

1 Great Falls School District

2  
3 **PERSONNEL**

5226

4  
5 Hazing/Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying

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7 The Great Falls Public School District is committed to providing a safe, productive and positive  
8 learning and working environment. A safe and accepting school environment is conducive to,  
9 and necessary for optimal academic achievement. Like other disruptive behaviors, bullying,  
10 harassment, intimidation and hazing negatively impact the learning and working environment.  
11 Bullying, harassment, intimidating and hazing behaviors will not be tolerated. Students, staff and  
12 third parties are strictly prohibited from bullying, harassment, intimidation, hazing, or retaliation  
13 for reporting such action.

14  
15 Definitions

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17 “Bullying” means any harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning  
18 gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic  
19 communication (“cyberbullying”) or threat directed against an employee that is persistent,  
20 severe, or repeated, and that substantially interferes with an employee’s benefits, opportunities,  
21 or performance, that takes place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-  
22 sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation, at any official school bus stop, or  
23 anywhere conduct may reasonably be considered to be a threat or an attempted intimidation of  
24 an employee or an interference with school purposes or an educational function, and that has the  
25 effect of:

- 26 • Physically harming an employee or damaging an employee’s property;
- 27 • Knowingly placing an employee in reasonable fear of physical harm to the employee or  
28 damage to an employee’s property;
- 29 • Creating a hostile learning and/or working environment; or
- 30 • Substantially and materially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

31 “Harassment” includes, but is not limited to, any act which subjects an individual or group to  
32 unwanted, abusive behavior of a nonverbal, verbal, written (electronic or otherwise), or physical  
33 nature, on the basis of any protected class as defined under federal and/or Montana state law.

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35 “Hazing” means an act against a student or coercing a student into behavior that creates risk of  
36 mental or physical harm to a person in order for the student to be initiated into, or affiliated with  
37 a student activity, team, club, or organization, or for any other purpose.

38  
39 “Intimidation” includes, but is not limited to, any threat or act intended to tamper with,  
40 substantially damage, or interfere with another person or their property, cause substantial  
41 inconvenience, subject another to offensive physical contact, or inflict serious physical injury.

42  
43 “Electronic Communication” is defined in 45-8-213, MCA, and includes any communication by  
44 any electronic device including but not limited to text messaging, email, or use of social  
45 networking.

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1 “Retaliation” means an intentional act or communication intended as revenge against a person  
 2 who has reported or participated in an investigation of bullying, harassment, hazing or  
 3 intimidation; or to improperly influence the reporting, investigation, or discipline that result from  
 4 an incidence of bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation. False charges shall also be regarded  
 5 as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

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 7 “Third Parties” include, but are not limited to, coaches, school volunteers, parents, school  
 8 visitors, service contractors or others engaged in District business, such as employees of  
 9 businesses or organizations participating in cooperative work programs with the District and  
 10 others not directly subject to District control at inter-District athletic competitions or other school  
 11 events.

12  
 13 “District” includes District facilities, District premises, and non-District property if the student or  
 14 employee is at any District-sponsored, District-approved, or District-related activity or function,  
 15 such as field trips or athletic events, where students are under the control of the District or where  
 16 the employees are engaged in District business.

17  
 18 “Designated Investigator” is the principal of the school, the designated Title IX coordinator, or a  
 19 staff member appointed by the principal responsible for receiving and investigating reports of,  
 20 bullying, harassment, hazing, and intimidation. An independent investigator may be designated  
 21 by the Superintendent or designee.

## 22 23 Prohibitions

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 25 No student, employee, or third party will engage in any of the following:

- 26
- 27 • Bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation of an employee;
- 28 • Retaliation against an employee for reporting or thought to have reported an incident of
- 29 bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation; or
- 30 • Coercion of another person to commit bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation.

31  
 32 Bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation is strictly prohibited in person or electronically (as  
 33 defined in 45-8-213, MCA):

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- 35 • On school premises; or
- 36 • During any school sponsored program, activity, or function including on a school bus or
- 37 other school-related vehicle.;

## 38 39 Consequences

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 41 Any employee disciplined will be afforded due process as required by District policy and  
 42 applicable collective bargaining agreement for action taken by school administration or the  
 43 Board of Trustees.

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 45 Employees whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline  
 46 up to and including recommendation for dismissal. Third parties whose behavior is found to be

1 in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by  
2 the District Administrator or the Board. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement  
3 officials.

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5 Intervention  
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7 All staff members shall intervene when witnessing potential bullying, harassment, hazing or  
8 intimidating behavior. If the staff member witnesses or receives a report of unresolved bullying,  
9 harassment, hazing or intimidation the staff member will report the matter pursuant to  
10 “Reporting” below.

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12 If it is determined that staff was aware of bullying, harassment, hazing or intimidation and did  
13 nothing to intervene; discipline or remedial action may be invoked.

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15 Reporting  
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17 All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Any  
18 employee, or third party who has knowledge of conduct in violations of this policy or feels  
19 he/she has been a victim of hazing, harassment, intimidation, or bullying in violation of this  
20 policy is encouraged to immediately report his/her concerns to the building principal or the  
21 District Administrator who have overall responsibility for such investigations. All employees are  
22 required to immediately report to their direct supervisor. Complaints against the building  
23 principal shall be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent or  
24 designee shall be filed with the Board.

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26 All parties shall be notified of the findings of the investigation and, as appropriate, that remedial  
27 action has been taken.

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29 Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies  
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31 A person alleging violation of any form of harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening,  
32 insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or  
33 electronic communication, as stated above, may seek redress under any available law, after  
34 exhausting all administrative remedies.

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36 Responsibilities  
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38 The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for ensuring notice of this policy is provided  
39 to students, staff, and third parties and for the development of administrative regulations,  
40 including reporting and investigative procedures, as needed.

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42 When an employee has actual knowledge that behavior in violation of this policy is sexual  
43 harassment, the employee must contact the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX sexual harassment  
44 grievance process will be followed, if applicable, prior to imposing any discipline that cannot be  
45 imposed without resolution of the Title IX process.  
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1 Retaliation and Reprisal

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3 Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a  
4 violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry. Such  
5 retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy, whether or not a complaint is  
6 substantiated. False charges shall also be regarded as a serious offense and will result in  
7 disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.

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9 Notification and Training

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11 The District policy and procedures will be included in the employee handbook for all grade  
12 levels and posted on the District/school webpages.

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14 Staff and students will be educated on the policy and procedures, including: recognizing  
15 inappropriate behaviors; using appropriate intervention and remediation; and possible  
16 consequences and discipline.

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19 Cross References:

20 Policy 3215	Students: Uniform Complaint Procedure
21 Policy 3225	Sexual Harassment <del>Intimidation</del> of Students
22 Policy 3225F	Sexual Harassment Reporting – Intake Form for Students
23 Policy 3226	Students: Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying
24 Policy 3310	Student Discipline
25 Policy 4226	Community Relations: Hazing, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying

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27 Legal References:

28 § 20-5-207, MCA	“Bully-Free Montana Act”
29 § 20-5-208, MCA	Definition
30 § 20-5-209, MCA	Bullying of Student Prohibited
31 § 20-5-210, MCA	Enforcement – Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies
32 § 45-8-213, MCA	Privacy and Communications
33 10.55.701(2)(f), ARM	Board of Trustees
34 10.55.719, ARM	Student Protection Procedures
35 10.55.801(1)(d), ARM	School Climate

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37 Policy History:

38 Adopted on:	May 9, 2005
39 Revised on:	April 24, 2006
40 Revised on:	January 22, 2007
41 Revised on:	February 24, 2014
42 Reviewed on:	November 9, 2016
43 Revised on:	March 12, 2018
44 Revised on:	August 23, 2021

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