



Gulf Coast State College
Drug-Free Schools and Communities
Act Biennial Review, AY 2026-2028

July 2026

GULF COAST STATE COLLEGE DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

As directed in Federal law, 20 USC 1011i and 34 CFR 86.100(a), Gulf Coast State College has adopted and implemented a drug and alcohol abuse prevention program. In compliance with this Federal law, the college offers this narrative to demonstrate its commitment to provide students and employees a program to prevent the use of illicit drugs and the abuse of alcohol.

I. Standards of Conduct

Gulf Coast State College is committed to ensuring that the college provides a safe, responsible environment and articulates expectations to meet this end. The office of student affairs is responsible for student discipline and provides expectations, definitions and processes for discipline in the Gulf Coast State College Student Code of Conduct. Distribution of the code of conduct is achieved via the annual publication of the Student Handbook. The Student Code of Conduct is reviewed each year by the college's Student Affairs Council, which recommends any changes to the college's Executive Council for consideration and amendment. The Student Handbook is available via the college's website or available upon demand in the office of student affairs.

Expectations, definitions and processes related to professional conduct are included in the college's Employee Handbook published by the office of human resources. Specifically related to illicit drug and alcohol abuse, Gulf Coast State College employees are notified of the college's Drug-Free Workplace policy through the annual dissemination of the Employee Handbook. The Employee Handbook is available via the college's Intranet or available upon request in the office of human resources.

Although the college's broad policy is in effect for all students and employees, students in limited access programs of allied and health sciences, public safety, and athletic teams are subject to program specific testing procedures. These conditions are set forth in the handbooks of each specific program. The college reserves the right to conduct drug testing of employees who are considered to be in safety-sensitive positions and in certain specialized academic programs that require instruction in medical clinical settings or instruction in specialized environments deemed sensitive.

II. College Sanctions for Violations

When the appropriate office receives notification of a violation of Gulf Coast State College policy, an investigation into the policy violation is initiated. After the investigation is completed in accordance with Federal constitutional protection and due process, the college will impose appropriate sanctions on employees and students who violate the college's policies and standards of conduct. Employees found in violation of the college's drug and alcohol policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and referral for prosecution by appropriate law enforcement officials. Students who are found in violation of the college's drug and alcohol policy will be subject to disciplinary action ranging from warning to expulsion and referral for prosecution by appropriate law enforcement officials.

III. Applicable Legal Sanctions under Local, State, and Federal law for the Unlawful Possession or Distribution of Illicit Drugs and Alcohol

Alcohol

Local: Bay County Ordinance Establishing Hours of Sale and Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages, Sec. 3-3 indicates special treatment zone during spring break at which time no alcoholic or intoxicating beverages may be sold, consumed or served between 2 am and 7 am. During non-spring break season, these non-consumption/sales/served hours are 4 am to 7 am. (Ord. No. 78-6, §§ 1—4, 10-10-78; Ord. No. 15-01, § 1, 1-6-15; Ord. No. 15-10, § 1, 3-31-15; Ord. No. 15-26, § 1, 5-19-15)

State: Florida law prohibits both the sale of alcoholic beverages to persons under 21 years old and the possession of alcohol by anyone under 21. It is unlawful for any person to misrepresent or misstate his or her age in order to procure alcoholic drinks. This includes the manufacture or use of false identification. Use of forged identification for the purpose of procuring alcoholic beverages is a felony. State law also makes it illegal to possess open containers of alcoholic beverages or consume alcohol in moving or standing vehicles. Under Florida law, driving under the influence of alcohol or any controlled chemical substance (DUI) is an offense evidenced by impairment of normal faculties or an unlawful blood or breath alcohol level of .08 or higher.

Depending on the severity and aggravating factors, violations of these state laws may be misdemeanors or felonies. Penalties range from community service, probation, treatment at an alcoholism treatment program, driver's license suspension or revocation, fines of thousands of dollars, and imprisonment of up to thirty years. See generally, Florida Statutes, Sections 316.193, 316.1936, 322.212 & 562.11.

Federal: The regulation of alcoholic beverages generally is given over to State and local control.

Drugs

State and Local: In Florida it is a crime to possess, manufacture, deliver, sell, or possess with the intent to sell certain controlled substances, including illicit drugs such as cannabis (marijuana), cocaine, and opium. Trafficking in illegal drugs constitutes a felony. It is a felony to sell, purchase, manufacture or deliver, or possess with the intent to sell, purchase, manufacture, or deliver, a controlled substance in, or within 1,000 feet of the real property comprising a public or private elementary, middle, secondary school, community, or state college or university. Felony level penalties include substantial terms of imprisonment, civil fines, and civil forfeiture of all real or personal property used in the illegal activity or obtained with the proceeds of the illegal activity. See generally, Florida Statutes, Chapter 893.

Florida Statute 381.986 and 499.0295 indicate the legalization and utilization of low-THC cannabis, medical cannabis and cannabis delivery devices for experimental treatments for terminal conditions as prescribed by a physician. Please see FS381.986 and 499.0295 for further information about the use of medical cannabis.

Federal: Federal law penalizes the unlawful manufacturing, distribution, use, sale, and possession of controlled substances. The penalties vary based on many factors, including the type and amount of the drug involved, and whether there is intent to distribute. Federal law sets

penalties for first offenses ranging from less than one year to life imprisonment and/or fines up to \$10 million. Penalties may include forfeiture of property, including vehicles used to possess, transport, or conceal a controlled substance; the denial of professional licenses or Federal benefits, such as student loans, grants, and contracts; successful completion of a drug treatment program; community service; and ineligibility to receive or purchase a firearm. Federal law holds that any person who distributes, possesses with intent to distribute, or manufactures a controlled substance on or within one thousand feet of an educational facility is subject to a doubling of the applicable maximum punishments and fines. See “Controlled Substances Act” 21 USC 800 et seq., Part D “Offenses and Penalties.”

IV. Health and Behavioral Risks

<http://www.floridahealthfinder.gov/HealthEncyclopedia/Health%20Illustrated%20Encyclopedia/1/001945.aspx>

The negative physical and mental effects of the use of alcohol and other drugs are well documented. Use of these drugs may cause: blackouts, poisoning, and overdose; physical and psychological dependence; damage to vital organs such as the brain, heart, and liver; inability to learn and remember information; and psychological problems including depression, psychosis, and severe anxiety. Risks associated with specific drugs are described later in this section.

Impaired judgment and coordination resulting from the use of alcohol and other drugs are associated with acquaintance assault and rape; DUI/DWI arrests; hazing; falls, drowning, and other injuries; contracting sexually-transmitted infections including AIDS; and unwanted or unplanned sexual experiences and pregnancy.

The substance abuse of family members and friends may also be of concern to individuals. Patterns of risk-taking behavior and dependency not only interfere in the lives of the abusers, but can also have a negative impact on the affected students’ academic work, emotional well-being, and adjustment to college life.

Individuals concerned about their own health or that of a friend should consult a physician or mental health professional. More information and assistance can be obtained by contacting the college’s counseling center or office of human resources.

Alcohol: Alcohol abuse is a progressive disorder in which physical dependency can develop. Even low doses of alcohol impair brain function, judgment, alertness, coordination, and reflexes. Very high doses cause suppression of respiration and death. Chronic alcohol abuse can produce dementia, sexual impotence, cirrhosis of the liver, and heart disease; and sudden withdrawal can produce severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, and life-threatening convulsions.

Marijuana (Cannabis): Marijuana has negative physical and mental effects. Physical effects include elevated blood pressure, a dry mouth and throat, bloodshot and swollen eyes, decrease in body temperature, and increased appetite. Frequent and/or long-time users may develop chronic lung disease and damage to the pulmonary system.

Use of marijuana is also associated with impairment of short-term memory and comprehension, an altered sense of time, and a reduction in the ability to perform motor skills, such as driving a car. Marijuana use also produces listlessness, inattention, withdrawal, and apathy. It also can intensify underlying emotional problems and is associated with chronic anxiety, depression, and paranoia.

Hallucinogens: This category includes phencyclidine (PCP or “angel dust”), and amphetamine variants that produce mind-altering effects. Perception and cognition are impaired and muscular coordination decreases. Speech is blocked and incoherent. Chronic users of PCP may have memory problems and speech difficulties lasting six months to a year after prolonged daily use.

Depression, anxiety, and violent behavior also occur. High psychological dependence on the drug may result in taking large doses of PCP. Large doses produce convulsions, comas, and heart and lung failure.

Lysergic acid diethylamine (L.S.D. or “acid”), mescaline, and psilocybin (mushrooms) cause illusions, hallucinations, and altered perception of time and space. Physical effects include dilated pupils, elevated body temperature, increased heart rate and blood pressure, decreased appetite, insomnia, and tremors. Psychological reactions include panic, confusion, paranoia, anxiety, and loss of control. Flashbacks, or delayed effects, can occur even after use has ceased.

Cocaine: Cocaine stimulates the central nervous system. Immediate physical effects include dilated pupils and increased blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, and body temperature. Occasional use can cause a stuffy or runny nose, while chronic use may destroy nasal tissues. Following the “high” of extreme happiness and a sense of unending energy is a cocaine “crash” including depression, dullness, intense anger, and paranoia. Injecting cocaine with contaminated equipment can cause AIDS, hepatitis, and other diseases. Tolerance develops rapidly, and psychological and physical dependency can occur.

Crack or “rock” is extremely addictive and produces the most intense cocaine high. The use of cocaine can cause kidney damage, heart attacks, seizures, and strokes due to high blood pressure. Death can occur by cardiac arrest or respiratory failure.

Stimulants: Amphetamines and other stimulants include “ecstasy” and “ice” as well as prescription drugs such as Adderall and Ritalin. The physical effects produced are elevated heart and respiratory rates, increased blood pressure, insomnia, and loss of appetite. Sweating, headaches, blurred vision, dizziness, and anxiety may also result from use. High dosage can cause rapid or irregular heartbeat, tremors, loss of motor skills, and even physical collapse. Long-term use of higher doses can produce amphetamine psychosis which includes hallucinations, delusions, and paranoia.

Depressants: Barbiturates and benzodiazepines are two of the most commonly used groups of these drugs. Barbiturates include Phenobarbital, Seconal, and Amytal; benzodiazepines include Ativan, Dalmane, Librium, Xanax, Valium, Halcion, and Restoril. These drugs are frequently used for medical purposes to relieve anxiety and to induce sleep. Physical and psychological dependence can occur if the drugs are used for longer periods of time at higher doses.

Benzodiazepine use can cause slurred speech, disorientation, and lack of coordination. If taken with alcohol, abuse can lead to coma and possible death.

Narcotics: Narcotics include heroin, methadone, morphine, codeine, and opium. After an initial feeling of euphoria, usage causes drowsiness, nausea, and vomiting. Effects of overdose include slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, and possible death. Physical and psychological dependence is high, and severe withdrawal symptoms include watery eyes, runny nose, loss of appetite, irritability, tremors, panic, cramps, nausea, chills, and sweating. Use of contaminated syringes may cause AIDS and hepatitis. In addition, narcotics include common painkillers such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Lortab, Norco, Percocet, Percodan, Dolophine, and Methadose. These painkillers have similar addictive, overdose and withdrawal symptoms as traditional narcotics, and when combined with alcohol are particularly dangerous. Alcohol slows breathing and in combination with these drugs the effects could lead to life-threatening respiratory depression.

Synthetic Cannabinoids: Synthetic cannabinoids refer to a growing number of man-made mind-altering chemicals that are either sprayed on dried, shredded plant material so they can be smoked (herbal incense) or sold as liquids to be vaporized and inhaled in e-cigarettes and other devices (liquid incense).

These chemicals are called cannabinoids because they are related to chemicals found in the marijuana plant. Because of this similarity, synthetic cannabinoids are sometimes misleadingly called "synthetic marijuana" (or "fake weed"), and they are often marketed as "safe," legal alternatives to that drug. In fact, they may affect the brain much more powerfully than marijuana; their actual effects can be unpredictable and, in some cases, severe or even life-threatening.

Synthetic cannabinoids are included in a group of drugs called "new psychoactive substances" (NPS). NPS are unregulated psychoactive (mind-altering) substances that have become newly available on the market and are intended to copy the effects of illegal drugs. Some of these substances may have been around for years but have reentered the market in altered chemical forms or due to renewed popularity.

Manufacturers sell these herbal incense products in colorful foil packages and sell similar liquid incense products, like other e-cigarette fluids, in plastic bottles. They market these products under a wide variety of specific brand names; in past years, K2 and Spice were common. Hundreds of other brand names now exist, such as Joker, Black Mamba, Kush, and Kronic.

For several years, synthetic cannabinoid mixtures have been easy to buy in drug paraphernalia shops, novelty stores, gas stations, and through the Internet. Because the chemicals used in them have a high potential for abuse and no medical benefit, authorities have made it illegal to sell, buy, or possess some of these chemicals. However, manufacturers try to sidestep these laws by changing the chemical formulas in their mixtures.

Easy access and the belief that synthetic cannabinoid products are "natural" and therefore harmless have likely contributed to their use among young people. Another reason for their use is that standard drug tests cannot easily detect many of the chemicals used in these products.

V. Drug and Alcohol Counseling, Treatment, or Rehabilitation or Re-entry Programs that are Available to Employees and Students

Students: Educational information about alcohol and drugs is available to students through the college’s counseling center. Student activity programs include awareness activities associated with safe spring break and informational materials are sponsored annually. The counseling center provides counseling for students suffering from drug and alcohol related issues and well as sponsors an annual services fair giving students on site access to representatives from various local drug and alcohol treatment facilities. Additionally, students in need of treatment for alcohol and other drug problems will be assisted with referrals through the counseling center to self-help support groups, community agencies, and private providers.

Employees: Gulf Coast State College offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides services to all employees. EAP services are available at no charge to all college employees. The college’s EAP is an employee benefit designed to provide counseling and referral services to employees. EAP services cover a broad range of issues that include personal, family, health, legal, and specifically drug and/or alcohol counseling. Additional support for treatment and rehabilitation of drug/and or alcohol abuse may be supported through the college-provided health insurance plan. The college’s office of human resources provides employees with confidential contact with EAP services.

VI. Results of institutional programs and initiatives

Gulf Coast State College has experienced a low occurrence of incidents involving alcohol and and/or drug policies. As an open campus, there have been 5 incidents involving a student and no reported incidents involving employees during the reporting period. These figures include incidence occurring on campus and on surrounding roadways connected to campus. See Table 1.

OFFENSES	2023	2024	2025
Drug Law Violations	0	4	0
Liquor Law Violations	0	0	1

Table 1: Number of alcohol or drug related incidents.

The Biennial Review Committee consisted of:

- Kelli Walsingham– Student Resources
- Leigh Bailey – Counselor
- Herb Dorsey– Campus Safety
- Amanda Reed- Human Resources

06/26/2026