

CIVILITY POLICY

Statement and Purpose:

The School Board's primary objective with this policy is to promote mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among district employees, parents and the public. The School Board supports all partners in the educational process in maintaining a safe and nurturing environment that models respectful problem solving and reduces the potential for serious or widespread disruptions within the school district. It is not the intent of the School Board to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. This policy conveys the need to maintain, to the greatest extent possible, safe and harassment-free environments for teachers, students, administrators, staff, parents and other members of the community.

In the interest of presenting teachers and other employees as positive role models, the school board encourages positive communication and discourages volatile, hostile or aggressive communications or actions. Gloucester County Public Schools believes that a safe, civil environment is essential to high student and staff achievement, to the free exchange of ideas central to a quality educational process, and to the development of youth as thoughtful participants in our democracy. Conversely, uncivil conduct, like other forms of disruptive behavior, interferes with a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students.

Gloucester County Public Schools encourages administrators, faculty, staff, students, volunteers, parents, and other community members to participate in maintaining a clear expectation of civil conduct and problem-solving throughout the school district. The School Board is committed to supporting this expectation and refuses to condone uncivil conduct on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, whether by staff, students, parents, volunteers, or other visitors.

The School Board desires to;

- promote a work and learning environment that is safe, productive and nurturing for all staff and students, and to encourage the free flow of ideas without fear or intimidation,
- provide a work and learning environment that discourages the influence of fear, anger, frustration, alienation, and rudeness, and
- provide all students with appropriate role models for respectful problem-solving.

Expectations:

The School Board, staff, parents, and visitors will treat each other with courtesy and respect. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not necessarily limited to, behavior which interferes with or threatens to interfere with the operations of a school environment.

The School Board believes;

- there should be respect for the obligations and time constraints of all individuals,
- school district employees should treat members of the public and their peers with civility, courtesy and respect,
- parents and the public should treat staff and students, while on school property and/or participating in school-related activities, with civility, courtesy, and respect,
- behavior should not interfere with or threaten the operation of a school, classroom or any employees' workspace, both inside and outside of the facility,
- the use of loud and/or offensive/and demeaning language, swearing, cursing or display of temper is not appropriate,
- there should not be verbal, physical, or written threats to do bodily or physical harm to a teacher, school administrator, school employee or student, regardless of whether or not the behavior constitutes or may constitute a criminal violation, and
- there should not be damage or destruction of school or school board property.

Process for Addressing Concerns and Issues:

Individuals who feel they have been subjected to uncivil (i.e., threatening and inappropriate) conduct are encouraged to resolve the concern/issue with the person or persons directly involved. Through a process of cooperative agreement, the affected individuals may be able to reach a mutually effective resolution.

Either party may cite this policy and notify the other person that they are ending the conversation or the interaction and remove themselves from the situation (i.e., ending a phone call, walking out of the room, or requesting the other individual leave the room). If the issue/situation is not addressed in a satisfactory manner, either party may notify the appropriate principal/supervisor or designee. The principal/supervisor or designee will assist the individuals in reaching a resolution.

In all cases, individuals who perceive that they have been treated in an uncivil manner will be urged to resolve their concerns through simple, direct or assisted communication with the person(s) at the source of the concern. When this is not possible or appropriate, any person who needs help in identifying and/or using appropriate problem-solving procedures may seek assistance from the school principal, principal designee, or work site administrator. Individuals are encouraged to work out issues of concern in a timely manner. No retaliation will be tolerated against individuals for working in good faith under this policy and its related procedures to resolve concerns.

ADOPTED: May 10, 2011

CROSS REFERENCES:

GBA	Sexual Harassment/Harassment Based On Race, National, Origin, Disability, Religion and Sexual Orientation
GBA-E	Report of Harassment
KGB	Public Conduct on School Property
KK	School Visitors
KL	Public Complaints