



# Gulf Coast Trades Center

*a Rite of Passage Program*

## Student Handbook

This book Belongs to:

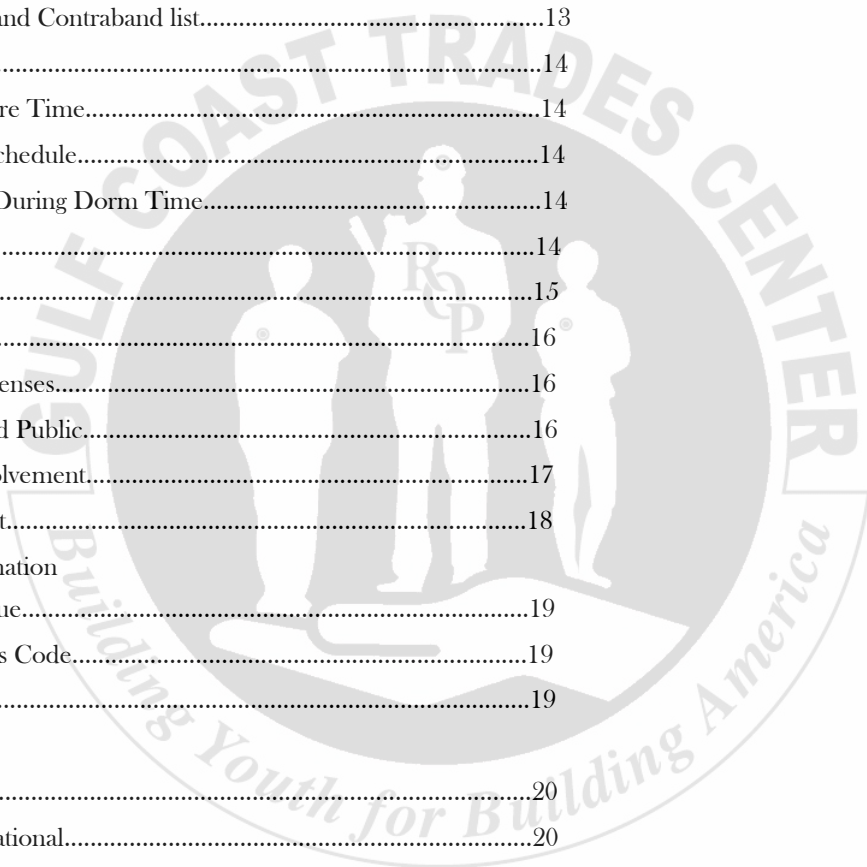
---

Name of Student

Updated  
10/29/2024

# Table of Contents Page #

Welcome to Gulf Coast Trades Center / ROP .....	3
Mission Statement.....	3
Program Philosophy and Purpose.....	3
Student Rights.....	4-5
Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Safe Environmental Standards.....	6
Mandated Reporting.....	6
How To Report.....	6
Status Progressions/Milestones.....	7-11
Behavior Intervention.....	12
Use of Physical Force/Restraint.....	12
Student Life	
Housing.....	13
Room Searches and Contraband list.....	13
Dining.....	14
Recreation/Leisure Time.....	14
Daily Program Schedule.....	14
Other Activities During Dorm Time.....	14
Telephone Usage.....	14
Mail.....	15
Personal Possessions.....	16
Money- Earnings and Expenses.....	16
Interaction with Media and Public.....	16
Visitation and Family Involvement.....	17
Positive Peer Environment.....	18
Additional Student Information	
What is Code Blue.....	19
What is the Dress Code.....	19
Hygiene.....	19
Support Services	
Social Services.....	20
Educational/Vocational.....	20
Medical, Dental, Psychological, Psychiatric.....	20
Counseling.....	20
Clothing.....	20
Laundry/Linen .....	20
Complaint and Grievance.....	21
Methods of filing a grievance.....	21
General Rules for grievance filing.....	22
Youth Request to conference with staff.....	23
Resolution of grievance.....	23
Appeal of grievance Resolution.....	24
Reporting grievance.....	24
Discharge.....	24
GCTC/ROP Norms.....	25-26



## Welcome to Gulf Coast Trades Center *a Rite of Passage Program*

Gulf Coast Trades Center/ ROP is a Vocational Trades Program that is focused on meeting your individual needs. We hope that you enjoy your time with us. While we understand that living away from friends and family may be difficult, we are here to help. This handbook is being provided to you to assist you in making the transition to GCTC/ROP. We hope that during your time here you take advantage of the valuable resources and skills that we have to offer. This handbook will give you a general idea of what Gulf Coast Trades Center (GCTC) / Rite of Passage (ROP) is all about. We look forward to getting to know you.

### **GCTC Mission Statement**

*"To increase the social and economic independence of disadvantage youth"*

### **ROP Mission Statement**

*"Dedicated to improving the lives of youth, families and communities"*

### **Program Philosophy and Purpose** (What We Believe)

Gulf Coast Trades Center's Program is designed around the beliefs that emphasizes the worth and dignity of each person. The program offers vocational skill training consistent with the student's capacity and interest. Positive values, attitudes and helping others are highlighted as important goals not only in living here, but also in life outside of this program.

The guiding principle of student life at Gulf Coast Trades Center is the Positive Peer Culture (PPC) and the development of Trust Based Relationship Intervention (TBRI) skills. The central position of Positive Peer Culture is that young people can develop self-worth, significance, dignity, and responsibility only as they become committed to the positive values of helping and caring for others. TBRI is designed to help our staff and students together find positive ways to address life issues and moments of stress that can become self-destructive.

Your responsibility and key to success at GCTC / ROP is that you be willing to help yourself and others!

## Student Rights

We believe in and actively support the human rights afforded to every student enrolled at Gulf Coast Trades Center / ROP . The basic rights afforded to each student however are not absolute and may be limited to the extent reasonably necessary for GCTC/ROP to discharge its responsibilities with respect to public protection, treatment, care and supervision. Your Basic Rights include: In accordance with Minimum Standards for General Residential Operations, Sub chapter H, 748.1101

- (a) A child's rights are cumulative of any other rights granted by law or other Licensing rules.
- (b) The following categories include the child's rights that you must adhere to:

**(1) Safety and care, including:**

- (A) The right to good care and treatment that meets the child's needs in the most family- like setting as possible
- (B) The right to be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and
- (C) The right to fair treatment

**(2) Family contacts, including the right to maintain regular contact with the child's parents and siblings, unless restrictions are necessary because of the child's best interest, the decision of an appropriate professional, or a court order**

**(3) Living a normal life, including:**

- (A) The right to be able to communicate in a language or any other means that is understandable to the child at admission or within a reasonable time after an emergency admission, if applicable, such as having a plan for an interpreter, having at least one person at the operation at all times who can communicate with the child in the child's own language, or other means to communicate with the child in the child's own language
- (B) The right to receive educational services appropriate to the child's age and developmental level
- (C) The right to have the child's religious needs met
- (D) The right to participate in childhood activities, including unsupervised childhood activities away from the operation and the caregivers, that are appropriate for the child's age, maturity, and developmental level
- (E) The right to privacy, including sending and receiving unopened mail, making and receiving phone calls, keeping a personal journal, and having visitors, unless the child's best interest, appropriate professionals, or court order necessitates restrictions
- (F) The right to personal care, hygiene, and grooming equipment and supplies and training in how to use them
- (G) The right to have comfortable clothing, which is suitable to the child's age and size and similar to the clothing of other children in the community. Teenagers should have reasonable opportunities to select the clothing
- (H) The right to clothing that protects the child against the weather
- (I) The right to have personal items in the child's room and to get additional items within reasonable limits
- (J) The right to personal space in the child's bedroom to store the child's clothes and belongings
- (K) The right to be informed of search policies and be free of unreasonable searches and unreasonable removal of personal items

(L) Depending on the child's age and maturity, the right to seek employment, keep the child's own money, have a bank account in the child's name, and get paid for any work done for the operation as part of the child's service plan or vocational training, with the exception of assigned routine duties that relate to the child's living environment, such as cleaning the child's room, or other chores, or work assigned as a disciplinary measure

(M) The right to consent in writing before taking part in any publicity or fund raising activity for the operation, including the use of the child's photograph

(N) The right to refuse to make public statements showing gratitude to the operation

(O) The right to not be pressured to get an abortion, give up her child for adoption, or parent her child, if applicable

**(4) Discipline, including:**

(A) The right to be free from any harsh, cruel, unusual, unnecessary, demeaning, or humiliating treatment or punishment. This means the child must not be:

- (i) Shaken
  - (ii) Subjected to or threatened with corporal punishment, including spanking or hitting the child
  - (iii) Forced to do unproductive work that serves no purpose except to demean the child, such as moving rocks from one pile to another or digging a hole and then filling in
  - (iv) Denied food, sleep, a bathroom, mail, or family visits as punishment
  - (v) Subjected to remarks that belittle or ridicule the child or the child's family
  - (vi) Threatened with the loss of placement or shelter as punishment
  - (vii) Subjected to demeaning behavior to embarrass, control, harm, intimidate, or isolate the child.
- "Demeaning behavior" may include using physical force, rumors, threats, or inappropriate comments

(B) The right to discipline that is appropriate to the child's age, maturity, and developmental level

(C) The right to have restrictions or disciplinary policies explained to the child at admittance and when the measures are imposed

**(c) Plans for the child while in care, including:**

(A) The right to have a comprehensive service plan that addresses the child's needs, including transitional and discharge planning

(B) The right to actively participate in the development of the child's service plan within the limits of the child's comprehension and ability to manage the information. The child has the right to a copy or summary of the plan. A child 14 years of age or older has the right to review and sign the service plan, unless there is a reason not to provide the plan

**(d) Medical care and records, including:**

(A) The right to medical, dental, vision, and mental health care and developmental services that adequately meet the child's needs. The right to request that the care or services be separate from adults (other than young adults) who are receiving services

(B) The right to be free of unnecessary or excessive medication

(C) The right to confidential care and treatment, including keeping medical records and operation records private and only discussing them when it is about the child's care

(5) **Complaints**, including the right to make calls, reports, or complaints without interference, coercion, punishment, retaliation, or threats of punishment or retaliation. The child may make these calls, reports, or complaints anonymously. Depending upon the nature of the complaint, the child has the right to call, report, or complain to:

(a) The DFPS Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline at 1-800-252-5400

(b) The HHSC Ombudsman for Children and Youth Currently in Foster Care at 1- 844-286-0769

(c) The DFPS Office of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-720-7777

(d) Disability Rights of Texas at 1-800-252-9108.

## **Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) / Safe Environmental Standards**

### **Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) - Zero Tolerance for Sexual Abuse**

GCTC/ROP has zero-tolerance for sexual abuse/harassment. This standard is designed to prevent, detect and respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Sexual activity between students or between students and any adult is strictly prohibited. Reports of such abuse may be made in writing or verbally through a staff member or calling hot line. Retaliation for a report is strictly prohibited. All students receive additional PREA education during orientation and reporting information is posted throughout campus.

#### **Mandated Reporting**

As mandated reporters, GCTC/ROP staff members are required by law to notify proper authorities, including, Texas Child Abuse Hot line when any reports of abuse, neglect, abandonment, or exploitation are brought to our attention. If you experience abuse or neglect, witness the abuse or neglect of any other student, or feels that your rights have been violated or ignored you have the right to make a report to the agencies listed below.

#### **How To Report**

- Report to any GCTC/ ROP staff, Volunteer, Contractor, Medical or Mental Health staff
- Submit a grievance or sick call slip
- Report to the PREA Coordinator or PREA compliance manager
- Report to your referring agency, family member, friend, legal counsel, or anyone else outside the facility /They can report on your behalf by calling 800-252-5400
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Abuse Hot-line: 800-252-5400
- Texas Juvenile Justice Department: 866-477-8354
- Ombudsmen: 844-286-0769

## Status Progressions/Milestones

The Status System is a tool designed to provide regular feedback to students on their progress in attaining the necessary skills to be successful in the program. The goal of this system is to build an atmosphere where students strive to be responsible and to provide consistency across campus life regarding behavioral expectations.

Students will complete a series of workshops focused on advocacy, service planning, education, vocation, health, behaviors and safety and work towards completing GCTC/ROP successful Discharge criteria throughout the program stay.

All staff that have significant contact with a student will document student's participation and daily behavior's

Your GCTC/ROP Case Manager will review your DPN's and Incident Reports and document your progression in the program. You will receive a rating based on your efforts towards your program goals and daily behaviors.

**Green** indicates consistently demonstrating pro-social skills in all aspects of the program and is meeting objectives on the Individual Service Plan.

**Yellow** indicates a rating where the student is demonstrating pro-social skills in some aspects of the program and meeting some objectives on the Individual Service Plan.

**Red** indicates a student is not consistently demonstrating pro-social skills, and not meeting objectives on the Individual Service Plan.

Based on your weekly ratings, you will be eligible for Status Progression. Our progression status levels are called Orientation, Rookie, Intern and RAMS.

For each status, you will complete a "Sign-off" sheet identifying what needs to be done to complete that level.

### Appeals on Status loss:

If student appeals a status loss, a Disciplinary Team Meeting (staffing) will be held.

If all parties agree that status should be reinstated, student will immediately be reinstated and his privileges will resume.

**Orientation** - Minimum time to remain on this status: 4 weeks

The primary objective of this status is for the new student to adjust to program rules, completing assessments and developing your needs and services plan objectives.

Behavior while on Orientation status : You will be expected to follow established program rules.

**Progression**- As a Orientation student, he should be able to begin to demonstrate the following:

- Model positive behavior.
- Completes fitness ritual.
- Accepts feedback with willingness to change behavior.
- Participates in POC, PSD, and Team Meetings.
- Completes details; keeps dorm inspection ready.
- Demonstrate positive school behavior; completes school work.
- Follows Dorm norms.
- Follows line movement norms.
- Volunteers for Extra-Curricular activities.
- Completes Concept manuals 1 and 2.
- Complete Orientation sign off sheet and obtain a minimum of 30 points.
- Once these tasks are complete student is awarded Rookie status.

During this time, student must maintain 3 out of 4 green weeks with the last two consecutive weeks being green to move up status.



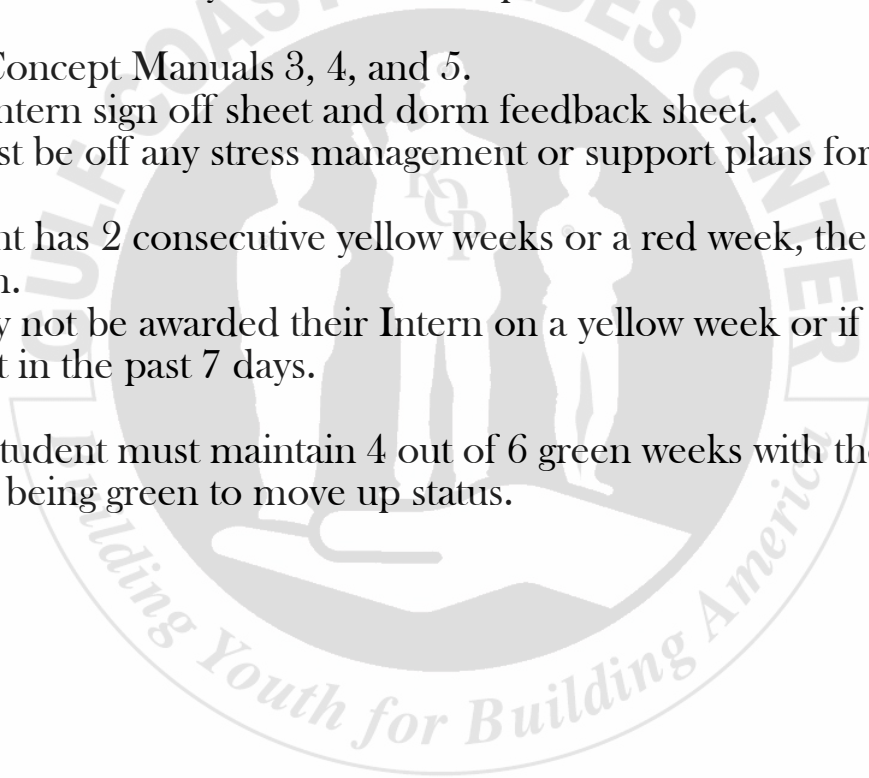
**Rookie-** Minimum time to remain on this status: 6 weeks

As a Rookie, students are actively developing skills, participating in program, and working on their specific goals developed in their needs and services plan.

**Progression:** As a Rookie student, he should be able to begin to demonstrate the following:

- Follow rules and program expectations consistently.
- Learn and complete chores as directed by staff.
- Identify reasons for placement.
- Learn to verbalize status system.
- Exhibit basic level of respect to staff, peers, and others.
- Demonstrate basic ability to verbalize the problems he needs to address in status meeting.
- Complete Concept Manuals 3, 4, and 5.
- Complete Intern sign off sheet and dorm feedback sheet.
- Student must be off any stress management or support plans for two weeks prior to earning status.
- If the student has 2 consecutive yellow weeks or a red week, the student begins Rookie status again.
- Student may not be awarded their Intern on a yellow week or if they have received an Incident Report in the past 7 days.

During this time, student must maintain 4 out of 6 green weeks with the last two consecutive weeks being green to move up status.



**Intern-** Minimum time to remain on this status: 6 weeks

At this phase of the program, the student not only has accepted a need to change self-destructive behavior but also is beginning to take an active part in the change process. The student starts to exhibit basic levels of insight into his behavior and begins to develop an understanding of his own patterns of distorted thinking. The student is starting to exhibit accountability for personal behavior but continues to struggle with issues of the core self and those related to family. Student separates himself from negative influences.

**Progression:** As an Intern, students should be able to clearly demonstrate the following:

- Demonstrate ability to anticipate future consequences of behavior.
- Exhibit accountability for own behavior and consequences associated with those choices.
- Begin to formulate long-term goals.
- Demonstrate basic problem solving and conflict management skills.
- Exhibit a consistent level of self-management of own behavior.
- Acknowledge impact of previous and current behavior on others.
- Respond to feedback from others appropriately.
- Begin to confront peers appropriately with concern.
- Complete Concept Manual 6 and 7 and 8.
- Communicates with staff concerning dysfunctional behavior by peers, milieu groups and program.
- Model positive behaviors.
- Completed sign off sheet and dorm sign off sheet.
- Read Life Story.
- Successfully complete 2 contributor meetings.

**Status Review:** If there is a cause to believe the student is not demonstrating the skills or stability for this higher level of privilege and responsibility, a status review may be initiated by the case manager, counselor or via a disciplinary hearing.

The case manager, counselor, and group living representative will meet with the student to identify the additional supports and interventions the student needs assistance with to be successful.

The status review plan will be reviewed after one week to determine if it should be extended, modified, or resolved. During the status review, the privileges will be suspended while the student works on targeted treatment interventions and supports.

If the student does not successfully complete the targeted support plan, they may remain Intern status level to focus on baseline skills and stability.

If a student has Intern status and loses his status over a Class A or B violation, student will have to obtain green week for three consecutive weeks in order to move up to next status.

See policy 600.121 regarding Violations and Code of Conduct.

During this time, student must maintain 4 out of 6 green weeks with the last two consecutive weeks being green to move up status.

**RAM** Status - Earliest Eligibility is after 16 weeks / Must obtain and remain on **RAM** status for 30 days consecutively for GCTC successful discharge criteria

At this phase of the program, the student is starting to apply program skills and knowledge to the emotional behavior and family problems that caused or contributed to placement. The student is a consistent role model in the milieu and confronts negative behavior through appropriate means. The student is developing a sense of empathy for their victims and has a strong sense of how their behavior effects those around them. The student is able to identify and utilize a limited number of safety tools or alternative behaviors to counter their patterns of distorted thinking. The student is able to develop and practice their interpersonal skills with both staff and peers and has a basic understanding of the power structures that exist in relationships. The student is also beginning to actively plan for his return to the community and identify needs and potential difficulties.

The **level expectations** for **RAM** status include:

- Develop and design long-term treatment plans and identify steps necessary to achieve goals.
- Consistently maintains pattern of self-directed behavior.
- Assumes a supportive role with staff not only for program tasks, but for program operation.
- Verbalizes and demonstrates proficiency in effective problem solving and conflict management.
- Takes initiative on personal problems.
- Consistently critiques and monitors own behavior.
- Exhibits consistent role model behavior.
- Requires minimal feedback from staff.
- Consistently supports the program and staff

**Progression:**

- The student must complete **RAM** status treatment packet and have the assignments approved by his Therapeutic Manager.
- The student must demonstrate appropriate behavior in school, as evidenced by earning written feedback from Education staff.
- The student must demonstrate appropriate behavior in groups.
- The student must complete a written review of their progress on **I-ACHIEVE** plan and update them.
- Complete Leader/Mentor sign off sheet and dorm sign off sheet.

**Privileges:**

- Eligible for Off-Campus Visitation.
- GCTC/ROP Overnight activities.
- Holiday Furloughs.
- Receive Letterman Jacket - If you lose **RAM** status student will return jacket until he has regained **RAM** status.
- Attend Review Committee (Review to evaluate Successful Discharge criteria completeness).

**Status Review:**

- If there is a cause to believe the student is not demonstrating the skills or stability for this higher level of privilege and responsibility, a status review may be initiated by the case manager, counselor or via a disciplinary hearing.
  - The case manager, counselor, and group living representative will be meet with the student to identify the additional supports and interventions the student needs assistance with to be successful.
  - The status review plan will be reviewed after one week to determine if it should be extended, modified, or resolved.
  - During the status review, the privileges will be suspended while the student works on targeted treatment interventions and supports.
- If the student does not successfully complete the targeted support plan, they may be regressed to the Rookie skill level to focus on baseline skills and stability.
- If a student has **RAM** status and loses his status over a Class A or B violation, student will have to obtain green week for three consecutive weeks in order to move up to next status.

See policy 600.121 regarding Violations and Code of Conduct.

## **Behavior Intervention SOP A.101**

It is the purpose of the Behavior Intervention Policy to provide a method where by a student may be prevented from harming himself or others or significantly damaging property to help the student regain self control and to teach the student better ways of coping with difficult situations and feelings.

A student will be asked to re-direct his behavior as a first step to intervention on their inappropriate behaviors.

### **Use of Physical Force and Restraint**

- Gulf Coast Trades Center prohibits the use of physical restraints as punishment and sanctions its use only as a control measure to :
- Ensure the safety and welfare of students and staff. Students cannot use physical restraints. Only trained staff are allowed to use physical restraint. Physical restraints will only be used in emergency situations to prevent imminent:
  - Probable death or substantial bodily harm to the student because the student overtly or continually is threatening or attempts to commit suicide or serious bodily harm; or
  - Physical harm to others because of threats, attempts or other acts the student overtly or continually makes or commits. Under these circumstances preventive, verbal techniques and attempts to deescalate have proven ineffective in defusing the potential for injury. These situations do not include verbal threats or verbal attacks.
  - In situations where a student is significantly damaging property, but is not posing a risk of harm to themselves or others, a short personal restraint may be used to intervene.
  - Physical restraint may be used to intervene in situations of imminent significant risk when a youth's behavior is being restrained because of an external hazard and care-givers must protect the student from immediate danger.
  - When a student demonstrates disruptive behavior, such as a tantrum in public, a short physical restraint may be used.

## Student Life

### Housing

- Student housing is provided in open bay or enclosed bedroom dormitory settings. Recent housing construction includes a maximum of 4 beds to an enclosed bedroom. Students are assigned to a particular dorm upon admission. Each student is responsible for maintaining his living area/restrooms/bedroom as well as sharing in the more general and routine chores.
- Grooming, personal hygiene and cleanliness are stressed as daily living practices.
- Each bed must be neatly made every morning with 2 sheets, 1 pillow, 1 pillowcase, 1 bedspread and 1 blanket(optional).
- Students must sleep in their assigned bed unless prior authorization is given by the Residential Manager or designee.
- Dormitory changes will be made at the discretion of the Shift Supervisor, or designee.
- Maintaining a clean and orderly environment makes our facility safer and better for both students and staff.

### Room Searches& Contraband List:

Room Searches will be conducted if any student is suspected of having unauthorized materials/contraband and/or randomly.

- Sharp objects to include anything metal and non-authorized
- Ink pens / ink / markers / dyes /
- Needles or any material used in tattooing
- Personal locks
- Batteries
- Razors
- Lighters/Matches, or any other fire producing material
- Bugs/Insects/ Pets/Animals/Wildlife
- Cell phones/Camera/ Recording devices / Computers/ electronic parts
- Purchased or Manufactured- Drug / Tobacco /cigarette / Vapes /alcohol / inhalants
- Cult / Gang affiliated items
- Weapons of any kind- guns/knives/etc.
- Pornography or lewd images deemed inappropriate
- Money of any amount
- Letters written to other GCTC/ROP students
- Jewellery not authorized through GCTC
- Gum/Food/Drink
- Any material deemed inappropriate by staff

## **Dining**

- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner meals will be provided daily and served in our cafeteria. Snacks are also made available at scheduled times throughout the day. These meals are prepared each day in accordance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human service dietary guidelines. We ask that all students remain courteous and observe appropriate dining etiquette. Special dietary needs should be forwarded to the caseworker and medical personnel.

## **Recreation/Leisure Time**

- Each student will be provided with a daily opportunity for recreation. Participation in recreation is conducive to a successful stay with us. In addition to our on-campus offerings, we encourage students to achieve the appropriate behavior level to participate in off-campus recreation/leisure outings.

## **Daily Program Schedule**

- All students program according to a daily schedule that is posted in every dormitory. Scheduling adjustments may be made due to the needs of the department at the discretion of the Shift Supervisor, or designee.

## **Other Activities During Dorm Time**

- Academic tutoring is available during designated times.
- On-campus non-denominational church services for students are provided as available.
- Sunday church services are also held for students off campus as available. Students with an Intern/Ram status are eligible.
- Various Student night activities occur as available

## **Telephone Usage**

- Students are allowed to make a direct phone call to their approved guardian on the first day of their arrival.
- Phone calls will be permitted between students and their pre-approved contacts once a week. These calls are scheduled and supervised by your casemanager.
- Agency/Attorney/Court personnel phone calls are not restricted, but must be coordinated through your assigned caseworker. Privacy is allowed for agency/court/attorney visits or calls.

## Mail

- We encourage students to share their success in the program. Let your friends and family know how well you are doing!! Each student is provided with materials to write home as often as he desires to approved contacts.
- Outgoing mail may be inspected for contraband prior to sealing by Social Services.
- Envelopes must have the student's complete return address with no graffiti, pictures, or gang inscriptions on them.
- A student may receive as many letters from approved family or friends care to send.
- GCTC may notify parents or guardians of students under the age of 18 who have received correspondence from organizations they feel may be detrimental to their child's well-being.
- GCTC provides unlimited postage and writing materials to student's for use in contacting attorneys and/or court personnel

### Stopped delivery of incoming/outgoing mail

- Incoming mail may not be delivered to a student and outgoing mail will not be deposited for posting if it contains contraband or it is addressed to or from a person who has not been approved.
- Mail that is not delivered will be returned to sender. Mail will not be deposited for delivery without a return address. Correspondence that has not been mailed will be returned to the student and student will be notified of any mail that is returned to sender. Finally, student may request review of the "stopped mail" by writing to the GCTC Program Director, or designee, within two weeks of their receipt of notice. The Program Director, or his designee, will notify the student of the decision within fifteen (15) days of receipt of their request.

The address for you to receive mail is:

143 Forest Service Rd. # 233  
New Waverly, Texas 77358

The diagram shows a rectangular envelope with three labels and arrows pointing to specific areas:

- A green arrow labeled "Return Address" points to the top-left corner of the envelope, which contains the text: "Sender's Name", "Street Address", "City, State Zip Code".
- A blue arrow labeled "Address" points to the bottom-left corner of the envelope, which contains the text: "Recipient's Full Name", "Street Address", "City, State Zip Code".
- A pink arrow labeled "Stamp" points to the top-right corner of the envelope, which contains a postage stamp with a colorful design.

## **Personal Possessions**

- During your admissions intake processing any unauthorized possessions will be inventoried and stored. You will have items returned at your discharge.
- While we understand that students may want to bring articles of sentimental value or items for personal use, this is not allowed. Such items will be viewed as contraband. GCTC will not be responsible for personal items: lost due to theft, fire, damage or related incidents. Articles found on GCTC property will be confiscated and turned in to the Residential Supervisor's office. Items will be disposed of / or stored.
- All Clothing/Footwear/Hygiene are provided for by GCTC/ROP. Students will wear only issued items and must be worn in accordance with the established GCTC/ROP dress code.
- Students will each be assigned a locker for the storage of their belongings in the dorm. Lockers must be kept clean, neat and organized and free from contraband.
- When not in use, student shoes will be stored in dorm office.
- Students must not use unoccupied lockers or place their possessions in lockers not assigned to them.

## **Money - Earnings and Expenses**

- While a student is enrolled at GCTC, they will not be allowed to possess money. All personal money in a student's possession upon admission will be kept in a special account separate from GCTC funds and maintained by the Accounting department. Agency sponsored activities and outings are provided at no additional cost to the student.
- Student's enrolled at GCTC may have opportunities to perform work that can provide an income. Any income received by a student is placed in the youth's trust account.
- Money earned and placed in student's account are returned to student at time of discharge.

## **Interaction with the Media and Public**

- Students have certain rights in regard to interaction with the media and public. However, this interaction is subject to rules established by GCTC/ROP. All media and public interaction requests must be approved by the GCTC Program Director, or designee. In addition to the Program Director's approval, TJJD students must comply with the rules and regulations established by TJJD Policy and Procedure.



## Visitation and Family Involvement

- GCTC supports the maintenance of healthy family relationships. Visitation by a student's parent, legal guardian, conservator, or referring agency is encouraged. All visitors must be approved by each student's caseworker based upon information received from the referring agency.
- Students have the right to confer with their attorneys in private. Caseworkers will arrange as needed.
- Opportunities for each student to maintain contact with their families will be provided through visitation.
- Visitation will be held Once a month on the first Saturday of each month.

Visitation is held in two sessions.

- Session I- 10:00am-12:00pm
- Session II- 1:00pm-3:00pm
- Families who wish to visit **Must** reserve an available session with students assigned caseworker by the 25th of the previous month.
- Limited to only two approved visitors each visit
- No siblings under the age of 18
- No outside snacks/drinks permitted
- No Cell phones permitted
- Any money brought in at visitation must be in change format and in a clear zip-lock bag
- No possession or contribution of any contraband
- No cursing / use of profanity or horseplay
- No use of alcohol, drugs, smoking/vaping by visitor or student
- Once visitor leaves the building once checked in the visitation is considered over
- Pictures, cards are not to be distributed in visitation. Must be mailed in.
- Visitors are to wear conservative/appropriate clothing
- Off campus visitation is only available to students on **RAM** status and with agency approval

## Positive Peer Environment

We strive to create an environment for our students that possess the following four essential characteristics:

- A social climate in which students may choose between appropriate social and past anti-social behavior.
- The opportunity to declare safely to peers and staff members their beliefs and disbeliefs that they will benefit by changing their values.
- An atmosphere in which they may examine the role and legitimacy of authority figures.
- A system emphasizing peer group decision-making which recognizes not only successful participation but particularly the willingness to consider, involve, and recognize others.

At GCTC, we seek to instill in every student values necessary to ensure a successful enrollment. They are listed as follows:

- Each student is responsible for their schedule. You must report at the required time for all classes and work details.
- Students are expected to respond in a polite manner to all instruction by staff members.
- Students are expected to follow all safety rules.
- Students are expected to maintain standards of good conduct at all times.
- Students are expected to maintain compliance with all requirements of their referring agency.
- Buying, trading, borrowing, loaning, gambling of any type, or selling personal items are prohibited.
- Students are not allowed to have any amount of money
- Food and drinks are to be consumed in designated areas only.
- Possession and/or use of tobacco/drug/alcohol products is prohibited at all times on and off campus - visits, trips, furloughs or any off campus activities.
- Horseplay is not allowed because of its potential for injury or misunderstanding.
- Hazing and Bullying is prohibited.
- Fighting is prohibited.
- Destroying or defacing GCTC/ROP property is prohibited.
- Students are not to leave supervised areas without supervision. Each student must be escorted by a staff member.
- Possession of any contraband is prohibited.
- For your safety all students must follow staff instructions during a “Code Blue.”
- Any gang activity is prohibited
- Students will follow the established GCTC/ROP Dress Code
- Students must be willing to help others

## Additional Student Information

### What is Code Blue?

When any staff member calls out “Code Blue,” all students are to stop what they are doing, stay still and listen for further instructions. Code Blue may be called for any type of emergency such as:

- Unauthorized person on campus
- Fight
- Student un-accounted for
- Campus Crisis
- Medical Emergency
- Dynamics on campus

### What is the Dress Code?

- At GCTC/ROP we believe in providing guidance and education, as well as modeling the appropriate expression of respect for our bodies, ourselves and for others by dressing appropriately for specific occasions and/or environments.
- Students will only wear GCTC/ROP issued clothing
- Students are expected to maintain acceptable standards of cleanliness and dress at all times. Shirts must be tucked in and belts must be worn. No sagging of pants or shorts. Appropriate/approved footwear must be worn.
  - Undergarments must be worn and must not show.
  - Haircuts/Hairstyles are to be conservative in manner and are not be distracting or suggestive.
  - Dying and/or bleaching of hair is not permitted.
  - Men must be clean shaven with sideburns no lower than the middle of the ear. Neatly trimmed mustaches are permitted, No beards.
    - No piercings are allowed.

### Hygiene

- GCTC/ROP will provide all approved hygiene products.
- You will take a shower every day during appropriately scheduled times.
- Showers are to be no longer than 10 minutes.
- Wash your hair as needed.
- Brush your teeth every day.
- Razors will be signed out as needed and supervised when in use and will be returned to staff after use.
- An external contractor will provide all Barber services and be scheduled appropriately. Only approved haircuts will be administered.

## Support Services

### Social Services Department

- Upon admission, each student is assigned a caseworker through our Social Services department. Caseworkers in addition to other GCTC staff are here to meet your individual needs. While enrolled at GCTC, each student will be evaluated in the following areas: education, vocational ability, and social development. The caseworker in conjunction with other GCTC/ROP team members will assist the student in the development of his individualized case plan. (ICP)

### Educational/Vocational Services

- All Educational/Vocational services are provided on-site through our Raven Charter School. Students are given the opportunity to earn their high school diploma and/or GED and certification in one of our offered trades.

### Medical, Dental, Psychological and Psychiatric Care

- We are supportive of student's right to basic and necessary medical, mental and dental care, both routine and emergency. A student's specific needs will be assessed upon admission and appropriate appointments scheduled. Students may also submit a sick call. Students will also receive various trainings in health care.

### Counseling Services

- Counseling is provided to each student as needed on an individual and/or group basis. The caseworker will make the necessary referrals for any student in need of clinical services.

### Clothing

- All students will be provided clothing, footwear and hygiene products for the duration of the program. Students are responsible for their items and to turn them in for washing or replacing due to damage/wear. Students are expected to not destroy, tag or damage items.

### Laundry/Linen Services

- Laundry services are provided to all students enrolled at GCTC/ROP. These services are provided by Residential staff on site. Laundry bags are provided to each student and kept in the Laundry room of each dorm. Items are washed daily and inspected for signs of wear and tear. Linens are washed once a week. Clothing inventories are conducted and items will be issued as needed.

## **Complaints and Grievances:**

A Grievance is a complaint about something you believed to be undeserved, mishandled or unfair. At GCTC/ROP, the expectation is that all students are to be treated fairly and respectfully at all times by other students, members of the staff and by visiting volunteers. If you feel that you have been treated wrongly or unfairly by the staff, students or volunteers, you have the right to file a grievance.

Students, parents/guardians of student, and student advocates have a right to file grievances concerning care, treatment, services, or conditions provided for student under the care of GCTC/ROP. GCTC/ROP will resolve grievances in a prompt, fair, and thorough manner. However, grievances alleging criminal violations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation will be referred to law enforcement and other mandated agencies for reporting for investigation and disposition.

### **Methods of Filing a Grievance a Grievance form:**

**A.** All grievance forms should be turned in during a meal time in the wooden box in the cafeteria

- A student will be provided with a copy of each grievance that he submits. The student will also sign the bottom of the complaint form stating that he received a copy of the complaint.
- A student who wishes to withdraw a grievance form must do so in writing in the presence of at least 2 staff members.

**B.** In Person to a Caseworker

- Any person who is unable or unwilling to submit a grievance in writing may verbally communicate a grievance to their caseworker, or the Administrator of the Social Services Department.

## General Rules for Grievance filing:

Blank grievance forms are provided in each dorm and cafeteria

- There is no limitation on the number or subject matter of grievances a person may file.
- Students may file complaints by placing document in the locked wooden box located in the cafeteria during any meal time.
- Parents/guardians or student advocates may file grievances with their student's caseworker.
- Any student who needs assistance filing a complaint may meet with their caseworker. The caseworker will assist individuals with disabilities who request accommodations in order to access the student grievance system.
- Retaliation or interference by staff concerning the filing or resolution of grievances will not be tolerated and is grounds for immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- To the extent possible, grievances will remain confidential. The identity of a person filing a grievance will not be shared with staff members other than those necessary to resolve the grievance. Student files will not contain any reference to the filing of grievances.
- Students will be informed of the system for filing and resolving grievances upon arrival at GCTC. Notices containing information on the grievance system will be posted in English and Spanish in conspicuous areas throughout GCTC/ROP. Parents/guardians will be provided information on the grievance resolution system and local contact information upon a student's admission to GCTC.
- Persons with limited English proficiency may file grievances in languages other than English.
- GCTC will provide confirmation of receipt, including a tracking number, to any grievance that has a legal right to access confidential student information.
- Upon written request, a parent/guardian of a student under 18 years of age will be provided with a summary of grievances filed by his/her student. A student 18 years of age or older must provide consent in order to release a grievance summary to his parent/guardian
- The only restriction imposed on a student filing a complaint is that it does not interfere with the daily schedule of the student. Every day each student is given free time in the evenings.

## Student Requests to Conference with Staff

GCTC/ROP recognizes that informal discussions between staff and student are a key element in resolving issues or concerns at the earliest stage and contribute to a positive facility culture. GCTC/ROP will make staff available to meet with student whenever possible, limited only by consideration for facility order and the safety of student and staff.

- Student assigned to GCTC/ROP may submit a written request for a conference with any staff member assigned to his facility as an informal means of addressing issues or concerns.
- Conferences with student will be scheduled at the earliest opportunity that does not jeopardize student or staff safety, facility order, or an ongoing investigation. Student will be notified in cases where the request cannot be honored promptly.
- A student may elect to file a grievance if he is dissatisfied with the result of the staff conference or the issue(s) raised in connection with the conference request cannot be resolved by his/her selected staff member. However, in no case will a student be required to submit a request for a conference as a preliminary step prior to submitting a grievance.

## Resolution of a Grievance

- Grievances will be promptly collected each morning on normal business days from the wooden box in the cafeteria. They will be immediately reviewed and expedited in order to avoid substantial loss or harm if delayed. They will then be signed with the date that it was received at the top of the form.
- The grievance will then be assigned to a staff member who is not directly involved in the grievance and has the authority to implement an appropriate corrective measure.
- Grievances involving healthcare issues must be assigned to a person with appropriate clinical expertise and credentials.
- The assigned staff member will provide a written response to the grievance within 15 workdays of submission of the grievance.

## Appeal of Grievance Resolution

- A grievant may file an appeal if dissatisfied with the response.
- GCTC/ROP will designate a staff member to provide a written response to the appeal.
  - Except in health care-related grievances. Appeals of responses to healthcare-related grievances will be submitted as direct appeals to the Program Director, or designee. TJJD student's may also appeal to the Executive Director of TJJD.
- For grievances that are not healthcare-related, a grievant may submit an appeal to the Program Director, or designee. TJJD student may also appeal to the Executive Director of TJJD.
- A grievant may submit a direct appeal to the Program Director, or designee, if no written response is received within 15 working days after submitting a grievance or an appeal of a grievance response. TJJD student may also appeal to the Executive Director of TJJD.
- An appeal to the Program Director, or designee, exhausts all administrative remedies on the issue(s) raised in the grievance. TJJD student may also appeal to the Executive Director of TJJD.

### Complaints / Grievances may be made to the following agencies:

- GCTC/ROP casemanager/administrator
- DFPS Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline @ 800-252-5400
- HHSC Ombudsman for Children and Youth Currently in Foster Care @ 844-286-0769
- DFPS Office of Consumer Affairs @ 800-720-7777, or
- Disability Rights of Texas @ 800-252-9108
- TJJD Incident Reporting Center

### Discharge

Discharge planning begins at admissions and continues throughout the program. Communication is continuous between the student's primary case manager and referring agency regarding students participation in GCTC/ROP's successful discharge criteria being met.



# GCTC/ ROP Norms

## Parts of a Positive Organizational Culture

- Receive positive, constructive, and helpful training
- Develop talents, assets, and skills in decision making
- Provides an opportunity for a positive high school

## Essential Norms:

- Treat others with respect
- Confront all negative behavior
- Support all confrontations

## Team Meeting Norms(PM):

- Scheduled after dinner, prior to bedtime
- Coach recaps the day (S+)
- Each Student Athlete should share:
  - A. We give an overview of our day focusing on the positive
  - B. We give an example of PSD skill used during the day
  - C. We give our goal for the upcoming day
- The Coach will give positive feedback to cottage and individuals

## Intervention Norms:

- We are accountable for our own behaviors
- We intervene to be helpful, not to hurt
- We accept all interventions the first time, without giving feedback
- We treat everyone with respect
- We do not lie
- We do not support negative behavior
- We do not use profanity, magnifying, or global labeling
- We do not minimize
- We do not make excuses for our behaviors
- We do not assent (pretend to agree)
- We do not assume, we ask instead

## Room Inspection Norms:

- We always have our rooms inspection ready
- We ensure our rooms are clear of clutter and are organized
- We keep all hygiene items stored properly
- We will keep all extra clothing stored neatly
- We always notify staff of graffiti in our rooms and within the program and remove it
- We will only hang pictures, drawings, and other items in designated areas
- We will make our bed daily prior to leaving the room
- We will not have any contraband in our rooms

## Dining Room Norms:

- We enter the Dining Hall on No Talk
- We utilize hand sanitizer prior to receiving a meal
- We do not trade food
- We do not make excessive noise in the dining room
- We do not table hop or talk from table to table, except when an intervention is needed
- We use good table manners and ask politely for things
- We do not complain about the food, and we compliment the cook occasionally
- We do not sit on counters or tables
- We do not take food out of the dining room, unless it is approved by staff
- We do not take food we do not intend to eat
- We do not take food or drink from another youth
- We use proper utensils and turn in utensils after each meal for a count
- We wait turn in line
- We sit properly in seat with feet flat on the floor
- We do not get up without permission

## Line Movement Norms:

1. We ensure everyone is in appropriate dress code for the activity.
  - a. We are in Bravo dress for school, meals, and visitation.
  - b. We are in Charlie dress for Health & Wellness and non-school days.
2. We stand in line without talking, arms distance apart by height shortest to tallest.
3. We wait quietly for the authorization to move.
4. We count off prior to movement to ensure proper student counts (1 Sir/Ma'am, 2 Sir/Ma'am, 3 Sir/Ma'am)
5. We move to the activities without talking, arms distance apart, and with our arms to our sides in a single file line.

**Cottage Norms:**

- We are aware of our group members at all times
- We do not use slang or gang expressions
- We do not touch the fire equipment
- We never climb on furniture or sit on top of tables
- We always allow staff to operate video equipment and select TV channels
- We stay away from windows, including room windows
- We never go into another student's room
- We return all games, magazines and books to Coaches when you are through with them
- We ask permission from the Coach before making any movement, including from your room to your assigned area
- We only have one student out of their seat at a time unless permission is given by staff
- We sit in our assigned seat unless we have permission from staff
- We follow staff instructions at all time
- We demonstrate respect to property and use it appropriately
- We wear all clothing appropriately
- We keep all hands, feet and objects to self
- All students will greet visitors with a firm handshake and an introduction of themselves as Student Athlete \_\_\_\_\_

**RAMS**

- Respect
- Attitude
- Motivation
- Spirit