purposes of determining equivalency under this pathway, each three semester units of coursework remaining toward the 24-unit requirement may be satisfied by at least 75 hours of qualifying professional experience with preschool-age children.

The Executive Director or designee may require additional experience or documentation when necessary to determine that the combined preparation is reasonably comparable to completion of 24 semester units of qualifying coursework.

<u>Qualifying Professional Experience</u>

Professional experience considered under this policy must involve substantial interaction with preschool-age children in a structured educational or child development environment.

Qualifying settings may include, but are not limited to:

- Public or private preschool programs;
- Licensed childcare and development centers;
- State preschool programs;
- Head Start programs;
- Transitional Kindergarten classrooms;
- Early childhood education programs operated by public schools, charter schools, nonprofit organizations, or private schools; and
- Other comparable early childhood classroom environments approved by the Executive Director or designee.

Experience must involve children who are predominantly preschool age. Experience exclusively involving elementary-age students shall not, by itself, qualify as professional experience with preschool-age children (age 3-5) for purposes of this policy.

Kindergarten or mixed-age classroom experience may be considered when the employee can document substantial and regular instructional responsibility for children who were preschool age during the period of service.

Documentation and Verification

An employee seeking qualification through the professional-experience equivalency pathway shall submit documentation sufficient for GVCS to verify the nature, duration, and setting of the experience.

Acceptable documentation may include:

- Employment verification letters;
- Contracts or personnel records;
- Job descriptions;
- Supervisor verification;
- Performance evaluations;
- Official service records;
- Classroom assignment records;
- Timesheets or experience logs; or
- Other documentation determined sufficient by the Executive Director or designee.

Documentation should identify, to the extent reasonably available:

1. The employer or educational program;
2. The employee's position and responsibilities;
3. The ages or grade levels of the children served;
4. The beginning and ending dates of service;
5. Whether the assignment was full-time or part-time;
6. The approximate number of hours or days of qualifying experience; and
7. The instructional or developmental nature of the employee's responsibilities.

GVCS Determination

The Executive Director, Human Resources Director, or designee shall review submitted documentation and determine whether the employee satisfies the criteria established by this policy.

The determination shall be documented in writing and maintained in the employee's personnel and/or credential assignment records.

Approval under this policy represents GVCS's determination of professional-experience equivalency pursuant to Education Code Section 48000(g)(4)(B). Because professional-experience equivalency is determined by the employing local educational agency, a determination made by another school district, charter school, or local educational agency shall not automatically establish equivalency for employment with GVCS.

Teachers Assigned to TK On or Before July 1, 2015

A credentialed teacher who was assigned to teach Transitional Kindergarten, including a combination TK/Kindergarten classroom, on or before July 1, 2015, is not subject to the additional requirements contained in Education Code Section 48000(g)(4).

Nothing in this policy prevents GVCS from considering additional education, preparation, or professional development in determining TK assignments.

Credential Requirements

Nothing in this policy authorizes an employee to serve in an assignment for which the employee does not possess an appropriate California teaching credential, permit, or other authorization required by law.

The Executive Director or designee shall ensure that TK teachers possess appropriate credentials and that assignments comply with applicable CTC requirements.

GOLDEN VALLEY
CHARTER SCHOOLS

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Children and schools gain a great deal when each part of a community comes together to support education. This is why the Golden Valley Charter Schools (GVCS) school administration and the Board of Trustees encourages parents/guardians and other members of the community to share their time, knowledge, and abilities with our schools. Volunteers help to enrich educational programs and to strengthen the schools' relationships in the community. The presence of volunteers in the classroom and on school grounds also enhances supervision of students and contributes to school safety.

Definitions

For the purpose of clarification, the definitions of a Volunteer and a Visitor are listed below:

Volunteer – An individual, 18 years of age or older, who is voluntarily assisting with activities at GVCS and is in proximity or direct contact with students. This includes but is not limited to those who are in the classroom, chaperoning nature walks or outdoor activities, teaching and non-teaching aides in the classroom, volunteer instructional aides in the classroom, those who lead after-school activities, clubs, or programs, and field trip or athletic trip chaperones and drivers. Volunteers may work with small groups under the direction of the teacher. During school hours, volunteers must register at the office. Volunteers are required to submit to a Background Check via Live Scan Process, and a Tuberculosis (TB) Clearance. Additional screenings and/or trainings may be necessary, as deemed by Federal, State, or Local law or requirements, including but not limited to additional public health requirements. Volunteers are required to comply with the Volunteer Policy.

Visitor – An individual who visits the school, occasionally. They may be observing or participating in school activities. A visitor to the campus may include those who are under the direct supervision of school staff such as a classroom presenter or a parent attending an information or enrollment meeting. Visitors also include those attending a school event where parents are required to supervise their own children, including but not limited to festivals, celebrations, parent-teacher nights, open houses, music, theater, or sporting events. During school hours, visitors must register at the office. Visitors are never left alone with students. Visitors do not require a Background Check and Live Scan Process or a TB Clearance. The site Principal and/or Executive Director will have final authority regarding requirements for visitors. Visitors are required to comply with the Visitors Policy.

Supervised vs. Unsupervised Volunteers—Supervised volunteers are continuously within line-of-sight of certificated staff. Unsupervised volunteers may have intermittent or direct responsibility for students without continuous staff supervision.

Driving Volunteers—Volunteers who transport students in any capacity using private or school vehicles.

Volunteer Supervision, Behavior, and Responsibilities

All volunteers shall read and sign the Volunteer and/or Chaperone Agreement before being cleared as a volunteer. Volunteers are also expected to follow the Adult Code of Conduct Policy at all times.

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Any volunteer may be asked to cease volunteering at any time. Volunteers work under the direct supervision of the professional staff or their designees. GVCS is responsible for the education, safety, and well being of each student, as well as providing a hostile free workplace. For this reason, a teacher, staff member, or volunteer coordinator may request the reassignment or removal of a volunteer whose actions are not in the best interest of the school or its students. The Principal and/or Executive Director and/or Board of Trustees shall make a final determination regarding whether a volunteer shall be reassigned or if a volunteer is no longer needed, eligible or welcome to volunteer at the school or at school-sponsored events.

Serving as a volunteer on the Board of Trustees or on any Board or Administrative designated committee as a volunteer, is also a privilege. Members of the BOT are considered volunteers for the purposes of complying with the requirements outlined in this policy. To prevent a conflict of interests, the Board of Trustees shall solely be responsible for the dismissal or reassignment of volunteers serving under its capacities according to its bylaws and charter. Any person who has at any time been served a reprimand letter from the school pursuant to California Penal Code Section 626.7 or California Education Codes 32210, 32211, 44810 and 44811 may be barred from serving on the Board of Trustees or on any school committee.

Classroom Volunteer Waiting Period

In keeping with Golden Valley Charter Schools' Waldorf-inspired educational approach, classroom volunteering generally begins after the first 40 school days of the school year.

The opening weeks of school are an important period of class formation. During this time, teachers intentionally establish classroom rhythms, routines, expectations, relationships, and a shared sense of community. Students are also learning how to orient themselves to the teacher, to one another, and to the daily life of the classroom.

Limiting additional adults in the classroom during this initial period helps provide students with consistency and allows the teacher to establish a cohesive class culture with fewer outside variables. This is especially important in a Waldorf-inspired program, where predictable rhythm, continuity, relationship, and the gradual development of a secure classroom community are considered important supports for learning and healthy social development.

The 40-school-day waiting period is therefore intended to:

- Allow the teacher to establish clear classroom rhythms, routines, and expectations;
- Support the development of a strong teacher-student relationship;
- Give students time to form relationships with classmates and develop a cohesive class community;
- Reduce distractions and additional social dynamics while the class is becoming established; and
- Allow teachers to identify how parent and community volunteers can best support the class once its needs and rhythms are more clearly understood.

After the 40-school-day period, classroom volunteer opportunities may be introduced at the discretion of the teacher and school administration based on classroom needs, student needs, available activities, and the volunteer's completion of all applicable GVCS volunteer requirements.

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The 40-school-day waiting period does not prohibit volunteers from supporting schoolwide events, festivals, office activities, campus projects, or other non-classroom volunteer opportunities when such service is approved by GVCS and all applicable volunteer requirements have been completed.

Exceptions to the classroom waiting period may be authorized by the teacher and administration when a specific educational, operational, or student need warrants earlier volunteer participation.

Registration of Visitors/Guests

Posting of Notice

The School shall post at every entrance a notice setting forth school hours, visitor registration location and requirements, penalties for refusing to leave the School premises, and any other announcements required by the local law enforcement agency in order to pursue the arrest of persons found loitering or trespassing.

Procedures for Visitors to School Premises

1. Any person who is not a student of the School or GVCS employee shall register his or her presence and the reason for visiting the School immediately upon entering the School premises.
2. The School shall provide identification to be used by all visitors at all times while on School premises. The visitor shall make this identification visible at all times.
3. All visitors registering with the School, including immigration-enforcement officers (unless exigent circumstances necessitate immediate action and if the immigration officer does not possess a judicial warrant or court order that provides a basis for the visit) will provide the School with his or her name, address, his or her purpose for entering the premises, and present proof of identity and any other information as required by law. In the instance where an immigration enforcement officer attempts to access the schoolsite or a student, the School's policy on "Responding to On-Campus Immigration Enforcement" shall be consulted and followed.
4. The School shall post signs at the entrance of its school grounds to notify outsiders of the hours and requirements for registration.
5. The Executive Director or designee may revoke a visitor's registration if the Executive Director or designee has reasonable basis for concluding that the visitor's presence on school premises would likely interfere or is interfering with the peaceful conduct of School activities, is interrupting classroom activities or is disrupting the Charter School, its students, its teachers, or its other employees or volunteers.
6. GVCS employees and volunteers should at all times watch for strangers on the School premises. Employees or volunteers who encounter a visitor not displaying the appropriate identification should ask the visitor whether he or she has registered with the School. Employees and volunteers should immediately inform the administration of any visitor, including immigration enforcement officers, who refuses to comply with registration requirements.
7. Any possession of unauthorized dangerous instruments, weapons, or devices on school grounds shall be reported immediately to the Executive Director or designee and may be reported to the local law enforcement agency.
8. Any person who fails to register within a reasonable time after entering the School premises, who fails to leave upon the request of the Executive Director or designee, or who returns after leaving pursuant to such a request has committed an unlawful act and may be prosecuted according to law.

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9. School personnel shall report entry by immigration-enforcement officers to any on-site police, security officers, or other appropriate administrator as would be required for any unexpected or unscheduled outside visitor coming on campus.

Confidentiality and Student Records

All volunteers shall follow State and Federal Laws regarding confidentiality and personally identifiable information (PPI) of students included in The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and relevant California Education Code. The problems, abilities, relationships, and confidences of students, parents, and staff should never be discussed with any volunteer unless he or she has a professional need to know. Volunteers will not have access to student records.

Tuberculosis (TB) Clearance

Per California Health and Safety Codes 1597.005; 121525; 121545; 121555 and California Ed Code 49406; 87408.6, school volunteers must be screened through a risk assessment and/or tested and cleared for tuberculosis by a health care provider. This clearance must be obtained every four years. Transfer of certification done within the past four years with another school district is acceptable. Volunteers must provide evidence that negative TB results are current (within four years). An X-ray of the lungs shall be required if the intradermal test is positive. . If the X-ray indicates positive results, the volunteer will not be permitted to participate in any activities involving school children during school hours or for school-sponsored events after school hours. The cost of obtaining such certification is the responsibility of the volunteer. If a potential volunteer has questions or concerns about this process, they should contact their School Principal.

Background Check via Live Scan Process

Per California State Law, school volunteers who have direct contact with students are required to submit to a criminal background check. This background check is done via fingerprinting and submitted to the FBI and California Department of Justice (DOJ) through the Live Scan process. As part of this process, valid identification and secondary verification is required. Volunteers are screened for convictions involving crimes against children and/or the community, such as assaults, sexual abuse, physical abuse, reckless driving or DUI's (the later two, which would disqualify a volunteer from driving students on field or athletic trips. See below). This information is reported to the authorized custodian of records for the site, as either verifying "no criminal record" or "contains a record of convictions." The volunteer is then either cleared to volunteer or not cleared to volunteer. This information is kept confidential. It may not be shared with any other entity. The DOJ prohibits sharing background information and individuals records with other organizations. The Live Scan process for volunteers only needs to be completed once. The clearance is active and updated for the duration of the volunteer's time at Golden Valley Schools. The cost of the background check and Live Scan Process is the responsibility of the volunteer. If a potential volunteer has questions or concerns about this process, they should contact their school principal.

Mandated Reporter Training

To promote student safety and comply with applicable California child abuse prevention and reporting requirements, all GVCS volunteers must complete approved child abuse and neglect identification and mandated reporter training before beginning volunteer service.

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Volunteers must:

- Complete the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Mandated Reporter Training, or another training program approved by GVCS that meets applicable legal requirements;
- Provide GVCS with a certificate or other acceptable proof of completion before volunteering; and
- Renew the required training annually, prior to volunteering during each school year.

A volunteer may not provide volunteer services on campus, during a school-sponsored activity, on a field trip, or in any other capacity on behalf of GVCS until the required training has been completed and verified by the school.

Training shall include, at minimum, information regarding the identification of child abuse and neglect, appropriate reporting procedures, and the responsibilities applicable to persons who are mandated reporters under California law.

Volunteers who are considered mandated reporters under applicable law have an individual and independent duty to report known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect to an appropriate child protective agency as required by law. A report to a teacher, principal, administrator, or other GVCS employee does not substitute for a legally required report to the appropriate agency.

Role-Specific Acknowledgments and Training

Volunteers must complete any required orientation or training, such as field trip or safety protocols, before serving.

Volunteer Chaperone Drivers for Field or Athletic Trips

In order to protect students, in addition to the other volunteer requirements, volunteers who drive students on field or athletic trips are subject to further requirements. They must read and comply with the Field Trip Policy, submit a DMV Driving Record print out in the manner prescribed by the school office, submit proof of current California State Driver's License, current vehicle registration, and current auto insurance, as required by Golden Valley Charter Schools. This must be done in the time and manner prescribed by the school office in order to be cleared to be a chaperone driver for each specific field or athletic trip.

We appreciate our volunteers for their cooperation and support, to ensure a quality education and safety for our schools, students, and community.

Disqualification and Eligibility Determinations

GVCS is committed to fair and consistent eligibility determinations. The following standards apply:

Automatic Disqualifiers:

- Any DUI (for driving roles)
- Any drug-related offense
- Any felony

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- Any sex offense, child abuse, or neglect
- Any violent crime, assault, or weapons violation

Conditional Eligibility (Discretionary Review):
The Executive Director (ED) may approve volunteering on a case-by-case basis when offenses are minor, isolated, or non-violent (e.g., petty theft, disorderly conduct) and significant time has elapsed with evidence of rehabilitation.

Review and Appeal:
The ED has final discretion to approve, conditionally approve, or deny eligibility. Written appeals may be submitted within 14 calendar days of notice.

Re-Screening and Ongoing Requirements

GVCS may require re-screening every ten years or upon changes in role, new information, or a lapse in service exceeding 12 months. Volunteers must self-report any new arrest, charge, or conviction within 5 calendar days to Human Resources.

Volunteer Conduct and Responsibilities

Volunteers must sign and comply with the Volunteer and/or Chaperone Agreement and the Adult Code of Conduct Policy. All volunteers shall check in at the office, wear identification when required, and work under the supervision of GVCS staff. Volunteers may be asked to cease volunteering at any time if their conduct or performance is not in the best interest of students or the school. Volunteers are not permitted to be alone with students without authorization from school administration.

Confidentiality and Student Records

Volunteers must comply with all state and federal confidentiality laws, including FERPA, IDEA, and relevant California Education Codes. Volunteers may not discuss student information or access records unless granted professional need-to-know status.

Privacy, Records, and Retention

All screening and background information is confidential and maintained separately by the Custodian of Records in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

Oversight and Administration

Principals ensure site-level implementation and volunteer coordination. Human Resources manages Live Scan documentation and compliance tracking. The Executive Director makes final eligibility determinations. The Board of Trustees oversees volunteer service on governance bodies or committees and enforces applicable conflict of interest and conduct standards.

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Acknowledgment

By signing the GVCS Volunteer Agreement, volunteers acknowledge receipt and understanding of this policy and agree to comply with all GVCS expectations for safety, confidentiality, professionalism, and integrity.

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Volunteer and/or Chaperone Agreement

Purpose of Field Trips

Non-classroom-based excursions allow for experiential learning that is an alternative/additional way to cover curriculum-based material and/or provide class bonding with each other and teachers.

Teacher Duties

- Hold the class as a whole during the trip (not individual students)
- See that the vision/purpose of the trip is met
- Re-assign children or groups as needed
- Dispense approved medications to students
- Ultimate decision maker
- Designate photographer(s)

Parent Duties Chaperon/Driver Role

- Support the teacher and students to ensure a safe environment
- Help model good guest behavior be it at a play, museum, campground, etc.
- Keep close proximity to your assigned group even as you move from one area to another
- Monitor the safety of your group and if possible, the other students' as well
- Listen and follow the instructions from the teacher/docent/guide
- Arrive prepared with the appropriate gear/food (ask coordinator/teacher in advance if unsure)
- Be on time for departures and designated meeting places
- Complete training and attend any required meetings for the field trip
- Communicate any concerns with the teacher at an appropriate time
- Stay back with a child if they are unable to participate in an activity
- Back-up drivers must be on campus, ready to drive on the day of the trip in the event we need you
- Wear clothing that supports you in movement and for the elements. A water bottle, a hat, sturdy walking shoes, and layers are recommended for most volunteer opportunities.

Parent interaction and bonding during FTs are a great part of the experience, but it must never come at the expense of watching the children, supporting the teacher, or helping with the activity at hand.

As part of the approval process for you to be an approved Golden Valley Charter School volunteer and/or chaperone, it is necessary for you to read and agree to the following list. ***Please initial each item separately*** as you read it to show your agreement.

_____ 1. Volunteers and/or chaperones shall be assigned to a predetermined group of students and will be responsible for the continuous monitoring of these students' activities. In the event a student is not cooperating it is the volunteer or chaperone's responsibility to notify the teacher in charge of the classroom or field trip.

_____ 2. Students on approved trips are under the jurisdiction of the Golden Valley Charter School Board of Trustees and are subject to all school rules and regulations.

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3. A teacher or other certified personnel shall accompany students on all trips and shall assume responsibility for their proper conduct.

4. Before the trip the teacher will provide clear information regarding responsibilities to all adult drivers and chaperones accompanying the students.

5. Chaperones will follow the car route provided to them and will not deviate or add additional stops.

6. Chaperones will adhere to the school Media Guidelines and Cell Phone Policy or other instructions provided by the class teacher. Do not take pictures of the children without the teacher's consent and do not post pictures on social media.

7. Teachers, volunteers and chaperones shall not consume alcoholic beverages, use controlled substances or smoke tobacco or carry weapons of any kind while accompanying and/or supervising students at any time.

8. Discussions in vehicles should be age appropriate. No inappropriate language/swearing.

9. No additional children or animals may accompany volunteers/chaperones during active participation in volunteering during school hours. This includes infants, toddlers, siblings, and pets.

10. Chaperones are not to pick up children or allow them to sit on their lap. If a child asks you to sit on your lap, let them know they can sit next to you.

11. Do not enter the bathroom to assist children. If a child needs assistance, you can stand outside the door and guide them with your words.

Name ***(please print clearly)***: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Please list each student you are personally associated with:

Student Name: _____ Grade/Class: _____

Student Name: _____ Grade/Class: _____

Student Name: _____ Grade/Class: _____

Student Name: _____ Grade/Class: _____

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Faculty Chair Report
Jordan Watkins
Orchard School

November has brought a beautiful shift in the rhythm of our school days. As the weather grows cooler, the leaves change colors, and autumn settles in, there is a wonderful sense of anticipation throughout our campus. Students are embracing the changing seasons, and excitement is beginning to build for the holidays ahead. This time of year offers a special opportunity to slow down, reflect on gratitude, and nurture the warmth and connection that make our school community so special.

One meaningful highlight of November was our participation in Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day. Students joined the nationwide *Walk with Ruby* movement, honoring the courage of Ruby Bridges, who, at just six years old, helped integrate an all-white elementary school in New Orleans in 1960. Adding to the significance of the occasion, three Orchard School middle school students shared speeches, offering their voices and reflections as part of the celebration. It was wonderful to see our older students take on leadership roles and help bring meaning to this important day for our school community. This experience provided an opportunity for students to reflect on the importance of courage, kindness, inclusion, and standing up for what is right.

There is so much wonderful learning happening in our classrooms. Our sweet first graders have been busy strengthening their number sense, practicing counting to 100 by ones, fives, and tens, while also finishing their second alphabet block. In the third-grade Jacaranda class, Mr. Kinter has been bringing the practical, hands-on spirit of the third-grade curriculum to life through meaningful activities, including learning measurement through cooking.

Our fourth-grade Yew Tree class is enthusiastically preparing for their upcoming class play, *The Trials of Gods and Giants!* Class plays are such a treasured part of Waldorf education, bringing together storytelling, movement, music, artistic expression, and collaboration. Meanwhile, the fifth-grade Madrona class has been exploring North American geography, deepening their understanding of the landscapes and regions of our continent.

In sixth grade, students have been hard at work creating a variety of wonderful items for their upcoming Baobab Market, an exciting culmination of their Business Math block. Ms. Arthur has put tremendous thought, creativity, and effort into making this block engaging and memorable for her students. Through their preparations, students are experiencing mathematics in a meaningful, practical way while developing entrepreneurial thinking, creativity, and responsibility.

Our seventh grade Bluebells are beginning an exciting Physiology block- exploring the remarkable workings of the human body, including nutrition, digestion, and the systems that keep us healthy. The seventh graders have been especially enthusiastic about the amount of science they get to experience as upper-grade students! In eighth grade, the Magnolia students have recently wrapped up their Revolution block and are looking forward to transitioning into creative writing, where they will have opportunities to develop their voices and express their ideas through storytelling.

Our Kindergarten classes have held their annual lantern walks, a beautiful tradition that brings light, warmth, and wonder into the darker days of the year. While many of our upper grades are planning fall gatherings with their class families, creating opportunities for students, parents, and teachers to come together outside of the classroom. These traditions and gatherings are such an important part of our school culture, strengthening relationships and fostering the sense of belonging that makes our community so special.

Faculty Chair Report
Sarah Chase
River School

Fall is in the air at the River campus. We are gearing up for the holiday season starting with the Veterans day break, the Thanksgiving holiday/break and then we will be onto our winter break before we know it. The 7th grade Poppy students are learning about the age of sail and are currently on their sailing field trip in San Francisco. The 4th grade Sycamore students are finishing up their first fractions block and will be moving onto their first human and animal block just in time to visit the Monterey Bay aquarium. The 3rd grade Banyan Tree class is well into their practical learning with cooking and gardening and have started wood burning clocks for woodworking. 1st grade Walnut Tree and 5th grade Manzanita Tree have started a routine of having a buddy circle time every week and it has been so much fun watching that develop this year.

In the last month, we have been lucky enough to welcome the Fratello Marrionette's for a performance for the first through fourth grade classes. This year they came a little earlier than they usually come and brought the story of Aladdin. It was as magical and whimsical as usual. I love watching the students' reactions year after year and the love they all have for this special performance. We also participated in the annual Ruby Bridges Walk with all the grades students. It started with a presentation from Mr. Sutton and then the 8th grade students sang a song for all of us. We then walked, as a school, around the neighborhood. This was a nice way to bring this learning to our students.

GOLDEN VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOLS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Submitted by Jennifer Hoover, ED

November 18, 2026

K-8 Tuition-Free Public Waldorf Schools

THE CHARTER MANAGEMENT OFFICE

As we enter November, our virtue of the month, gratitude, provides an opportunity to reflect on the strength of our Golden Valley community and the many individuals who contribute to the success of our schools. Gratitude is more than simply recognizing what we have. It is acknowledging the dedication, perseverance, and generosity of those who make our work possible. I am especially grateful for our teachers and staff, who continue to navigate the complexities of public education while remaining committed to providing a rich, Waldorf-inspired educational experience for our students. I am grateful for our families, who volunteer their time, share their resources, and advocate for our schools, and for our leadership team, whose willingness to tackle difficult challenges and pursue continuous improvement helps move Golden Valley forward. As an organization, we have much to celebrate, but we also recognize that meaningful growth requires reflection, accountability, and a willingness to make difficult decisions.

One of our most significant priorities continues to be the renewal of Golden Valley River School's charter petition. Our leadership team has been working diligently to finalize the renewal petition, with submission anticipated by the end of November. This process has provided an important opportunity to examine our academic performance, educational programming, student supports, and organizational practices while highlighting the distinctive educational experience that Golden Valley provides. Our Waldorf-inspired approach, commitment to educating the whole child, and emphasis on meaningful relationships and experiential learning remain central to our mission.

The upcoming renewal hearings are scheduled for December 15, 2026, and February 23, 2027, before the San Juan Unified School District Board of Education. We are actively preparing our school community for these hearings and encouraging parents, teachers, and staff to share their experiences with the SJUSD Board. Hearing directly from individuals whose lives have been positively impacted by Golden Valley is an important part of communicating the value of our educational program. I am grateful for the staff and families who are willing to lend their voices to this process and for the collective commitment to ensuring that Golden Valley River continues serving students for years to come.

Alongside our renewal efforts, we continue to focus on strengthening academic outcomes through data-informed instruction, early intervention, and improved systems of student support. Following our fall FastBridge benchmark assessments, leadership has been examining student achievement data to better understand areas of strength and identify students requiring additional intervention. These discussions are guiding our efforts to strengthen our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and improve the effectiveness of both Tier 1 and Tier 2 academic instruction and interventions.

To support this work, we continue to collaborate with the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) and Placer County Office of Education (PCOE) to provide ongoing professional development for our classroom teachers and leadership team. This partnership is focused on strengthening Tier 1 instruction through effective, evidence-based teaching practices, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and differentiated instruction that meets the needs of diverse learners within the general education classroom. Additionally, our professional development is expanding to address Tier 2 targeted academic interventions, with an emphasis on identifying students who need additional support, implementing appropriate interventions, and consistently monitoring student progress to determine their effectiveness. This work

represents an important investment in building the capacity of our teachers and creating a more systematic and proactive approach to addressing learning gaps before they become more significant. Our goal is to ensure that every student receives the appropriate level of academic support at the right time while maintaining high expectations, strengthening teacher effectiveness, and using our resources responsibly.

November also marks an important leadership transition within our Special Education Department. I am pleased to report that Dr. Geniel Bratton has accepted the position of Director of Special Education and will begin on November 20, 2026. Dr. Bratton previously served Golden Valley before departing in the summer of 2025. Since that time, she has earned her doctorate and administrative services credential. She returns with familiarity with our schools, established relationships within our community, and a strong commitment to collaborative problem-solving. Her priorities will include strengthening departmental systems, supporting special education staff, improving communication with families, and building the capacity of school leadership to understand and effectively implement special education requirements. We look forward to welcoming Dr. Bratton back to Golden Valley and to the experience and leadership she will bring to the department.

Our annual Eagle Chase was another wonderful example of the generosity and enthusiasm of the Golden Valley community. Golden Valley Orchard held its Eagle Chase on October 29, followed by Golden Valley River on October 30. Students, teachers, families, and volunteers came together in support of our schools, demonstrating tremendous school spirit and a shared commitment to our educational programs. This year's campaign raised more than $100,000, an incredible accomplishment that reflects the generosity of our families and the hard work of everyone involved. Final fundraising totals will be reconciled and reported separately.

Beyond the financial success, Eagle Chase demonstrated the strength of family participation at both campuses. Several classrooms achieved exceptional participation rates, reflecting the collective effort of students, families, teachers, and classroom volunteers. I want to extend my gratitude to everyone who helped coordinate the events, counted laps, supported students, donated, and encouraged participation. Events like Eagle Chase do more than raise money. They strengthen relationships, build community, and remind our students that working together toward a shared goal can produce meaningful results.

Financial sustainability remains an ongoing priority, particularly as we continue to navigate the financial challenges facing California public schools. With the majority of our operational revenue tied to student attendance, enrollment stability and consistent attendance remain critical to maintaining a healthy budget. Leadership continues to emphasize responsible spending, thoughtful staffing decisions, and the importance of aligning resources with student needs and organizational priorities.

Our Annual Giving campaign, Rooted in Service, Growing in Community, continues to provide an opportunity for families and community partners to contribute to the educational experiences that make Golden Valley distinctive. Planning is also underway for our 2027 Gala, Moonlight at the Ranch, scheduled for Saturday, March 13, 2027, at Moonraker Millhouse. The Gala Committee is working to create a memorable fundraising experience while maintaining a disciplined event budget. A primary objective is to structure ticket revenue to cover event expenses so that sponsorships, auction proceeds, and additional fundraising can more directly benefit our schools. The committee is actively seeking additional sponsorships while finalizing event logistics, volunteer roles, and fundraising activities. I am grateful for the individuals who continue to dedicate their time and talents to these efforts, recognizing that their contributions provide both financial support and opportunities to strengthen our community.

As we reflect on gratitude this month, I am reminded that the strength of Golden Valley is not found solely in our programs, facilities, or organizational structures. It is found in our people. It is found in teachers who arrive each day prepared to inspire their students, staff members who go above and beyond to support children, parents who generously contribute their time and resources, and students who demonstrate kindness, curiosity, and perseverance.

Gratitude does not mean overlooking challenges or becoming complacent. Rather, it means recognizing the tremendous value of what we have while remaining committed to making it better. As we navigate charter renewal, strengthen our student support systems, welcome new leadership, and plan for the future, I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve this extraordinary school community. I also want to express my appreciation to the Board of Trustees for your continued service, thoughtful governance, and commitment to the mission of Golden Valley Charter Schools.

ORCHARD –

This month, Orchard School enjoyed two meaningful and successful events that brought students, families, and staff together.

Our annual Eagle Chase was a tremendous success, providing students with an opportunity to build school spirit, engage in healthy physical activity, strengthen connections across grade levels, and raise funds to support our school. The event highlighted our students' enthusiasm, perseverance, and strong sense of community.

We also participated in Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, a powerful opportunity to honor the legacy of Ruby Bridges and reflect on themes of courage, fortitude, inclusion, respect, and social responsibility. Students gathered in the MP Room to hear essays and poems written and presented by our 7th and 8th grade students before taking part in an all-school walk through the neighborhood as we "Walk with Ruby." Classrooms also engaged in age-appropriate discussions and activities that encouraged thoughtful reflection on how individuals can positively impact their communities.

During a recent faculty meeting, staff engaged in meaningful reflection and discussion about our collective needs and aspirations as a school community. A strong theme that emerged was a shared desire to deepen our connection to the Waldorf roots that helped shape our school's identity. While we are in the early stages of this work, the enthusiasm and commitment from staff have been evident. There is a genuine excitement about exploring Waldorf-inspired practices more intentionally and strengthening our understanding of how these principles support the growth and development of the whole child.

It has been especially encouraging to see veteran teachers eager to share their experience, knowledge, and passion for Waldorf-inspired education. At the same time, newer teachers have expressed genuine excitement about learning more, embracing these principles wholeheartedly, and exploring how they can enrich their work with students. The energy, curiosity, and collaborative spirit among both experienced and new staff members have created a strong foundation for continued growth as we strengthen our Waldorf-inspired approach together.

As we move into the coming months, we remain focused on fostering a vibrant school community, deepening our Waldorf-inspired practices, and providing meaningful learning experiences that support the academic, social, and emotional growth of every student. The dedication of our staff and the engagement of our students continue to be key strengths as we advance our mission and vision.

RIVER –

As we welcomed the month of November at the River school, we turned our attention to the virtue of Gratitude. As the days grow shorter and the season invites us to slow down, we are given a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the many gifts that surround us each day. Gratitude asks us to pause, to notice, and to recognize the goodness that is so often woven into the ordinary moments of our lives.

In Waldorf education, gratitude is cultivated not simply through words, but through experience. Children develop a sense of reverence for the world through their daily encounters with nature, the beauty of artistic work, the rhythm of the seasons, and the meaningful relationships they form with one another. Whether working in the garden, listening to a story, preparing a seasonal craft, or coming together in a Friday gathering, children are given opportunities to experience the wonder of the world and to develop an appreciation for all that it offers.

Gratitude also reminds us of our responsibility to one another. Within the River school community, it is expressed through kindness, generosity, service, and the recognition that our collective well-being depends upon the contributions of many. It lives in the teacher who patiently guides a child, the parent who volunteers their time, the student who offers a helping hand, and the countless quiet acts of care that make our school a place of belonging. These gestures may seem small, but together they create something extraordinary.

As we move toward the Thanksgiving season, I encourage each of us to find small ways to make gratitude part of our daily rhythm. Take a moment to share something you are thankful for around the dinner table. Notice the beauty of the changing season. Thank someone whose efforts might otherwise go unrecognized. Most importantly, help our children understand that gratitude is not dependent upon having everything we wish for, but rather learning to appreciate the many gifts already present in our lives.

May this November bring each of us opportunities to pause, reflect, and recognize just how much we have to be thankful for. I am grateful for the children, families, teachers, and staff who make the River school community such a special place, and for the opportunity we share to help our children grow in wisdom, wonder, and compassion.

Enrollment and Attendance – Orchard				
	2026-2027	Month 3 ADA	Movement	
TK	29	94%	+1	
K	31	94%	+1	
ABK	20	TK:97%/K:96%	0	
OBK	20	TK:96%/K:96%	0	
MBK	20	TK:90%/K:88%	+2	
1	28	96%	+1	
2	20	94%	0	
3	39	95%	0	
4	41	94%	0	
5	26	96%	+2	
6	28	95%	0	
7	27	92%	(1)	
8	27	96%	0	
Total	10/30/2026	Month 3 ADA Total 95%	296	

Enrollment and Attendance – River				
	2026-2027	Month 3 ADA	Movement	
TK	25	84%	0	
K	34	92%	0	
CBK	20	TK: 100%/K:100%	0	
LBK	20	TK:81%/K:88%	0	
PBK	19	TK:86%/K:96%	0	
1	48	96%	0	
2	47	93%	0	
3	30	99%	0	
4	29	95%	0	
5	28	96%	0	
6	23	94%	0	
7	30	94%	0	
8	17	98%	0	
Total	10/30/2026	Month 3 ADA Total 95%	313	

Enrollment – We have no Parent Information Meetings for the rest of the 2026-2027 school year.

We will continue to accept applications and make offers for enrollment when there is an open seat in a class.

Waitlist:

Orchard:

TK: 5

K: 28

River:

TK: 0 (13 TK in submitted status)

K: 38

Hybrid Cherry Blossom: TK: 8 K: 23

Marketing, Communications & Outreach

- **Focus:** Highlighting the engagement of our community and comprehensive and developmentally appropriate curriculum
- **Actions:**
  - Weekly social media posting
  - Editing the Filmed CCSA video project for prospective families – project launch date by January
  - Ensuring School newsletters highlight stories, involvement, and community

Communications

- **Theme:** Rooted in Service, Growing in Community - Bingo Card for Family Engagement in school office
- **Engagement Plan:** Purpose is to bring families, teachers, staff, and parent-led groups together to strengthen the partnership between home and school
- Gearing up for sharing heartfelt stories of "Why We Give" campaign for week of giving

Development

Annual Giving Campaign

- On pause for Eagle Chase Fundraiser for the month of October and Half of November
- Communications in School Newsletter of progress and action needed
- Will launch another reminder to give to the annual giving campaign for the week of giving and before the winter break

Fundraising with GVEF

- **Monthly Meeting Nov 3:**
  - Re-cap for Eagle Chase event
  - **Mixer & Gala Meeting:** Nov 19
  - **Next Monthly Meeting:** Dec 1

SCHOOL	Donors/enrollment	YDT Received	Projected AGC Receivables	Goal
GVOS	35/294	$6,123		$35,000
GVRS	73/313	$11,190		$65,000
General Donation	n/a	$0		
TOTAL	**108/607**	**$17,313**	**$40,000**	$100,000