

CURRENT GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOL POLICY

Rule 25 - Gang Activity or Gang-related Activity

No student shall commit any act which furthers gangs or gang related activities. A student shall not threaten or intimidate another individual, or disrupt including but not limited to displaying gang colors, logos or jewelry on one's person or possessions, using gang gestures (throwing gang signs) or verbal communications, for the purpose of gang identification, or tag or deface school or personal property with gang-related symbols or slogans. A student shall not incite other students to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity, solicit others for gang membership, or commit any other illegal act or other violation of school district policies that relates to gang activity. This rule will only apply when the behavior does not meet the standards of any other violation. If gang-related activity is associated with another act of misconduct, evidence of gang activity shall be considered an aggravating factor.

Consequences

- Elementary - In-school disciplinary action. OSS up to 3 days for repeated or serious violations.
- Middle School - In-school disciplinary action. OSS up to 10 days for repeated or serious violations.
- High School - In-school disciplinary action. OSS up to 10 days for repeated or serious violations. Principals of high schools on a block schedule must consult their School Support Officers prior to suspending a student out of school for more than five (5) days.

- periodic follow-up reports to parents/guardians;
- and, referral to appropriate support personnel.

School personnel shall actively seek effective, positive methods and strategies to help each student learn to behave in a manner that is conducive to effective learning and that respects the rights of others. Each school principal shall systematically identify potential problem areas within his/her school that may contribute to discipline problems and shall work to maintain a positive school environment to minimize discipline problems.

Gangs are not a problem that can be suspended away. As we stated at the outset we want no part of a policy of identifying students as gang members strictly to “get rid of them”. We are asking that the gang policy be revised so principals, administrators and staff can effectively develop relationships with youths and their families who are or may be involved with gangs.

Revising the board policy is step one in effectively addressing this issue. It will send a message to administrators, teachers, and parents that GCS is going to be proactive and work alongside of them to address this issue.

SUGGESTED GCS POLICY:

Rule 25 - Gang Activity or Gang-related Activity

No student shall commit any act which furthers gangs or gang related activities. A gang is defined as any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts or the purposeful violation of Guilford County School Policies and having a common name or common identifying sign, colors, or symbols.

Conduct prohibited by this policy:

1. Wearing, possessing, using, distributing, displaying, or selling any clothing, jewelry, emblems, badges, symbols, signs, visible tattoos and body markings, or other items, or being in possession of literature that shows affiliation with a gang, or is evidence of membership or affiliation in any gang or that promotes gang affiliation;
2. Communicating either verbally or non-verbally (gestures, handshakes, slogans, drawings, etc.), to convey membership affiliation in any gang or that promotes gang affiliation;
3. Tagging, or otherwise defacing school or personal property with gang or gang-related symbols or slogans;
5. Inciting other students to intimidate or to act with physical violence upon any other person related to gang activity;
6. Soliciting others for gang membership;

7. Conspiring to commit any violation of this policy or committing or conspiring to commit any other illegal act or other violation of school district policies that relates to gang activity.

The Superintendent/designee shall consult with law enforcement officials semi-annually to establish a list of gang-related items, symbols and behaviors. Principals shall meet with law enforcement once a year. The principals shall maintain the list in the main office of the school and shall notify students of the items, symbols and behaviors prohibited by this policy. This notice shall be included in the student handbook.

Before being suspended for a first offense of wearing gang-related attire (when not involved in any kind of altercation), a student will receive a warning and will be allowed to immediately change or remove the attire that is in violation of this policy.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Education, Education, Education- everyone from the Superintendent to parents to the custodians needs to have an understanding of this issue. Local Law enforcement is ready and willing to assist.
2. School Assessments- GCS needs to get a handle on exactly what the gang issue is and to quantify exactly who and what we are dealing with. Local law enforcement officials can assist. (an example is attached)
3. Teaming with local law enforcement gang unit's- these are the folks that have the knowledge and can educate and assist with any planning. Develop a formal committee made up of school officials and law enforcement gang units to collectively address and plan around this issue.
4. Intervention: each school can identify 10-15 of the "leaders" and make a concerted effort to build that relationship within the school. Discussing future plans, choices, life, meeting with family members (at school and home), going out of your way to check up on that student can go a long way to bridging the gap that so often exists between these students and the school.
5. Prevention: Gang Resistance- According to Deborah Price, Assistant Deputy Secretary for the Federal Safe and Drug Free Schools initiative, Gang resistance "certainly falls under the umbrella of violence prevention in Safe and Drug Free Schools". Include gang conversations in your anti drug, life skill programming. Attached is the outline used by the Charlotte "Gang Of One" program. Also team with local law enforcement and pursue "G.R.E.A.T" funding (Gang Resistance Education, And Training- www.great-online.org) for elementary and middle schools.