

Gitksan West Secondary School Society SCHOOL POLICIES



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www.gwsss.ca

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Description of Logo:

Logo was designed by Michelle Stoney

The logo draws inspiration from the classic shield shape found in many well-known school emblems, symbolizing strength, unity, and tradition. The three western Gitksan communities of Gitsegukla, Gitwangak and Gitanyow come together to form one complete and unified image for the benefit of the children, now and in the future.

At its center is the Cooper (copper), a significant cultural symbol of wealth. Traditionally, copper represented prosperity not as something to be kept, but as something to be shared—broken apart and distributed at feasts to benefit the community. Within the context of the school, the copper represents the wealth of knowledge being taught and shared with students.

The shield includes four clans, symbolizing the children who will attend the school and reflecting their deep connections to one another. A sharp, pointed mountain crowns the top section, representing the village of Gitsegukla. The name Gitsegukla translates to “people of Segukla,” meaning “pointed mountain,” making the mountain a meaningful symbol of place and identity. The rabbit symbolizes Gitwangak, known as the people of the rabbit. The stars in the background represent Gitanyow, the people of many numbers; the abundance of stars reflects this meaning.

Flowing through and connecting them is the River of Mist—the meaning of Gitksan — symbolizing unity and shared identity. Trees placed along the river further emphasize an enduring connection to the land, grounding the design in culture, history, and community.

Acknowledgements

The Gitksen West Secondary School Board acknowledges the Gitanyow, Gitwangak, and Gitsegukla Chiefs and Councils for entrusting the Steering Committee with the responsibility of guiding the development of Gitksen West Secondary School from October 26, 2025 to February 27, 2026. Their leadership recognized the need for a dedicated body to oversee the school's establishment and to support quality, culturally relevant education for students from the three western Gitksen communities.

A Draft Terms of Reference helped guide the Steering Committee in its early stages and informed the development of the School Board Governing Policy Manual.

Special thanks to the Steering Committee members:

- **Gitanyow:** Lesley McLean and Georgette Good
- **Gitsegukla:** Noel Argueta, Wendy Wesley, and Joe Sampare
- **Gitwangak:** Chief Chasity Daniels, Brandi Maitland, and Angie Russell

Noel Argueta served as Chair, and Angie Russell served as Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee.

A special thank you to Edith Loring-Kuhanga, B.Ed., M.Ed., Governance and Leadership Consultant, for developing the Gitksen West Secondary School Board School Policy Manual.

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Important Contact Information

School Main Fax	250-849-
Gitwangak Band Office Chief Chasity Daniels Interim COO: Angelina Russell	250-849-5591
Gitwangak Health Director, Kym Mathews	250-849-5555
Gitwangak Education Society Lillian Gogag, Executive Director	250-849-5330
Gitsegukla Band Office Chief Anne Howard Band Administrator, Susan Miller	250-849-5490
Gitsegukla Health Director Leah Blezard	250-849-5231 Ext. 227
Gitsegukla Education Manager Joe Sampare	250-849-5739 Ext. 308
Gitanyow Band Office Band Administrator, Alice Morgan	250-849-5222
Gitanyow Health Director, Wanda Good	250-849-5572
Gitanyow Education Manager Jackie Smith & Brandi Maitland	250-849-5384
Ambulance/Fire/Police (<i>Emergency</i>)	911
RCMP (<i>Non-emergency</i>)	250-842-5244
Wrinch Memorial Hospital	250-842-5211 (emergency dial 911)
Fire Department	Emergency dial 911
Northern BC Crisis Line	1-888-562-1214
KUU-US Crisis Response Service (24/7)	1-800-588-8717
Provincial Suicide Prevention & Intervention Line	1-800-784-2433
Kids Help Line	686868 (text)
Youth Support Line (24/7)	250-564-8336 (or text 250-564-8336)
Gitxsan Child & Family Services	250-842-2258
MCFD, Hazelton	250-842-7624
Poison Control	1-800-567-8911

Gitksen West Secondary School Vision

At Gitksen West Secondary School, we walk together—students, parents, staff, and Elders—to weave academic excellence with Gitksen culture, Sim’algayax, and traditional teachings. Through inclusive, high-quality education grounded in respect for the laxyip, our learners graduate confident, capable, and rooted in Gitksen teachings, ready for the world.

Gitksen West Secondary School Mission Statement

Gitksen West Secondary School’s mission is to provide a high-quality, culturally grounded education that strengthens Gitksen identity while fostering academic excellence, athletics, life skills, technology, and career pathways. Rooted in the ayookw and laxyip, and honouring individual strengths, we nurture capable and confident graduates who stand proudly in their Gitksan identity and are fully prepared to pursue post-secondary education, skilled trades, meaningful employment, and leadership in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds.

Philosophy

1. Students

We believe every student has the right to learn in a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment, free from bullying, discrimination, and harm. Rooted in Gitksen teachings and guided by the ayookw, we honour each learner’s strengths, identity, and voice. We hold high expectations for learning, behaviour, and personal growth, supporting students to develop confidence, responsibility, and pride in who they are as Gitksen people and as learners prepared to succeed in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds.

2. Parents, Elders, and Community

Parents and grandparents are recognized as a child’s first teachers, and education is a shared responsibility between home, school, and community. Gitksen West Secondary School values active involvement from families, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and the three Gitksen West communities. Community teachings, histories, and protocols are honoured, including our Wilp and pdeek systems, li’ligit practices, and respect for our laxyip, Simgiget, and Sigidimhaana’k. Through shared accountability and collective guidance, families and community partners help strengthen student identity, belonging, and success.

3. Sim’algayax and Gitksen Culture

Sim’algayax and Gitksen culture form the foundation of all learning at Gitksen West Secondary School. Ayookw guides behaviour, discipline, and decision-making, taking priority in how

students are taught and supported. Through adaawk, Sim'algyax ayookw, li'ligit system teachings, ~~land-based~~ learning on the laxyip, songs, regalia-making, food harvesting, and seasonal practices, students acquire Sim'algyax, and Gitksen knowledge. As part of Gwelxyee' ensxwhl, our Simgiget, Sigidimhaana'k, Elders and Knowledge Keepers are central to the curriculum, ensuring teachings are accurate, respectful, and passed on correctly, so Gitksen identity, language, and traditions remain strong for future generations.

4. Staff

Staff at Gitksen West Secondary School are committed to upholding ayookw, modelling respect, fairness, and accountability in all they do. Administration and teachers provide the highest standard of academics while ensuring each student receives the support they need to be successful. All staff create a culturally safe, inclusive, and structured learning environment that recognizes diverse learning needs and promotes student well-being. Staff work collaboratively with families, Elders, Simgiget, Sigidimhaana'k, and community partners; maintain high expectations; address bullying and discrimination promptly; and commit to continuous learning to prepare students for future.

Policy Guidelines

The Gitksen West Secondary School Board is charged with the governing of the school and is the policy making body in matters relating to the operation of the Gitksen West Secondary School.

All personnel of education programs are responsible to Gitksen West Secondary School Principal.

The Board will refer to the policies and relative legislation set forth by the British Columbia Ministry of Education to establish its own educational policies.

POLICY FORMULATIONS AND POLICY AMENDMENT

1. Initiation of draft policy or policy amendment may be brought forward by a staff member, parent/guardian and/or a Board Member.
2. The new draft policy or a policy amendment will be presented at a Board meeting.
3. After appropriate discussion, any necessary changes to the new or amended policy will be approved or rejected by a motion of the Board.
4. Approved policies, and any amendments, will be forwarded to the Education Managers/Directors of the respective Bands for information and posted on the school website, in a timely manner.

Admission of Students

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School is primarily designed to serve the students of Gitsegukla, Gitwangak and Gitanyow however, accepts registration from other local First Nations, off reserve and non-First Nations people.

Procedures

1. All applications are subject to review and approval from the school principal. Applications may be forwarded to the school administration for review at any time.
2. Students registering at Gitksen West Secondary School will have to correspond to the age requirement set forth. The maximum age for any student registering will be 21 years for their Grade 12 academic year, as of December 31 of the registering school year. All admissions will be reviewed by the school administration.
3. The grade and age equivalent for secondary students are as follows;
 - Grade 12 - 20 years of age, as of December 31 of the registering term.
 - Grade 11 - 19 years of age, as of December 31 of the registering term.
 - Grade 10 - 17 years of age, as of December 31 of the registering term.
 - Grade 9 - 16 years of age, as of December 31 of the registering term.
4. All students will have applications reviewed by the school Principal prior to admission.
5. Students transferring schools, as a result of special circumstances, shall be considered at any time during the year.
6. Student transfers from within the School District #82 area are discouraged after the September 30th nominal roll deadline date, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Students from outside the SD #82 district applying for admission will be subject to review.
7. Students who are under suspension or expulsion from another independent school, Band school or school district are not eligible for admission to Gitksen West Secondary School until their disciplinary status has been formally reviewed and resolved.
8. All applications from students who, at the time of application, are not attending school will be reviewed by the school principal prior to admission.
9. The principal of Gitksen West Secondary School reserves the right to refuse the admittance of any student.

Alcohol/Banned/Illegal Substance

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School adheres to a “zero” tolerance towards the use and trafficking of alcohol and banned substances.

Procedures

1. Gitksen West Secondary School invokes its entitlement to search any part of the facility if there is a reasonable belief that a narcotic, banned substance, or alcohol is being stored. This is in accordance with Section 10 of the Narcotic Control Act that reads; “A peace officer may, at any time, without a warrant, enter and search any place....in which the peace officer believes, on reasonable grounds, there is a narcotic by means of which of or in respect of which an offense under the Act has been committed.”
2. Any person who is in possession of or under the influence of alcohol may face suspension from the school and any school related functions for a time set out by the Administration and/or Board in accordance with school policy.
3. All alcohol seized will be disposed of by the proper authority and may include notification to the RCMP.
4. Possession of a Banned Substance (Narcotic): Section 4 – Narcotic Control Act (Canadian Criminal Code)
 - A. No person shall traffic in a narcotic or any substance represented or held out by the person to be a narcotic.
 - B. No person shall have in their possession any narcotic for the purpose of trafficking. Trafficking meaning to manufacture, sell, give, administer, transport, send, deliver, or distribute.
5. All narcotics/banned substances seized will not be disposed of by anyone other than the principal or School Board President, and will include notification to the RCMP.
6. Any individual who is in violation of Section 4 of the NCA shall face suspension from school premises, an investigation by the proper authorities, and other measures set out by the principal and/or Board.

Appeal Policy

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School is committed to fair, transparent, and timely processes for resolving concerns and appeals. Students and parents/guardians have the right to appeal decisions that affect a student's education, including decisions related to assessment, placement, supports, and inclusion.

1. Guiding Principles

- A. All appeals will be addressed respectfully, collaboratively, and in a manner that prioritizes the best interests, dignity, and success of the student.
- B. Appeals will be handled in a fair, unbiased, and timely manner.
- C. Resolution at the school level is encouraged whenever possible.
- D. Open communication and collaboration are central to the process.
- E. Students and families will be treated with respect and provided clear information throughout the process.
- F. The student's well-being and educational success will remain the primary focus.
- G. This policy aligns with Section 11 of the *School Act* of British Columbia¹, which provides the right to appeal decisions affecting a student's education.

2. Grounds for Appeal

An appeal may be made regarding, but not limited to:

- Student assessment and evaluation
- Placement or programming decisions
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or learning supports
- Disciplinary actions
- Access to inclusive educational opportunities.

Procedures

1. Informal Resolution (Step 1)

- A. The student and/or parent/guardian is encouraged to first discuss the concern with the classroom teacher or relevant staff member.
- B. If unresolved, the concern should be brought to the School-Based Team or Learning Support Teacher.
- C. Most concerns should be resolved collaboratively at this stage.

2. Formal Appeal to the Principal (Step 2)

- A. If the issue is not resolved informally, a written appeal may be submitted to the principal.
- B. The written appeal should include:
 - A description of the concern

¹ Appeals, Section 11. (???) British Columbia School Act:
https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_02#section11

- Relevant background information
- Steps already taken to resolve the issue
- The desired outcome

C. The principal will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the appeal within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., 5 school days)
- Review all relevant documentation
- Meet with involved parties as needed
- Provide a written decision within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., 10–15 school days)

3. Review Process (Step 3)

A. If the appellant is not satisfied with the principal's decision, the appeal may be referred to the School Board of the GWSS (e.g., Board, Education Authority, or governing body).

B. The School Board will:

- Review the documentation and process followed
- Ensure alignment with school policy and provincial guidelines
- Make a final decision or recommendations within 45 days of when the Board received the appeal.
- Promptly report the decision of the appeal to the appellant.
- The School Board's decision is final.

4. Representation and Support

A. Students and parents/guardians may be supported by an advocate, support person, or community representative at any stage of the appeal.

B. The school may also involve appropriate personnel to support a fair review process.

5. Documentation and Confidentiality

A. All appeal proceedings will be documented and securely maintained.

B. Confidentiality will be respected in accordance with privacy legislation.

C. Information will only be shared with individuals directly involved in the appeal process.

6. Timelines

A. Appeals will be addressed as promptly as possible to minimize disruption to the student's learning.

B. Timelines may be adjusted in extenuating circumstances, with clear communication to all parties.

7. Continuous Improvement

A. The school will review appeal outcomes to identify patterns and improve practices.

B. Feedback from appeals will inform school planning and inclusive education practices.

Attendance

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School believes that for students to succeed in school, they must have a minimum of 90% attendance (less than 19 absences in the school year). It is the parents/guardians' responsibility and duty to send their child to school.

Procedures

1. Student learning opportunities are maximized if the school and home work together to ensure students attend school regularly.
2. Parents are required to notify the school in order for students to receive an "excused absence" which include: funerals, family emergencies, school related activities, medical/dental appointments and other family related reasons provided by the parent/guardian.
3. The classroom teacher will take attendance twice per day (once in the morning and once in the afternoon).
4. The attendance will be sent to the office indicating students who are absent – in the morning and in the afternoon.
5. After 20 minutes, the administration office will make every effort to contact those parents/guardians of students who are absent.
6. When students arrive late, they will be required to sign in at the office and get a late slip.
7. Teachers will send monthly letters to parents/guardians for all students who have more than 3 unexcused absences per month and are habitually late.
8. Parents/guardians' phone calls to the school or notes written to the school are required for each absence. After 2 consecutive days, the school will contact the parent/guardian. If a student is absent due to illness for three (3) consecutive days, a note from a medical practitioner is required.
9. Intermittent notices will appear in the weekly newsletter requesting parents/guardians to inform the school of student absences.
10. Individual teachers will contact parents of individual attendance concerns once per month, or earlier if necessary.
11. After five consecutive days of unexcused absences, the principal will contact the parent/guardian with the expectation that attendance will significantly improve.

12. Should a student miss more than 50% of classes in a given month, the parent and student must attend a meeting with the principal and teacher to demonstrate how they will improve punctuality, attendance and complete outstanding school assignments.
13. If there has been no improvement in attendance over the next month and the principal has exhausted all communication efforts, the principal will notify the Band Designated Representative and/or the Education Manager/Director of the respective Bands.
14. If there has been no improvement in attendance over the next month for children who are under 16 years of age² and the principal has exhausted all communication efforts and there have been concerns with child protection³, the principal will notify the Gitxsan Child & Family Services Society or the Ministry of Children & Family Development.
15. Should there be no improvement in the student attendance and academic achievement, credits will not be provided for Grade 10 to 12 students.
16. Students who are 16 and above may be removed from the school registration and will be required to re-register for the following school year.

² School Act, Government of BC. 2021. BC Laws: Entry to educational program:

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96412_02

³ Section 13 – When Protection is Needed. Child, Family and Community Service Act, BC.

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96046_01#section13

Behaviour and Management

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School has implemented a student behaviour and management policy that is designed to protect the rights of all students and ensure a learning environment that is free of harassment and unwanted behaviors that affect the ability of students and staff to complete their respective duties.

Procedures

Student rights and responsibilities include:

1. I have a right to learn in this classroom. It is my responsibility to listen to instructions, work quietly when asked, be prepared to work, and raise my hand if I have a question, concern, or need to leave.
2. I have a right to hear and be heard. It is my responsibility to not talk, shout, or make noise when others are speaking.
3. I have a right to be respected in this classroom. It is my responsibility to not tease or bother other people and to respect their belongings and feelings.
4. I have a right to be safe in this classroom. It is my responsibility to not threaten or harm another person either physically or mentally.
5. I have a right to privacy and to my own personal space. It is my responsibility to respect the personal space and privacy of others in the classroom and in the school.

The student management policy is based on the premise that the student has an impact on their behavior, and is therefore responsible for any actions deemed unacceptable. Students and staff have a role in determining what is best for the student, the class, and ultimately the entire school community. A student has a right to a learning environment that is free of harassment of any kind.

The student management policy is divided into minor and major infractions. These are cumulative in nature, and the discipline procedures accepted by the student are based on the number of major infractions that are on file.

1. Minor Infractions

Minor infractions are incidents that are dealt with on the spot by the intervening staff member. The staff member explains the inappropriate behavior and provides the student with the opportunity to demonstrate proper behavior. A minor infraction becomes a major infraction if the student continues to demonstrate the behavior despite the intervention by the supervising school member or designate.

Minor infractions include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following;

- 1.1 Eating and disposing of food in the school and school grounds.
- 1.2 Littering in the school or on school grounds
- 1.3 Smoking in the school or on school grounds at any time
- 1.4 Inappropriate demonstrations of affection in the school or on school grounds
- 1.5 Running, loitering, yelling, rough play, hall wandering, spitting

- 1.6 Unsafe use of equipment, rough play, poor sportsmanship
- 1.7 Mishandling of books, equipment, disruptive behavior, food in areas not designated for eating
- 1.8 Improper use of exit and footwear during physical activities
- 1.9 Washroom - loitering, misuse of supplies, markings, soiling
- 1.10 Bus - unacceptable behavior, misuse, soiling or damage of any part of bus, wearing improper or suggestive clothing

2. Major Infraction

All staff are expected to respond to major infractions. A student committing a major infraction is sent to, or accompanied to, the office. The student is responsible for discussing the incident with the principal, or designate, as well as for all homework assigned during the class missed.

The student is empowered to; 1) describe the behavior that was unacceptable, 2) discuss why the behavior is unacceptable, and, if requested 3) write a plan which will describe the appropriate behavior should the student encounter the same or similar situation in the future.

Parents/Guardians will be informed of all major reports by outlining the incident and the actions taken to remedy the situation. The parent's confirmation slip must be returned to the school prior to the student returning to class unless otherwise indicated. When there is an out of school suspension parents/guardians will be asked to assist in the follow up of all school work as well as a plan to return to the school program.

Major infractions may include, but may not be necessarily limited to the following;

- 1.1 Behavior with intent to injure (fighting and throwing objects)
- 1.2 Theft, vandalism, or improper care/use of school/others property
- 1.3 Overt opposition of authority
- 1.4 Skipping classes, leaving school area during school without permission
- 1.5 Profane or abusive language
- 1.6 Being in school areas without permission (i.e. gym, IE shop, library)
- 1.7 Blatant disrespect of staff/students/guests

The Grade 8 to 12 program will implement consequences, at the discretion of the principal and with consultation with staff, based on the following for major infractions;

1st Report – Report conduct to the office Student removed from class and admitted to the ISS (In School Suspension) room for the remainder of the day. Report will be sent home which must be signed by the parent/guardian.

2nd Report – Report conduct to the office A verbal warning, via meeting with school administration. Student to the ISS room for remainder of the day.

3rd Report – Report conduct to the office. Student is sent home immediately after meeting with the school administrator. Any suspension is accompanied by an assignment which must be completed prior to admission back to class. Report will be sent home which must be signed by the parent/guardian.

4th Report – Report conduct to the office. Immediate suspension for two days after meeting with the school administrator. An assignment will be sent home that must be completed prior to admission. The student must set up and bring a parent/guardian to a meeting with the teachers to discuss the behavior and expectations.

5th Report – Report conduct to the office. Suspension of three days. All previous suspension conditions apply. The meeting will include the principal as part of the process for re-admission to class. The student will contact the office to set up this meeting.

6th Report – Report conduct to the office. Suspension of six days. Student must set up a meeting with parent/guardian, staff, the principal, and the Board representative prior to re-admission. Student will also submit a behavior contract that meets the approval of all parties.

7th Report – Report conduct to the office. Student is removed from school for the remainder of the semester. Home schooling option may be discussed.

Major Major Infractions – refer to third report status.

Examples of a major major infraction include, but are not limited to;

- Blatant disrespect to a staff or school member (swearing/threats).
- Absolute refusal to do work or a reasonable request.
- Destruction of school and/or others property.
- Theft
- Seriously threatens student or staff safety.

2. Major-Major Infractions

These will result in the immediate indefinite expulsion of the student with the parent/guardian being notified. As well, the proper authority will be contacted and informed of the incident. This includes such offices as the RCMP and the Gitksan Child & Family Services.

Major-Major infractions include;

- Being in the possession of or under the influence of a controlled and/or banned drug as outlined in Section 39 of the Food and Drugs Act
- Verbal threats and/or abuse of staff or students based on Section 264.1 of the Canadian Criminal Code
- Physical assault of a student or staff member as outlined in Section 265/266 of the Canadian Criminal Code

- Wanton destruction of school property
- Possession of a prohibited weapon as outlined in Section 91 of the Canadian Criminal Code

Costs to repair vandalized school property will be the joint responsibility of the parent/guardian and the student deemed willful or careless. Students must meet with the school administration, along with parent/guardian, and apply for re-admittance. It is the decision of the school as to whether to allow a student to return to school.

Students taking part in the school suspension will be responsible for all class work and assignments missed due to the suspension.

Bus Behaviour

Policy

Appropriate bus behaviour is always required on all Gitksen West Secondary School buses. Misbehaviour could result in having bus-riding privileges suspended or removed.

Procedures

1. All passengers must:
 - a. Be on time to board the bus. Buses will not wait for late comers.
 - b. Remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
 - c. Place bags under the seat in front of them.
 - d. Not wave their arm(s) or put any body parts outside the windows.
 - e. Not throw any item in the bus and outside the windows/doors.
 - f. Not open back door or the windows with alarms unless in an emergency.
 - g. Refrain from shouting or making loud noises.
 - h. Stay out of aisles while bus is in motion.
 - i. Keep the bus clean and hold on to the garbage until bus has stopped and then put it into the garbage container.
 - j. Not smoke on or near the bus.
 - k. Not eat or drink on the bus.
2. The driver's responsibilities include:
 - a. Knowledge of the school bus transportation rules and regulations.
 - b. Pre-inspection and post-inspection.
 - c. Ensure bus is mechanically sound prior to transporting students.
 - d. Ensure students are picked up and dropped off according to the schedule (both during the regular school day and during special field trips).
 - e. Safe transportation of students between school and home or on excursions.
 - f. Minimizing distractions such as playing audio and video.
 - g. Enforce bus rules and ensure student's safety when boarding, riding, and departing.
 - h. Report concerns to the principal.
 - i. Maintain a daily record of the number of passengers transported.
3. The supervisor's responsibilities for field trips include:
 - a. Stay with group – no wandering off.
 - b. Refrain from smoking.
 - c. Eat meals with the assigned group.
 - d. Being prompt for **all** scheduled meetings, including meeting at the bus, special events, etc.
4. The student's responsibilities include:
 - a. Never wandering from the group leader.

- b. Eating lunch with the assigned group.
 - c. Listening to group leaders/supervisors.
 - d. Respecting self and others at all times.
- 5. When a student is misbehaving on the bus:
 - a. The driver shall report any incidents or violations or misconduct to the principal.
 - b. If dangerous conduct is occurring, the bus driver is required to pull off the road at the first safe opportunity to address the matter.
 - c. Students will have their bus riding privileges suspended or revoked for misconduct. In such cases, parents will be responsible for transporting their child to and from school.
- 6. In Case of Emergency, the bus driver shall:
 - a. Abide by bus evacuation policy and procedures.
 - b. Contact the teacher or group supervisor.
 - c. Contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact of the child (if possible).
 - d. Inform the school principal.

Cash Payment

Policy

The Gitksan West Secondary School does not accept cash payments for any purpose.

Procedures:

1. All tuition and educational funding are received through:
 - Nominal Roll, Indigenous Services Canada
 - British Columbia Ministry of Education and Child Care
 - Other funding agreements.
2. Any additional payments to the School must be made using approved non-cash payment methods such as:
 - Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT);
 - Direct Deposit;
 - Cheque; and
 - Interac e-Transfer.
3. Financial records for all payments and funding received shall be maintained by the GWSS School administration.

Child Abuse and Reporting

Policy

The Gitksan West Secondary School is committed to the prevention of child abuse and recognizes the ethical and legal role that they have for the overall well-being and safety of the students entrusted in its care.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles are provided to inform all parties serving students and families at Gitksan West Secondary School.

- To provide an environment that will nurture our student's self-esteem, confidence and determination to succeed.
- The safety and well-being of our students are fundamental to their education.
- Students are entitled to a nurturing, loving and caring environment and free from abuse, neglect, harm or threat of harm.
- Primary caregivers for children are the parents however, when that is not possible then the extended family has a responsibility for their care and well-being.

Procedures

1. All staff must be familiar with the *Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers (June 2017)*⁴.
2. Staff will receive an annual training session on the signs of child abuse and reporting procedures from the local Delegated Aboriginal Child Welfare agency.
3. The school will provide students with health and safety programs for its students to give them the knowledge that they need in order to protect themselves from harm.
4. The Appointed School Official (ASO) is the school principal. The Alternate Appointed School Official (AASO) is the Student/Family Advocate (School Counsellor). Both are responsible for "working with child care workers to determine whether a child has been harmed by someone who works or volunteers at the school, or works on contract for the school".⁵
5. The role of the Alternate Appointed School Official is to "ensure the continuity of the reporting and investigation process in the event of possible involvement of the primary appointed official in a matter that falls under section 14 of the *CFCSA*"⁶.

⁴Ministry of Children and Family Development. June 2017. *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers*: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/public-safety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_serviceprovider.pdf

⁵ Ministry of Education. Supporting Our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse.

⁶ *ibid*

6. In fulfilling the role of ASO, they may be required to:
 - “investigate where appropriate on behalf of the school authority;
 - ensure a safe school environment during investigations;
 - consult with the child welfare worker and/or police;
 - ensure that no school employee interferes with any investigations;
 - communicate with parents with respect to actions taken by the school authority;
 - report to the Commission for Teacher Regulation, Teacher Regulation Branch, Ministry of Education, when the School Authority dismisses, suspends or otherwise disciplines a certified teacher or school principal (*Independent School Act* section 7 and 7.2); and,
 - refer student(s) for counseling according to the school’s policies”.⁷
7. The principal will assist school personnel in identification and their legal duty to report child abuse cases under the *Child Family and Community Service Act* (Part 3, Div. 1.14.1).
8. It is all staff’s legal responsibility under section 14 of that Act to report promptly to an Intake Social Worker at Gitxsan Child & Family Services (250-842-2258) if there is a reason to believe that a student has been or is likely to be:
 - Physically harmed, sexually abused or exploited, or neglected by a parent, or
 - Otherwise in need of protection as set out in Section 13 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*.
9. If staff are unable to speak directly to the Gitxsan Child & Family Services Society Intake Social Worker, a report will be made to Hazelton Ministry of Children & Family Development at 250-842-7624; Helpline for Children is 310-1234. If the child is in immediate danger, the staff member will call 911.
10. The ASO or AASO will notify the Band Designate that a report has been made.
11. In the event of staff receiving a disclosure from a student, the following protocol is to be adhered to as practically possible:
 - a. Report to a Gitxsan Child & Family Services Society Intake Social Worker or the Ministry for Children and Family Development Social Worker.
 - b. The staff member must take notes documenting only what the student reported verbatim and not ask any follow up questions.
 - c. The staff member must not include assumptions or opinions.
 - d. When quoting a student’s comments, use quotation marks around their direct quotes.
 - e. Notify the principal that a report has been made.

⁷ Ministry of Education. Supporting Our Students: A Guide for Independent School Personnel Responding to Child Abuse: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/independent-schools/sos_guide_independent_schools.pdf

12. All information gathered is held confidential and put in a sealed signed envelope and put in the Student's PR file which will abide by the disclosure policy as stipulated in the *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers*⁸ (June 2017).

⁸ Ministry of Children and Family Development. June 2017. *BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect for Service Providers*: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/public-safety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_serviceprovider.pdf

Dress Code

Policy

The Gitksen West Secondary School Student Dress Code is to provide a safe, orderly and respectful learning environment for all.

Procedures

1. We recognize that the way students dress reflects their identity, their family, and their wilp, and we respect the cultural significance these connections carry.
2. We also recognize that the clothes students' wear reflects the pride in our school and the Gitksen nation.
3. Students will not be permitted to cover their head with hoodies in the school.
4. We also believe that there are times and places to wear certain attire that would be appropriate.
5. Students are not permitted to wear clothing that is vulgar, offensive or obscene, or which endangers the health and safety of the students or others.
6. Presenting a bodily appearance or wearing clothing that is provocative, revealing, vulgar, offensive or obscene, or which endangers the health and safety of the students or others is prohibited. For example:
 - a. Attire or belongings with messages or illustration that are lewd, indecent or vulgar or that advertise products or services forbidden by law to minors;
 - b. Offensive hardware jewelry, such as studded arm bands; and
 - c. Symbols, styles or attire associated with intimidation, violence, gangs, stereotypes and racism.
7. Students who are inappropriately dressed will be referred to the principal to deal with the situation in a mutually respectful and discreet manner.

Educational Programming and Curriculum Development

Policy

Staff of the school will adhere to standards of educational programming and curriculum development, in accordance with the Ministry of Education, including the Independent Schools Branch.

Procedures

1. Teachers are expected to:
 - (a) Follow the requirements in the Independent School Act for developing and delivering educational programming and curriculum to students of the school.
 - (b) Follow the guidelines for teachers in the core competencies from the Ministry of Education.
 - (c) Collaborate with the Special Education department in developing and implementing an Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.s) or S.M.A.R.T. Goals for any student in their classroom considered to have additional learning requirements and/or special needs. These should be completed by the end of September and reviewed and updated by February annually.
 - (d) Submit a daily classroom schedule to the principal which is reflective of the overall educational programming for the semester.
2. All teachers must provide the principal with a written copy of the educational programs and/or curriculum that they intend to use in their classrooms by September 30th of each school year or as directed by the principal and/or designate.
3. Teachers are expected to update their educational programs and/or curriculum plans and submit them to the principal and/or designate by the end of January for the second semester.
4. The principal must provide consent before any new educational programs or curriculum is developed or used in any classroom or program of the school.

Evergreen Certificate

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School will honour the achievements of students with special needs by awarding them with the Evergreen Certificate⁹.

Procedures

1. Students who have Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.) and who have not met the goals of their education program but have completed their personal learning goals will be eligible for the Evergreen Certificate.
2. The Evergreen Certificate is intended to celebrate the success of the student even though they are not eligible for a Dogwood Diploma. This is pre-dominantly an education program for students who are not succeeding in an academic oriented program.
3. Students are not placed in the program until after completing Grade 10.
4. Students are encouraged to move back into an academic program, but only after they have demonstrated sufficient personal responsibility and academic success.
5. The program implemented with the following goals:
 - Students will move through the academic program at their own pace
 - Students will be mainstreamed into the regular classroom program
 - An emphasis is placed on personal, social, emotional growth and life skills.

⁹ School Completion Certificate. Ministry of Education: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/school-completion-certificate-program>

Field Trips

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School recognizes the benefits of fieldtrips outside of the school environment for educational purposes.

Procedures

1. Good behaviour and attendance are required to participate in field trips (local and distant).
2. Students not completing the required course of studies at school will not be permitted to participate in field trips.
3. All day trips within our catchment areas require a notification being given to parent/guardians.
4. Day trips beyond our catchment areas will require permission forms to be signed by parents/guardians and returned to the school.
5. All overnight field trips will require a permission form to be signed and returned by parents/guardians.
6. All overnight field trips will have at least one male and one female chaperone.
7. No alcohol and/or drugs will be permitted on school field trips.

Files and Student Records

Policy

The Gitksen West Secondary School will maintain files and records pertaining to students in a safe and confidential manner, in a locked, fireproof cabinet.

Procedures

1. A student file must be maintained for each student in the school. Each file shall be reviewed bi-annually and annually and updated as necessary in order to provide an accurate record of the student's education. The following data must be included in the student file:
 - (a) Official administrative records
 - (b) Educational achievement records
 - (c) Notification that the child is on an IEP and/or a copy of the IEP
 - (d) Personal information, allergies, medical information, emergency information
 - (e) Report cards
 - (f) Attendance records
 - (g) Assessments
 - (h) Other relevant information ie. registration form with BC ID, status card, proof of residence, vaccine records
2. The homeroom teacher must ensure that all relevant data is placed in student files.
3. All information contained in a student's file is considered to be strictly confidential to staff, students and parents unless released by the parent or student upon the age of eighteen or requested by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (concerns around child protection) and the Ministry of Health (contact tracing for pandemic).
4. Student files are accessible only to the school staff who are directly involved with the student's program, and upon permission by the parents/guardians in the event another professional requires information on the student. The student and/or their parents have a right to a professional interpretation of the data contained in an official record.

5. The principal will ensure that student records are reviewed on a bi-annual and annual basis, and upon the student's transfer to another educational institute, to ensure that the contents meet the necessary guidelines.

Transfer of Student Files

6. A photocopy of a student's file may be transferred in a timely manner under the following circumstances:
 - (a) upon receipt of an appropriate request by an educational institute
 - (b) where the parent/guardian or student (if 18 or older) consents
 - (c) when the student is enrolled in the outside agency.
7. Photocopies will only be released to outside agencies upon written consent of the parent/guardian.
8. All students and employees of the school who have access to information that is in a student's file are expected to keep confidential all the information that in the file.

Permanent Student Record

9. The Permanent Student Record must be retained by Gitksan West Secondary School for 55 years after a student has withdrawn or graduated from school¹⁰.

¹⁰ Ministry of Education (2021). Permanent Student Record Instructions:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/permanent-student-record>

Graduation Requirements

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School complies with the BC Ministry of Education to meet the requirements of graduation.

Procedures

1. To be eligible to receive the provincial Dogwood Certificate, students must have:
 - 48 required course credits,
 - 28 or more elective credits,
 - 4 credit portfolio assessment, and
 - 16 credits earned at the Grade 12 level.
2. Students require a minimum of 80 credits to graduate. Of these 80 credits¹¹,
 - At least 16 credits must be at the Grade 12 level, including a required Language Arts 12 and Career Life Connections
 - At least 28 credits must be elective course credits
 - 52 credits are required from the following:
 - Career-Life Education (4 credits), and Career-Life Connections (4 credits)
 - Physical and Health Education 10 (4 credits)
 - Science 10 (4 credits), and a Science 11 or 12 (4 credits)
 - Social Studies 10 (4 credits), and a Social Studies 11 or 12 (4 credits)
 - A Math 10 (4 credits), and a Math 11 or 12 (4 credits)
 - A Language Arts 10, 11 and a required 12 (12 credits total)
 - An Arts Education 10, 11, or 12 and/or an Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies 10, 11, or 12 (4 credits total)
 - In addition, students must also complete three graduation assessments:
 - The Grade 10 Numeracy Assessment was introduced in 2018
 - The Grade 10 Literacy Assessment was introduced in 2019/20
 - The Grade 12 Literacy Assessment will be introduced in 2021/22
3. Teachers are required to submit all grades for courses for each graduating student to the Ministry of Education in a timely manner.

¹¹ Ministry of Education: Dogwood Diploma at a glance: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/graduation>

Harassment and Bullying Prevention

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School will ensure that students are protected from all forms of bullying, regardless of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression (BC Human Rights Code, July 2016).

Students who feel safe, valued, connected, and respected tend to be physically and mentally healthier, and perform better academically (Preventing Bullying and Ensuring Safe and Caring School Communities – Level 1; Province of British Columbia, 2013, p 13).

Guiding Principles

- ❖ We make our school accessible to all students and provide equitable opportunities for successful experiences.
- ❖ We treat each individual with respect and dignity, in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment.
- ❖ We provide educational opportunities that allow all students to develop their maximum emotional, intellectual, social and physical skills.
- ❖ We promote lifelong learning to enable our students to succeed in a changing society.
- ❖ We share the responsibility for the education of students with the community.
- ❖ We foster positive relationships among all groups and individuals based on trust, honesty and fairness.

What is Bullying¹²?

“Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending themselves. So, everyone needs to get involved to help stop it. Bullying is wrong! It is behaviour that makes the person being bullied feel afraid or uncomfortable. There are many ways that young people bully each other, even if they don’t realize it at the time.

Some of these include:

- Punching, shoving and other acts that hurt people physically
- Spreading bad rumours about people
- Keeping certain people out of a group
- Teasing people in a mean way
- Getting certain people to “gang up” on others.”

Common types of bullying¹³:

¹² Bullying Canada: <https://www.bullyingcanada.ca/get-help/>

¹³ *ibid*

1. Verbal bullying – name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours, threatening, making negative references to one’s culture, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, unwanted sexual comments.
2. Social Bullying – mobbing, scapegoating, excluding others from a group, humiliating others with public gestures or graffiti intended to put others down.
3. Physical Bullying – hitting, poking, pinching, chasing, shoving, coercing, destroying or stealing belongings, unwanted sexual touching.
4. Cyber Bullying – using the internet or text messaging to intimidate, put-down, spread rumours or make fun of someone.

What is Harassment?

Harassment¹⁴ is any behaviour or comment that is hurtful, degrading, humiliating or offensive to another person. Intimidation is the act of causing fear in order to force or influence someone to do, or not to do, something.

The difference between bullying and harassment¹⁵

Bullying and harassment are similar, yet different:

- Harassment is similar to bullying because someone hurts another person through cruel, offensive and insulting behaviours
- Harassment is different from bullying in that it is a form of discrimination.

Prevention Strategies that are implemented:

1. Teachers incorporate anti-bullying programs throughout the curriculum which includes circle/sharing meetings, novel studies and using youtube.
2. Sm’algyax teachers teach values such as respect, kindness, sharing and caring throughout the year.
3. School wide programs can include curriculum resources and speakers from Bullying Canada, Red Cross, WITS (Walk Away, Ignore, Talk it out, Seek Help) and The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (Society for SACSC).

Initial intervention for harassment:

- i. This is a summary for dealing with students who are involved with harassment behaviours. Confidentiality must be practiced unless there is serious self-harm, abuse or harm inflicted on another person which then must be brought to the appropriate authority.

¹⁴ https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teaching-tools/student-safety/sec_callsafe.pdf

¹⁵ Canadian Red Cross: <https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/violence-bullying-and-abuse-prevention/educators/bullying-and-harassment-prevention/definitions-of-bullying-and-harassment>

- ii. The staff person will meet immediately with the student(s) in private and complete these steps:
 - **Investigate** the complaint or report; interview participants, witnesses and review evidence as necessary.
 - **Assess** if the harm is harassment or child abuse. In the case of child abuse, refer to the Child Abuse Policy.
 - **Parental Involvement** – Parents may be informed and involved early in the discussion, dependent on the severity of the incident.
 - **Student Reconciliation**
 - Describe the harassment behaviour to the students in a specific and concrete way and explain the impact on the recipient(s).
 - State the school's policy on harassment and possible action or consequences.
 - Discuss expectations in a specific and concrete way. Explain options: encourage student to recommend remedies.
 - Indicate when you will check back with the student to see if the harassment has been resolved.
 - **Documentation** – A summary of these events should be written and retained by the staff person and administration.

Secondary Intervention:

- i. If the harassment behaviour continues or escalates, the following action must be taken.
 - **Inform** parents that the behaviour has continued/escalated and action will be taken.
 - **Refer** to principal and/or appropriate authority immediately.
 - **Student Reconciliation** – Staff and administration are responsible to make a plan for healing and accountability for all involved, including parents, caregivers, harassed student(s) and harassing student(s), counselling staff and teacher involved. Prudence needs to be exercised with the alleged harassing students until a plan of action is developed. In school suspension may be part of the student reconciliation and accountability.
 - **Restorative Justice** - The school may invite Elders and parents to participate in Circle meetings.
 - **Expulsion and Board Involvement** – If the disciplinary action proposed is serious, such as expulsion, the principal should inform the Education Manager/Director prior to taking any action. The principal shall carry out a reasonable investigation of the matter and make a determination as to the appropriate discipline to be administered.
 - **Dispute Resolution** – If there is a dispute from any party involved concerning the matter, the principal should inform the School Board of Directors shall take over the responsibility for dealing with the matter. The Board of Directors will carry out an investigation before taking any action.

Inclusion Policy

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School is committed to creating an inclusive learning community where all students are welcomed, valued, and supported to achieve their full potential. Inclusion is the foundation of all educational practices, ensuring equitable access, meaningful participation, and a sense of belonging for every learner, including those with disabilities and diverse abilities. This policy is aligned with the Inclusive Education Policy¹⁶ and Inclusive Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines¹⁷ of the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Procedures

1. Inclusive Education Principles

1. All students have the right to equitable access to learning in inclusive environments alongside their peers.
2. Educational practices will reflect inclusive design, removing barriers to participation rather than placing the burden on the learner to adapt.
3. Diversity is recognized as a strength, and all students are supported in their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and cultural development.
4. Inclusion supports lifelong learning, well-being, and positive transitions beyond secondary school.

2. School Commitment to Inclusion

Gitksen West Secondary School is committed to equitable and inclusive practices by:

- A. Providing a continuum of supports within inclusive classroom settings.
- B. Using flexible, responsive teaching practices such as differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning.
- C. Identifying and addressing barriers to learning as early as possible.
- D. Collaborating with families, caregivers, community agencies, three Gitksen West communities, and other First Nation partners.
- E. Supporting ongoing professional learning for staff in inclusive practices.
- F. Aligning policies and practices with provincial guidelines and inclusive education standards.

3. Student Support and Assessment

- A. Ongoing classroom-based assessment will guide instruction and identify student strengths and needs.
- B. Assessment practices will be inclusive, culturally responsive, and varied in approach.

¹⁶ Government of British Columbia. (2023). Inclusive Education Policy. Retrieved at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/inclusive-education>

¹⁷ Government of British Columbia. (2024). *Inclusive Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines*. Retrieved at: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/inclusive_ed_policy_manual.pdf

- C. When additional support is required, a collaborative planning process will be initiated involving staff, families, and the student where appropriate.
- D. The School-Based Team (principal, teachers, learning support staff, and education assistants) will meet regularly to plan supports and monitor progress.
- E. Families will be engaged as partners and informed through regular communication and meetings.

4. Individualized Planning

- A. Individualized Education Plans¹⁸ (IEPs) will be developed for students requiring specialized support, in accordance with provincial guidelines.
- B. Where appropriate, other planning tools (e.g., Student Learning Plans) may be used to support inclusive practice.
- C. Plans will:
 - Focus on student strengths, interests, and goals
 - Include meaningful, achievable outcomes
 - Identify supports, strategies, and services
 - Be regularly reviewed and updated.
- D. Students will be included in goal-setting and planning wherever possible to support self-advocacy and independence.

5. Learning Environment and Supports

- A. Most students will be supported within regular classroom environments with appropriate adaptations and supports.
- B. Additional supports may include:
 - Differentiated instruction
 - Assistive technology
 - Education assistant support
 - Small-group or targeted interventions
- C. Decisions regarding supports will prioritize inclusion, participation, and student dignity.

6. Collaboration and Partnerships

- A. The school will foster collaborative relationships with families, caregivers, and community organizations.
- B. Partnerships with Gitsegukla, Gitwangak and Gitanyow First Nations will be respected and integrated into inclusive practices.
- C. External agencies may be engaged to support student success when appropriate and with consent.

¹⁸ Government of British Columbia. (2026). Individual Education Plan. Retrieved at: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/inclusive-education>

7. Records and Confidentiality

- A. Student records will be securely maintained in accordance with privacy legislation.
- B. Access to records is limited to authorized personnel.
- C. Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to access records with appropriate support for interpretation.
- D. Consent is required for sharing information beyond authorized personnel.

8. Appeal Process

Gitksen West Secondary School is committed to fair and transparent processes:

- Concerns regarding inclusive supports should first be addressed collaboratively with school staff.
- A written appeal may be submitted to the principal if concerns are unresolved. (Please refer to the GWSS Appeal Policy & Procedures).
- The principal will work with all parties to reach an equitable resolution.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

A. The school will continuously review inclusive practices to ensure effectiveness and accountability.

B. Evaluation will include:

- Student progress and outcomes
- Effectiveness of supports and interventions
- Feedback from students, families, and staff

C. The school will align with best practices supported by organizations such as First Nations Education Steering Committee and First Nations Schools Association.

D. Ongoing improvement will reflect provincial priorities in inclusive education.

Learning Educational Resources

Policy

The Gitksen West Secondary Board of Directors will approve learning educational resources used by the School for a five-year period unless they are withdrawn. The school board may grant an extension of an additional five years to use the same learning resource.

Procedures

1. Effective July 1, 2016, all independent school authorities were required to have policies and procedures on how learning resources are chosen for use in schools as the Ministry of Education no longer conducts evaluation processes to recommend learning resources. The learning resources requirement is authorized under the authority of the Independent School Act, s4(1)(b).
2. This policy sets out the procedures that determine how learning resources are chosen, as well as how concerns or challenges will be addressed by the school.
3. The school will encourage teachers to utilize education media that have been formally evaluated before being used in the classroom. The Curriculum/Professional Development Committee will carry out the evaluation process which will involve a minimum of four school authority representatives: the principal and two teachers who each have a minimum of three year's teaching preferably in the grade level and subject area for which the resources are being used, and a Board Member.
4. An evaluation process must be completed prior to teachers selecting and using new learning resources in their classroom.
5. The evaluation criteria used in determining appropriate learning resources for the school will include, but are not limited to:
 - Supporting the learning standards and outcomes of the curriculum
 - Assisting students in making connections between what they learn in school and its practical application in their lives
 - Addressing developmental and age appropriateness
 - Having effective instructional and technical design
 - Meeting the requirements set by copyright and privacy (PIPA) legislation
 - Suitability based on the pedagogical, social, philosophical, cultural and/or spiritual values of Gitksen West Secondary School.
6. Evaluating resources from the perspective of pedagogical, social, philosophical, cultural and/or spiritual values will:

- encourage understanding and promote positive social attitudes and respect for diversity and individual differences
 - ensure that BC students will see themselves and their life experiences, within a free, pluralistic, and democratic society and evidenced in the learning materials they use in their classroom
 - identify potential controversial or offensive elements that may exist in the content or presentation, and highlight where resources might support positive social attitudes, diversity, and demonstrate tolerance and respect for individual differences.
7. Resource evaluation will be based on one or more of the following inclusion criteria:
 - age
 - multiculturalism and diversity
 - accessibility
 - beliefs and values
 - cultural attributes
 - socio-economic factors
 - humour
 - ethical and legal considerations
 - language
 - course content, skills, and competencies
 - respect for individual differences
 - violence
 - social responsibility
 - democratic principles
 - service learning
 - pedagogical perspectives
 8. The Gitksan West Secondary School Board of Directors will approve resources used by the School which then become recommended resources for a five year period unless they are withdrawn. The authority may continue to use the learning resources after five years if the authority grants an extension of an additional five year period.
 9. The Learning Resource approval will be confirmed by a motion passed by the Gitksan West Secondary School Board of Directors.
 10. Learning Resources will maintain a recommended status for five years, after which continued status will be subject to, but not limited to, criteria such as curriculum relevance, currency, and availability.
 11. The recommendation to withdraw any of the resources will be made by the Curriculum/Professional Development Committee to the Board of Directors which will be approved by a motion.

12. Challenges to the use of authority recommended learning resources must be made in writing to the principal identifying the learning resource and stating the reason why the resource(s) may not be suitable. Challenges will only be accepted from individuals in the school community whose children are directly engaged with the learning resource(s), educators who use the resource(s) or Ministry of Education staff.
13. Within 14 days of written receipt of a learning resource challenge, the principal will convene a meeting with an Appeal Committee which consists of 2 members of the Curriculum/Professional Development Committee and another practicing teacher who has at least three years of experience in the grade level(s) and subject area(s) for which the resource is used.
14. Based on the Appeal Committee's recommendation, the Board of Directors may dismiss the challenge, raise the awareness of the implications of using the resource with the teaching staff, communicate with the publisher and/or withdraw the recommended resource from further use in the school.
15. The individual issuing the challenge will be notified by the principal of the committee's decision in writing within 14 days of the decision.
16. The Gitksen West Secondary School may use the services of the Education Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC), First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) to assist in choosing or approving learning resources.

Definition of Learning Resources

Learning Resources are texts, videos, software, and instructional materials that teachers use to assist students to meet the expectations for learning defined by provincial and local curricula.

This policy is specific to learning resources which form the core program collection of resources.

Learning resources used in the classroom will be evaluated and approved by the Gitksen West Secondary School with consideration given to curriculum fit, pedagogy, social considerations, age and developmental appropriateness, as well as the school authority's philosophical, cultural and/or spiritual values.

Management of Life-Threatening Allergies

Policy

The Gitksen West Secondary School believes that Anaphylaxis management is a shared responsibility that includes allergic children, their parents, caregivers, and the entire school community.

Procedures

1. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to:
 - a. Inform the school principal of their child's allergy (and asthma) and discuss the need for an individual plan (Strategies to avoid allergens, communication with staff, special requirements).
 - b. Complete medical forms and the "Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan" which includes a photograph, description of the child's allergy, emergency procedures, contact information, and consent to administer the medication.
 - c. Advise the school if their child has outgrown an allergy or no longer requires an epinephrine auto-injector. A letter from the child's physician/allergist is required and will be put in the student's file.
2. The child's allergy must be recorded on the Permanent Student Record, School Registration Form, and student emergency contact information card. The names and photos of students with medical conditions and allergies must be posted in the copy room, staff room and kitchen areas.
3. Availability and location of Epinephrine auto-injectors or Allergy Medication:
 - a. Students must always carry their own Epinephrine auto-injector or allergy medication with them.
 - b. The parent/guardian must provide the Epinephrine auto-injector or Medication to the school.
 - c. It cannot be presumed that a student will self-administer their auto injector while having a reaction.
 - d. Posters describing the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis or allergic reaction and the use of the Epinephrine auto-injector should be posted in relevant classrooms and the office.
 - e. If a student who is allergic or anaphylaxis is going on a field trip; the Epinephrine auto-injectors and allergy medication must be brought along.
4. On an annual basis there will be an awareness session for all staff at the beginning of the school year, which will include:
 - a. Ways to reduce the risk of exposure
 - b. Recognition of signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis
 - c. When and how to give the epinephrine auto-injector.

5. In case of emergency:
- a. One person must stay with the individual at all times.
 - b. One person goes for help.
 - c. Administer epinephrine at the first sign of reaction.
 - d. Contact the emergency room, and regardless of the degree of reaction or response to epinephrine, transfer the child to the emergency room.
 - e. It is suggested that another individual accompany the driver to provide assistance.
 - f. Contact student's parent/guardian.
 - g. A calm or familiar person stay with the student until a parent/guardian arrives.

Medical Emergencies & Student Injury

Policy

In the event of a medical emergency of students, the staff of the Gitksan West Secondary School will provide the best treatment and care as possible which may require transportation to a medical facility for examination and treatment if necessary.

Procedures

1. All Staff are required to have Basic First Aid and CPR. Those who do not have a valid 1st Aid & CPR will be required to take it during the Professional Development Days or take it during their break. The course fees will be reimbursed by the school upon submission of the original receipt and certificate.
2. If a student requires immediate attention, every attempt will be made to address the medical needs of the student immediately by the 1st aid attendant.
3. Another staff will call for emergency assistance, if required.
4. Instructions of emergency assistance will be followed.
5. The student's parent will be contacted to come pick up their child as soon as possible.
6. All medical emergencies will be reported to the principal who will inform the Education Manager/Administrator of the respective Bands.
7. If necessary, a staff person of the school may drive the student to the nearest emergency unit. If a student must be transported to hospital, every attempt will be made to notify the student's parent(s). If the parents are unavailable, every attempt will be made to locate one of the persons listed on the emergency contact sheet of the student.
8. Staff of the school may not administer prescribed medicine to a student unless the parent consents, and the medicine is prescribed by a medical practitioner, dentist or a physician authorized to prescribe such medicine. The prescribed medicine must have proper instructions, be in its original container, have the date, dosage and medical practitioners and student's legal name on it.
9. Parental consent is required for staff to administer over the counter medication to their child. Staff are required to record the type of medicine, dosage, time and date.
10. The principal will notify the Education Manager/Director verbally with a follow up with a written report identifying all serious injuries.
11. Staff are required to fill out an *Incident Report Form*, describing what happened, any first aid that was administered, and by whom. All completed forms will be kept in an Incident Report Binder, separate binder in the principal's office.

Personal Information Privacy

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School is committed to meeting the privacy standards established by British Columbia's Personal Information Protection Act¹⁹ (PIPA) and any other applicable legislation.

Procedures

1. Confidential information of the school shall be handled in a manner consistent with the provisions of the PIPA (British Columbia).
2. The Privacy Commissioner is the principal.
3. Parent instructions will be respected and abided by.
4. The Ten Principles²⁰ of Privacy Protection govern the actions of the school as they relate to the use of personal information. The Ten Principles are as follows:
 - a. Be accountable
 - b. Identify the purposes
 - c. Obtain consent
 - d. Limit collection
 - e. Limit Use, disclosure and retention
 - f. Be accurate
 - g. Use appropriate safeguards
 - h. Be open
 - i. Give individual access
 - j. Provide recourse.
5. The most recent update of British Columbia's *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)* is available, upon request, at the school office.

¹⁹ Personal Information Protection Act (http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_03063_01)

²⁰ Province of British Columbia. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/managing-a-business/protect-personal-information/principles>

Public Speaking Skills

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School recognizes the importance of students developing a high degree of competence in the four communication skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, and recognizes that these skills must be developed together throughout the curriculum at all grade levels.

Procedures

1. One of the three core competencies of the BC Curriculum is Communication: “The Communication competency encompasses the knowledge, skills, processes and dispositions we associate with interactions with others. Through their communication, students acquire, develop and transform ideas and information, and make connections with others to share their ideas, express their individuality, further their learning, and get things done. The communication competency is fundamental to finding satisfaction, purpose and joy”.²¹
2. While recognizing the importance of all four communication skills, it is the policy of the Gitksen West Secondary School that a special emphasis be placed on the development of speaking skills in the students.
3. The rationale is as follows:
 - A. Some student’s inadequate oral skills which contribute to the problems students may experience in developing their reading skills. To compensate for observed oral language deficiencies, it is important that the school spend time developing speaking skills.
 - B. The development of speaking skills relates much more directly to the enhancement of self-esteem in students than does the development of writing skills.
 - C. The development of cognitive or thinking skills is a good route to the development of writing skills.
 - D. The use of speaking in the classroom allows for immediate student accountability. This accountability is a primary objective of the school.
 - E. The development and use of speaking skills in the classroom generates many activities; oral exams, presentations, speeches that are highly visible and communicate a strong message to the community. These activities are important in developing community confidence and support. This support is an important element in the development and growth of the school.
4. The traditional culture of Gitksen people is oral and in many aspects of the culture such as the li’ligit (feast) requires public speaking in the feast hall.

²¹ Ministry of Education, Core Competencies: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies>

Reporting to Parents/Guardians

Policy

The Gitksen West Secondary School will report to parents and guardians describing their children's school progress in accordance with the School Act of BC.

Procedures

1. In accordance with the school act, the school will provide a minimum of five²² reports to parents annually: three formal and two interim reports.
2. Report dates are determined annually and communicated through the school calendar.
3. A report of student progress shall be completed through scheduled reporting periods held during the school year.
4. The issuing of school reports shall be provided to parents/guardians.
5. Reporting to parents/guardians shall be done on the Gitksen West Secondary School approved report cards and will contain sufficient information to provide an adequate standing on student progress, transferrable to any other school.

²² Student Reporting. Ministry of Education: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/student-reporting>

School Bus - Transportation

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School will provide student transportation to and from school for regular school instruction and fieldtrips with qualified bus drivers and regularly inspected buses. Students are required to maintain proper and orderly conduct while riding the school buses.

Procedures

1. The school will provide bus transportation to students who attend Gitksen West Secondary School on the days when school is in session and for fieldtrips.
2. On field trips, school staff will supervise students that are being transported by the school bus.
3. Students will only be dropped off at the designated bus stop unless the parents have notified the school prior to the end of the school day.
4. Due to liability reasons, only registered students and authorized persons of the School are permitted to ride the buses.
5. School buses will adhere to transportation and safety procedures as set out by the Province of BC to ensure the safe operation of the buses and safe transportation of the students.
6. Seating plans for the bus route may be established by the bus drivers as required.
7. The students are required to follow the Bus Behaviour Policy while riding on the school bus. Misbehaviour could result in having bus transportation privileges suspended or removed.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility:

- √ Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child (ren) arrives at their designated bus stop at the appropriate times.
- √ In the case that a student is picked up early for any reason, parents and guardians are required to phone the school ahead of time and pre-arrange this with the secretary/receptionist.
- √ If a student is not taking the bus home, parents and guardians are responsible for picking their child up no later than five minutes after school has ended, unless they are participating in extra-curricular activities.
- √ Parents and guardians must respect and follow posted signage including but not limited to no parking signs and speed limits.

School Bus Cancellation

Policy

The Gitksen West Secondary School principal may cancel school bus transportation for students due to inclement weather.

Procedures

1. The Bus Drivers will contact the principal if the road conditions are unsafe to safely transport students from home to school by 7am.
2. The principal will then determine whether or not to cancel bus transportation.
3. The principal will have the administrative assistant notify the staff that transportation has been cancelled.
4. The administrative assistant will notify the parents/guardians that transportation has been cancelled.
5. The administrative assistant will put a notice on the web site by 8am.
6. In the event that transportation is cancelled, both students and staff who are impacted by the transportation will be considered an “excused absence”.
7. Parents/guardians may make alternative arrangements for their children by arranging for them to stay with their immediate family members or may pick up their children at the school.

School Bus Evacuation

Policy

School bus evacuation drills are as important a part of the school program as are fire drills to evacuate a school building. Drills must be conducted for each bus at least twice during the school year.

Procedures

1. Each bus will do an evacuation drill at least twice each school year (once by the end of October and once again before spring break); at least one drill must include the teachers, teacher assistants and the principal.
2. All practice school bus evacuation drills will be held under the direct supervision of the principal.
3. The principal will assign members of the school to assist students unloading from the bus through the rear exit door due to the height of the bus from the surface on which the bus is parked.
4. When discussing school bus emergency drills with students, the importance of an orderly evacuation must be emphasized.
5. School bus evacuation route and procedures will be reviewed periodically throughout the year.
6. A record of the school bus emergency drills must be recorded and kept in the principal's office.

School Closure

Policy

The Gitksen West Secondary School may close due to emergencies with school plant operations and inclement weather or other emergency situations.

Procedures

1. The principal may close the school for emergency situations such as no heat, no water or power outages that is considered unsafe for classroom occupancy.
2. In the event of plant failure prior to school opening, school may be closed for the day. Should the condition of the plant improve before lunch, school may resume in the afternoon. This would be at the discretion of the principal.
3. If plant failure occurs during regular school hours, classes will continue for one hour. Should the plant failure not be corrected within an hour, school may be cancelled for the remaining part of the day.
4. If the plant failure is corrected within an hour at or after 11:00 a.m., the school lunch break will be adjusted accordingly and afternoon classes will resume after the lunch break.
5. If there is a serious deterioration in weather conditions while school is in session the principal may dismiss school early.
6. All such actions shall be immediately communicated to the Education Managers/Directors and on the school's website and social media sites. The Board chairperson is advised of all class cancellations due to inclement weather within a reasonable timeframe.
7. The administrative assistant will contact the parents/guardians, teachers and other staff regarding the school closure.
8. The principal will inform the Board of Directors of all school closures.

School Code of Conduct

Policy

The entire Gitksen West Secondary School community of shall abide by a code of conduct. The purpose is to promote a safe, secure, supportive learning environment in which opportunities to grow, learn and teach are maximized, and where everyone is treated with respect.

Procedures

To achieve a quality educational learning environment, the students shall:

1. Show kindness and respect by:
 - a. Respecting the property of others and self;
 - b. Avoiding name calling and put downs; and
 - c. Do the best to learn as much as possible and help others to learn as much as they possibly can.
2. Set good examples for each other by:
 - a. Obeying school rules and encouraging others to do the same;
 - b. Demonstrate respect for self and others; and
 - c. Demonstrate personal value for education.
3. Work together to promote appropriate and helpful behaviour by:
 - a. Making decisions appropriate to all
 - b. Encouraging each other to do what is right
 - c. Being polite, respectful and courteous.
4. Work together to discourage inappropriate and hurtful behaviour by:
 - a. Respecting individual differences; and
 - b. Counteracting hurtful actions with helpful ones.

To achieve a quality educational learning environment, staff shall:

1. Show kindness and respect to one another;
2. Show kindness and respect to students and their families;
3. Be good role models for one another and for students;
4. Respect and celebrate individual differences amongst one another and students.

School Emergency Drills: Fire, Earthquake and Lockdown

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School recognizes the value of periodic emergency fire, earthquake and general emergency drills. The emergency fire drills, earthquake drills, and lockdown drills must be conducted separately from one another.

Procedures

1. Emergency drills must be performed throughout the school year as follows:
 - a). Fire drills - at least six times
 - b). Earthquake drills - at least three times
 - c). Lockdown - at least twice
 - d). Hold and secure – at least twice
2. Drills should include security measures that are appropriate to the emergency such as a major incident or threat of school violence within the school, or in relation to the school.
3. All classes will vacate their classrooms in accordance to their evacuation route (enclosed map) for all drills.
4. When evacuating the building, teachers must take their daily attendance sheet with them and ensure that attendance is taken before and after each drill. The administrative assistant is responsible for taking the administrative attendance sheet with them. The recording of drills shall be conducted and recorded by the principal and administrative assistant.
5. “Lockdown” is only used when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school, or in relation to the school.
6. A “hold and secure” is to secure the school due to an ongoing situation outside the school which is generally not related to the school (ie. armed robbery near the school).
7. When the school is evacuated, no one is to re-enter the school until the principal and/or designate has indicated that it is safe to do so.
8. In the event that it is unsafe to re-enter or exit a portion of the school, the staff and students will assemble at the designated location outside, at which time, arrangements will be made to transport students’ home, only if it is safe to do so.
9. Teachers must:
 - a. Post the evacuation route and procedures in the classroom and other locations throughout the school.
 - b. Ensure that students are familiar with fire evacuation routes, emergency drills, lockdown and “hold and secure” procedures during the first week of school.
 - c. Have their daily attendance readily available to take when evacuating the building.

- d. Review the emergency drill procedures periodically throughout the year.
- 10. It is recommended that at least one of the drills be conducted in co-ordination with the local emergency management coordinator or the Gitwangak Fire Department and be consistent with applicable federal, provincial and local emergency operations plans.
- 11. The principal shall ensure that a program of fire prevention education is taught in the school. Such a program may include:
 - a. The use of local and provincial fire authorities.
 - b. “Fire Prevention Week” activities.
 - c. Demonstrations on the use and maintenance of firefighting equipment.
 - d. Integration of fire prevention study within subject areas.
- 12. All staff will participate in fire extinguisher training at the beginning of the year.

Special Education

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School is committed to providing quality education programs and services to all our students, including students with disabilities and diverse abilities.

Procedures

1. All students have a right to obtain an education in the setting most appropriate for their needs.
2. The education of students should take place in the least restrictive, most normalized education setting in which these students can benefit.
3. All students have the right to access an education that encompasses their spiritual, physical, social, emotional and cognitive development to prepare them adequately for lifelong learning.
4. Gitksen West Secondary School, in its ongoing commitment to ensure equitable education opportunities, has established a Special Education program to develop and implement assessment tools and strategies to assist all learners. The goals are:
 - A. To provide a continuum of services for students with special needs.
 - B. To provide procedures for the identification and assessment of students with special needs.
 - C. To address special needs as early as possible, recognizing the benefits of early intervention.
 - D. To foster and maintain cooperative relationships with agencies and associations to provide services to the special need's population.
 - E. To plan appropriate and useful professional development.
 - F. The school will align their policies and procedures with the Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines²³
5. Identification of Special Needs:
 - A. Assessments will be used to determine student academic levels and, if applicable, student needs.
 - B. Students will be assessed throughout the school term to assess and track academic growth.

²³ Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines (2016). Ministry of Education: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/inclusive/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf

- C. Once identified, all efforts will be made to provide further assessment and the development of a learning plan that will include, but not be limited to, staff, support personnel, family, and administration.
 - D. The school-based team (principal, learning support teacher, teachers, and education assistant) will discuss the needs of the student and the options available for meeting student needs.
 - E. All results of assessments will be made available to families through parent/staff meetings.
 - F. An IEP (Individual Education Plan) will be developed for each student requiring specialized services.
6. IEP – Individual Education Plan:
- A. The principal is responsible for ensuring that an IEP is developed for those requiring specialized services in order to ensure that all needs are met.
 - B. The IEP will be a working document that will be re-visited during the school term.
 - C. The IEP will contain, but not necessarily be limited to, the following data as outlined in the First Nations Schools Association IEP template:
 - ✓ Student data – name, grade, age, parents.
 - ✓ Summary of strengths and needs.
 - ✓ Goals and objectives to be met during the school term.
 - ✓ Strategies and materials that may be utilized to meet the goals.
 - ✓ Recommendations for special services.
 - ✓ Review dates.
7. All student records will be kept in the secure filing storage located within the school office.
- A. Access to student files is limited to Principal and authorized school personnel.
 - B. Written consent must be obtained from the parent/guardian prior to non-authorized access to student files.
 - C. Student files are accessible to authorized parents/guardians in the presence of an authorized school official who will be able to interpret the file material.
 - D. Any objection to the contents of the student file may be forwarded through the appeals process.
8. Appeal Process
- Gitksen West Secondary School will endeavor to provide a fair and equitable process of appeal when a student and/or parent does not agree with a decision made by the school-based team and/or school administration regarding the implementation of special needs assistance.
 - A written appeal, including any concerns, must be forwarded to the principal to initiate the process.
 - The principal will work with the complainant to arrive at a suitable conclusion to the appeal.

9. Evaluation

- A. Gitksen West Secondary School will strive to review programs on an ongoing basis to ensure accountability.
- B. The evaluation will include, but not be limited to, an ongoing review of student progress, a review of student services provided, and feedback from parent/guardians regarding the level of satisfaction of the education provided to their children.
- C. Gitksen West Secondary School will provide feedback to agencies that support “Best Practices” and provide funding for special needs services.
- D. Best Practices will be supported and enhanced through FNESC, FNSA and the Ministry of Education initiatives.

Student Funding

Policy

Funding for all programs through the Gitksan West Secondary School will be accessed from federal, provincial, not for profit entities, foundations, charities and other means.

Procedures

1. Administration will work with the GES Executive Director and other Bands (as required) to submit the Nominal Roll by September 30th annually. Federal funding based on students living on reserve and recorded on the federal nominal roll process.
2. Administration will apply for provincial funding through “reciprocal tuition” for students living off reserve and non-status students.
3. Administration will apply for other funding from FNEESC, FNSA, First Peoples Cultural Council and other grants that come available throughout the year.

Student Illness and Medical Appointments

Policy

Students are required to go home immediately if they get sick during the school day.

Procedures

1. Students who get sick during the school day are required to be isolated from the rest of the school and will be required to go home, as soon as possible.
2. The teacher and/or Educational Assistant will take the student to the isolated sick area. All used tissues and paper towels will be disposed of immediately and staff are required to practice hand hygiene practices.
3. The student will be taken to the sick area while waiting for the parent/guardian to pick them up. The student is required to follow the Respiratory Etiquette and hand hygiene policy and procedures while waiting to be picked up.
4. The secretary/receptionist will call the parents/guardians to inform them that their child is sick and to request that their child be picked up as soon as possible. The student will wait in the sick area.
5. Any staff who are required to assist the sick student will be required to wear gloves and a mask and follow PPE guidelines.
6. As soon as the student is picked up, the custodian will clean and disinfect the sick areas (where the child got sick and the sick area). The cot sheets and pillow cases will be stripped and put in the washer immediately; disinfect and sanitize the cot wall and floor and area. Gloves and mask must be disposed of immediately.
7. The parent/guardian is required to sign out their child when they pick them up. Should the student have COVID-19 symptoms, the school will recommend that the parent call 811 to get further advice.
8. Schools should not provide notification to staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill at home or at school, including if they display symptoms of COVID-19, unless directed to by public health.
9. Self-isolation and Quarantine:
 - A. Students and staff with cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms should stay home, self-isolate, and be assessed by a health-care provider. Testing is recommended for anyone with these symptoms, even mild ones.
 - B. Self-isolation is also advised for those who are considered a close contact of a confirmed case. Public health staff identify and notify close contacts of a confirmed case. Public health also ensures those required to self-isolate have access to health-care

providers and that other appropriate supports are in place.

10. If a student is required to leave school before regular dismissal for a medical appointment, the student is required to sign out at the office. The student should bring a note from home explaining the need for early dismissal or the parent/guardian must call the school and leave a message with the receptionist.
11. If a student returns to school from the medical appointment, they must sign in upon returning.

Student Promotions (Grade)

Policy

The school will promote students in accordance with their academic achievement and social and emotional well-being.

Procedures

1. Student Placements and Progress - General
 - The principal will consult with students, teachers, and parents regarding student progress and placement.
 - Decisions will be based on the students' classroom work, tests, written assignments, presentations, general observations, and other sources deemed useful.
 - Decisions on progress and placement shall be the responsibility of the principal and may be made at any time during the academic year.
 - For students requiring specialized assessments, the school will ensure appropriate procedures for specialized referrals/assessments of students are followed through.
 - Parents must be informed of the reason for a specialized referral/assessment and must agree in writing prior to the referral-taking place.
 - Parents shall be informed of information, recommendations for action, program recommendations or assistance required as a result of the assessment process.
2. Grade Promotion
 - a.) Grades 8 to 9: Students in the middle years shall be grade promoted, with an emphasis on skill acquisition in Mathematics and English/Language Arts. Students who do not meet the academic requirements of these core subjects but are promoted, the teacher and principal will inform parents both in person at teacher/parent conferences and in writing prior to the end of the school year. A copy of this report with specific programming recommendations for the next year teacher will be included in the student's file. No student shall spend more than two years in one grade.
 - b.) Grades 10 to 12: Students in grades ten to twelve shall be grade promoted and will be consistent with the "*Graduation Requirements Policy*". All students in grades ten to twelve shall write Provincial examinations, which will determine at least 20% of the final mark but not exceeding 50% of the final mark. The balance of the mark will be determined by averaging the student grades throughout the three previous reporting periods.

c.) Grading System

A	86-100%
B	74-85%
C+	67-73%
C	60-66%
C-	50-59%
IP/F	0-49%

(IP = in progress course which continues beyond usual final reporting period)

Supervision

Policy

The Gitksen West Secondary School ensures that students are supervised whenever they are on school premises, including before and after school and while on school field trips.

Procedures:

The School will supervise students as follows:

1. Before School:
Students arriving on the buses will be supervised by teachers and Educational Assistants until classes start. Students may go directly to class or to the track and field area.
2. During:
Students are to be under staff supervision at all times.
3. After School:
Only students with written permission from parents/guardians may stay and participate in after school programming.

Staff Responsibility:

1. All teaching and Educational Assistants are responsible for a minimum of one supervision per day per week.
2. Staff must arrive no later than 5 minutes prior to their scheduled supervision shift.
3. Supervisor must wait until the last student is inside and accounted for before leaving their area. If a student is unable or unwilling to come in, the Supervisor must call the front desk and arrange someone to assist.
4. If the Supervisor is unable to complete their supervision block, it is their responsibility to inform the principal and administrative assistant and to find a replacement.

Supervision Locations:

Before School and Recess/Lunch Breaks:

- Track and Field: One supervisor
- Front and side of the building: One supervisor
- Inside – Walking in the hallway corridors and classrooms: One supervisor

After School:

- All students must report directly to the after school extra-curricular program they have signed up for.
- Students must be supervised at all times during all after school events.

Supervision Schedule:

1. Supervision schedule will be established at the first staff meeting at the beginning of the school year.
2. The supervision schedule will not be changed or altered without prior permission/approval of the principal.
3. The supervision schedule will be posted in the office and classrooms.

Suspension and Expulsion

Policy

The Gitksen West Secondary School believes that suspensions and expulsion of students are not in the best interests of a student's education. However, circumstances may deem suspensions and expulsions necessary for the safety and well-being of the students, staff and property.

Procedures

1. Parents/guardians of a student suspended or expelled will be contacted by the principal
2. Students could be suspended or expelled for any of the following:
 - Threatens, either verbally or physically, the safety of students and staff;
 - Has in their possession, or is under the influence of, a banned substance or alcohol;
 - Willfully damages the school, school property, or property of those attending or working at the school;
 - Has in their possession a prohibited weapon, as described in the Canadian Criminal Code; and/or
 - Does not fulfill the attendance and student management requirements set forth the Gitksen West Secondary School and/or the Gitksen West Secondary School Board may expel a student who poses as a threat to the delivery of service, in conflict with the policies and guidelines set forth in the policy manual and the Ministry of Education for the province of British Columbia.
3. Prior to returning to school, the student and parent/guardian must meet with the principal to discuss and create a behavior plan/contract.
4. Suspensions and expulsions will result in a letter to the parents/guardians, as well as in the student's file.
5. The principal will contact the President of the School Board and Education Manager/Directors of the applicable Band to report all suspensions and expulsions.
6. A copy of the discipline letter will be forwarded to the President of the School Board as well as the Education Manager/Director of the student's home Band.

Tobacco and Vape Products

Policy

Our School is a 100% tobacco-free school environment for students, staff, and visitors.

Procedures

1. A person must not smoke, use tobacco, hold lighted tobacco or use vape products in or on school property or on school trips.
2. This does not apply to the ceremonial use of tobacco in or on school property if the ceremonial use of tobacco is approved by the Board of Directors and it is performed in:
 - a. a traditional ceremonial activity or
 - b. by a prescribed group for a prescribed purpose.
3. Any person who breaks this law can be charged if the principal and/or school board feel that there has been an infringement on the tobacco free school environment.

Violence and Intimidation

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School considers any act of violence or intimidation on school property, or during a school function, to be a serious threat to the school environment, to the health and safety of others, and to the community at large.

Procedures

1. If it is safe to do so, the adults will immediately remove and/or separate the student(s) who are involved in the violence or intimidating situation.
2. The principal will make all reasonable attempts to minimize the risk of injury to others.
3. When it is safe to do so, the principal will meet with the student(s) to conduct an immediate investigation to determine the cause, level of violence and intimidation etc.
4. The principal may report the matter to the RCMP, and if appropriate, seek their assistance.
5. The principal shall, as soon as practical, notify the parent/guardian of any student involved in the situation.
6. The principal may suspend the student and determine the length of the suspension which will be dependent on the circumstances and seriousness of the offense.
7. The principal may:
 - a. expel the student: expulsions are for serious or ongoing breaches to the safety of others.
 - b. recommend resolution using the Restorative Justice framework.
8. The principal will make a verbal report to the School Board President and to the appropriate Education Manager/Director of where the student resides.

Water Testing

Policy

Gitksen West Secondary School has its water tested on a regular basis throughout the school year and at least once every year for lead content to ensure that it meets provincial requirements established by the Ministry of Health, such as Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality for lead.

Definition:

Lead (Pb) is a dense, odourless, bluish-grey, lustrous metal that is malleable, insoluble and resistant to chemical corrosion.

Procedures:

1. Gitksen West Secondary School works closely and cooperatively with the Gitwangak Band based water monitors to ensure that the water is tested regularly.
2. The Gitwangak Band and School follows the First Nation Health Authority Water Testing Guidelines²⁴ which are in accordance with the Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines²⁵.
3. The Gitwangak Band's community-based water monitors check the drinking water throughout the community water system including at the school for potential bacteriological contamination using community lab equipment once per week.
4. Gitwangak Band's community-based water monitors check the drinking water using community lab equipment or certified lab testing on an as-needed basis throughout the year.
5. In addition, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Environmental Health Officers (EHO) check lead at least once per year.
6. The principal will receive notification of any exceedances in sample results in a timely manner and will have access to reports as required.
7. If sample results reveal lead levels exceed the maximum allowable concentration in accordance with the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality by Health Canada, the

²⁴ First Nations Health Authority. (2026). Drinking Water Safety Program. Retrieved from: <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/environmental-health/drinking-water-safety-program>

²⁵ Government of Canada. (2025). Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality – Summary. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/reports-publications/water-quality/guidelines-canadian-drinking-water-quality-summary-table.html>

school in consultation with the EHO will undertake mitigation strategies which may include the following²⁶:

- A. Flushing for 30 to 60 seconds until the water is cold;
- B. Deactivate water sources and post signage;
- C. Install filtration systems;
- D. Upgrade plumbing; and
- E. Or other steps that reduce the exposure of lead to acceptable levels.

8. In the event that testing reveals that drinking water concentrations of lead or at or above the maximum acceptable level, the principal will notify the:

- A. Chief Operating Officer of the Gitwangak Band
- B. Environmental Health Officer, FNHA
- C. Independent Schools Branch
- D. Parents and guardians.

Cross References:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/programs/consultation-lead-drinkingwater/document.html>

<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/environmental-health/environmental-public-health>

²⁶ First Nations Health Authority. (2026). FACT SHEET. Lead and Copper in Drinking Water. Retrieved from: <https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Fact-Sheet-Lead-and-Copper-In-Drinking-Water.pdf>

Weapons

Policy

The possession or use of any weapons on or near shall be considered a serious threat to the entire school environment and community at large. All school personnel who believe that such a threat exists shall take appropriate action.

The definition of a weapon is any object that has the potential to be used and is intended to be used, or is used, to injure, threaten or intimidate any person.

Procedures

1. When the principal reasonably believes that any person on the school premises possesses a weapon, they shall:
 - a. Make all reasonable attempts to minimize the risk of injury to any person.
 - b. Arrange for the removal of weapons from the school premises.
2. After the principal and/or designate has ensured that safety of all she/he:
 - a. Shall, as soon as practical, notify the parent/guardian of any child involved in the situation.
 - b. May report the matter to the RCMP, and if appropriate, seek their assistance.
 - c. Make an immediate verbal report to the appropriate Education Manager/Director (followed by a written report) who will verbally inform the School Board President.
3. Suspension of Student: The school recognizes the possession of any weapon by a student on or near the school premises, or at any school function, a serious threat to the school environment and the community at large. Therefore, the principal shall suspend any student in possession of or using a weapon.
4. All cases involving weapons shall result in a suspension. The length of the suspension is at the discretion of the principal in accordance with the circumstances and seriousness of the offense.