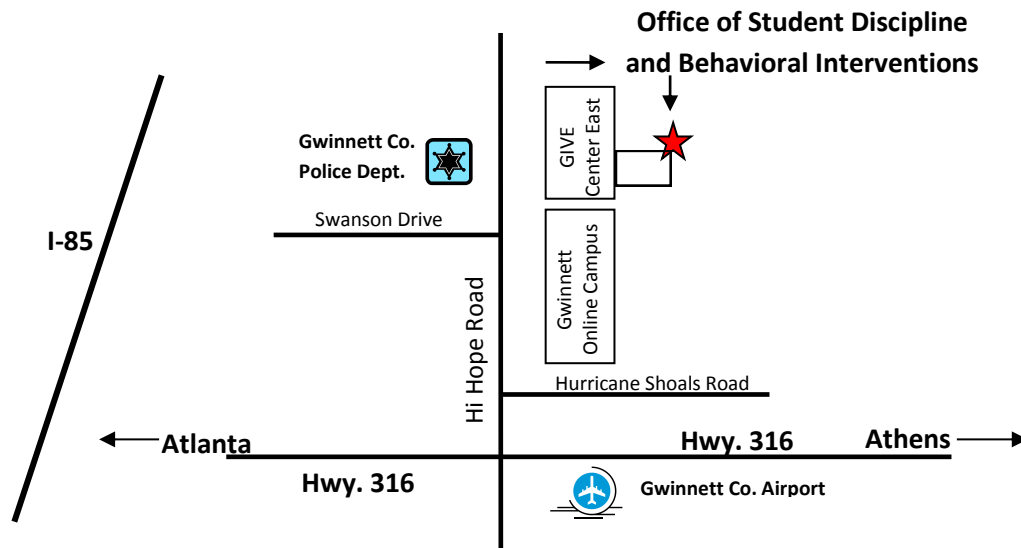


## MAP TO OFFICE OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS



- Take I-85 to Highway 316.
- Travel east on Highway 316 toward Athens.
- Turn left at the first red light which is Hi Hope Road.
- Proceed past Gwinnett Online Campus and GIVE Center East which are both on the right.
- Enter the north parking lot of the GIVE Center East. The driveway is marked with a sign reading “Student Drop-off and Pick-up.”
- Drive to the back of the GIVE Center East facility and park by the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions.

## A GUIDE TO DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS



### Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions

**Gwinnett County Public Schools**

723 Hi Hope Road, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30043

**Phone:** 770-513-6607 • **Fax:** 770-513-6840

## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO DISCIPLINARY HEARINGS

Students learn about their responsibilities as good citizens throughout their school careers. As a good citizen, every student is expected to follow the rules of Gwinnett County Public Schools, as well as the laws of the county, the state, and the nation.

To ensure that all students are familiar with behavior expectations in our schools, each year, GCPS provides a current version of the Student Conduct Behavior Code for parents and students to read. When the school believes a student has violated the code and a long-term suspension or expulsion should be considered, the school refers the student to a disciplinary hearing.

### HOW DOES THIS PROCESS BEGIN?

When a student is believed to have violated a rule(s) of the Student Conduct Behavior Code, the local school administration will conduct an investigation into the alleged misconduct. If the local school administration determines that the student has violated a rule of the code and has sufficient evidence to charge the student for the misconduct, the administrator will issue a consequence. In some cases, the administration will refer the student to a disciplinary hearing.

If this is the case, the administration will attempt to contact the student's parent or guardian to discuss the incident and advise of the date and time of the scheduled hearing. Shortly after that, the school will mail a packet of information to the student's home including the following:

- Notice of suspension

- Waiver of parent/guardian's right to attend the hearing (If parent/guardian chooses not to attend, must be signed and returned.)
- Map to the hearing location
- A copy of the Student Conduct Behavior Code
- Procedures that will be followed in conducting the discipline hearing, including the rights of the parent/guardian regarding the hearing

### WHY A HEARING?

According to Georgia law, the local school principal may suspend a student for up to 10 days. If the principal recommends a suspension longer than 10 days, the student must be referred to a disciplinary hearing because only the Gwinnett County Board of Education (BOE) is authorized to issue a suspension of greater than 10 days under state law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-753, 2014).

At the disciplinary hearing, a hearing officer (acting on behalf of the BOE) will determine whether the student violated the code. The hearing officer will issue a consequence for the rule violation(s).

### WHO ATTENDS THE HEARING AND WHAT HAPPENS?

The principal and/or assistant principal from the student's school will attend the disciplinary hearing. The administration may bring school witnesses, including, but not limited to, teachers, students, or staff, to testify to the alleged misconduct.

It is important that the student and a parent/guardian attend the disciplinary hearing so that the student has an opportunity to provide his or her version of the incident, provide evidence, and mount a defense to the charges. *Due to the sensitive nature of disciplinary hearings and*

*the use of audio recorders, please be advised that small children and siblings are not permitted to enter the hearing rooms. Childcare cannot be provided by GCPS employees during the proceedings, so please plan accordingly.*

The student is permitted to have witnesses come and testify on his or her behalf. A copy of any supporting evidence (photograph, video, etc.) may be submitted at the hearing.

The student also may retain an attorney. If an attorney will represent the student, the family must contact the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions 24 hours prior to the disciplinary hearing so that the school system can schedule an attorney to be present on its behalf.

The hearing is conducted in three phases.

**Phase I** is the evidentiary phase. The school and the student may present evidence and/or call witnesses to testify concerning the alleged misconduct. The hearing officer will determine if the student has violated school rules. If the student has not violated any school rules, the student would return to school the next day. However, if the student has violated school rules, the hearing will move to Phase II.

**Phase II** is the records phase where the school's representative presents the student's grades, attendance, and discipline history.

**Phase III** is the final stage where the student, parent/guardian, and school staff have the opportunity to make final comments and then the hearing officer renders a decision for a consequence.

## WHAT ARE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES?

Hearing officers have a wide range of consequences available to them, including community service, restitution, the Creating Lasting Family Connections Class, in-school suspension, additional days of out-of-school suspension, and possible assignment to the Gwinnett Intervention Educational (GIVE) Center. Hearing officers also have the authority to suspend a student for up to one year (365 calendar days) and also may recommend permanent expulsion to the Board of Education.

### WHAT IS PERMANENT EXPULSION?

A hearing officer may submit a recommendation to the BOE for permanent expulsion in the most serious cases. The BOE would then review the case and determine if permanent expulsion is merited. A student who has been permanently expelled may not return to his or her school or attend any district school, including a GIVE Center.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS?

Families with additional questions may contact the Office of Student Discipline and Behavioral Interventions at 770-513-6607. Additional information also is included in the Student Conduct Behavior Code found on the website at <http://tinyurl.com/GCPSConductCode>.

It is the policy of the Gwinnett County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, color, disability, religion or national origin in any program or activity, employment, admission, service, treatment, admissions to facilities or access to any program or activity operated by the Board or in the employment practices of the Board.