

1 **8302R NON-INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS**

2 Guidelines for Indoor Air Quality

3 **Animals in the Classroom**

4 While many teachers and students have classroom pets, animals can be a source of allergens, asthma  
5 triggers, and microorganisms that may cause infectious diseases. Therefore, Great Falls Public Schools has  
6 instituted an animal policy based on information gathered from walkthrough inspections, building  
7 systems evaluations, IAQ concern reports, and staff meetings.

8 Animals should be isolated to the extent possible and should be kept away from carpets, upholstered  
9 furniture, and stuffed toys. Specific types of animals may be restricted from the classroom if a concern is  
10 expressed by staff, students, or parents. The district also reserves the right to ban certain animals if they  
11 pose a threat to the safety or comfort of staff and students. Classroom pets should be placed away from  
12 return air ducts and from students with known allergy or asthma problems. District policy 8425 outlines  
13 the specific criteria for use of service animals in classrooms.

14 **Food in the Classroom Policy**

15 When it is necessary to store food in classrooms, it must be kept in airtight, sealed containers to minimize  
16 the potential for pests, odors, and biological growth. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to ensure  
17 that food is stored properly in their classrooms.

18 **Painting Policy**

19 Schools must use latex, water-based paints; using paints that contain mercury or lead is prohibited.  
20 Painting and drying should only occur when the area of the building is unoccupied and properly ventilated.  
21 It is also important to inform all affected staff and students before a painting job begins. The school  
22 district's Hazardous Materials Policy is located in Buildings & Grounds Department.

23 **Hazardous Materials Policy**

24 It is important to handle hazardous materials according to the manufacturers' guidelines. Wastes  
25 generated from hazardous materials should be stored separately from regular waste and disposed in  
26 appropriate containers. Hazardous materials are common in art, science, and vocational/industrial  
27 classes. Training sessions for staff can help explain the risks associated with hazardous materials and the  
28 importance of complying with this policy. The school district's Hazardous Materials Policy is located in  
29 Buildings & Grounds Department.

30 **Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Management Plan**

31 An AHERA Management Plan is required by Federal law and is intended to prevent staff exposure to  
32 asbestos during general operation and maintenance activities. It describes the location and condition of  
33 asbestos-containing building materials, and documents their removal and repairs. The AHERA  
34 Management Plan also describes the proper recordkeeping practices that school officials must follow.  
35 Schools must update their AHERA Management Plans with information collected from their periodic  
36 surveillance every 6 months, re-inspection of buildings for asbestos-containing materials every 3 years,  
37 and response actions taken within the school. The AHERA Management Plan is located in Buildings &  
38 Grounds Department.

**1 Integrated Pest Management Program**

2 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a comprehensive strategy for controlling pests, pest-generated  
3 substances (such as cockroach fecal matter), and pesticides, which can act as irritants and trigger allergies  
4 and asthma. The district's IPM program aims to reduce the frequency and magnitude of both pesticide  
5 use and pest problems. The school district's IPM file is located in Buildings & Grounds Department.

**6 Lead Policy**

7 Lead can adversely affect the nervous system. Young children are particularly susceptible. If lead is present  
8 in existing school building paint coatings, renovation procedures must be employed that minimize the  
9 exposure of building occupants to airborne lead-based paint particles. In addition, a plan has been  
10 implemented that includes water sampling, faucet replacement, education, and record keeping. The  
11 records are located in Buildings & Grounds Department.

**12 Radon Gas Policy**

13 Radon is a naturally-occurring gas that can enter into school buildings from the underlying soils, and build-  
14 up to levels that increase occupants' risk for developing lung cancer. Radon testing will be periodically  
15 performed in all school buildings. Information on radon testing and mitigation is located at the Building  
16 and Grounds office.

**17 Non-Smoking Policy**

18 The Great Falls Public Schools prohibits tobacco use in all public school buildings or public school property  
19 including vehicles. Information about smoking regulations is located in Board Policy 5225 Personnel –  
20 Tobacco Free Policy & 8225 Non-Instructional Operations- Tobacco Free Policy.

**21 Cultural Considerations**

22 Lighting of tobacco, sage, sweet grass or cedar by an adult Indian may be used as a part of a District-  
23 approved traditional American Indian cultural ceremony in a well-ventilated area. The building  
24 administration will be informed when these ceremonies are taking place.

**25 Curricular Considerations**

26 Teaching activities in curricular areas including but not limited to, the arts, sciences and vocational  
27 technology that produce fumes, vapors and air-borne particulate materials, must be conducted in a  
28 properly ventilated space.

**29 Anti-Idling Policy**

30 Delivery and bus pickup and drop off zones have been located away from building outdoor air intakes to  
31 ensure that exhaust fumes do not enter the facility. The Great Falls Public Schools prohibits buses from  
32 idling while waiting to pick up or drop off students. Buses shall idle no longer than the time required to  
33 bring engines to proper operating temperature and to defrost all windows. This policy is not in effect when  
34 temperatures fall below 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

1 **Procedures:**

2 Cleaning and Chemicals

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## 1 **Procedures:**

### 2 **Cleaning and Chemicals**

3 Regular and thorough cleaning is an important means for the removal of air pollutant sources. However,  
4 the use of cleaning products may also contribute to indoor air pollution. To ensure that cleaning practices  
5 remove pollutant sources while using cleaning products appropriately, guidelines have been created.

- 6 • Custodial staff shall only use cleaning agents approved by the district for school use. All products  
7 must be clearly labeled and stored in a secure area. Bottles of cleaning agents must be tightly  
8 closed when stored.
- 9 • All safety data sheets should be stored in an area available to all staff, and the location of this  
10 information is discussed in the district's "Employee Right to Know" annual training.
- 11 • Rooms must be kept clean. Slightly damp microfiber cloths are used to remove dust from surfaces  
12 — however, wiped surfaces should not be left damp or wet for extended periods of time, since  
13 this can cause mold growth.
- 14 • Ammonia-based cleaning agents and chlorine-containing cleaners (such as bleach) must never be  
15 mixed because this generates toxic gases.
- 16 • During routine operations, pollutant-releasing activities are restricted by time of day, week, or  
17 year. For example, the waxing of floors will be performed [on Friday afternoons or vacations, to  
18 ensure that gases are removed by the time classes resume].
- 19 • Areas of frequent use should be cleaned more often than areas of infrequent use.
- 20 • Large walk-off mats must be used to trap dirt and moisture at building entrances. These mats are  
21 cleaned according to manufacturers' guidelines to ensure optimal performance. Trapping dirt and  
22 moisture at building entrances helps to maintain the cleanliness of floors and carpets throughout  
23 the building.
- 24 • Staff are not permitted to bring any cleaning products, pesticides, air fresheners, or other  
25 chemicals into the school that are not on the list provided by the IAQ Coordinator.

### 26 **Flooring**

27 The two most common types of floor covering for general use in schools are carpet and resilient floor  
28 covering products. Carpet offers acoustical and comfort benefits that are generally not available with  
29 other floor coverings. Many schools prefer to use carpet in classrooms and administrative areas. Resilient  
30 flooring is used for high traffic areas including classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, art rooms, restrooms, and  
31 anywhere liquid spills are likely.

32 While there is considerable debate about the most appropriate flooring material for use in schools, EPA  
33 recognizes that there are advantages and disadvantages associated with all types of floors coverings.  
34 Regardless of the floor covering type, regular and effective cleaning and maintenance is essential to keep  
35 it dry and clean. Carpets must not be cleaned with hot water extraction during the school year unless it  
36 can be dried within 24 hours.

## 1 **Preventive Maintenance, Operations and Monitoring**

2 Preventive maintenance involves routine inspection, adjustment, and repair of building structures and  
3 systems, including the heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system (HVAC); unit ventilators; local  
4 exhaust; fresh air intakes; and flooring. Preventive maintenance plays a major role in maintaining the  
5 quality of air by assuring that the building systems are operating effectively and efficiently. Moreover, it  
6 helps to maintain comfortable temperatures and humidity in occupied spaces.

7 The preventive maintenance schedule for Great Falls Public Schools can be found at the Building and  
8 Grounds department. The schedule describes the time intervals and locations of building and ventilation  
9 components that are inspected and maintained on a routine basis. The schedule was established using  
10 the past experience of school district maintenance professionals, the availability of financial resources,  
11 and technical guides, including the manufacturer's specifications. All records of preventive maintenance  
12 are located in the buildings and grounds office.

13 Unless otherwise noted, school buildings should be maintained according to the American Society of  
14 Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers' (ASHRAE) recommended comfort parameters. The  
15 district will use the indoor air quality standards for Co2 levels established by the Montana Department of  
16 Labor as a guide (ASHRAE). If the recommended parameters cannot be met, the district staff will make  
17 ventilation adjustments that provide fresh air, temperature, and humidity levels that are as close to the  
18 ASHRAE parameters as possible.

## 19 **Construction and Renovation**

20 Great Falls Public Schools should consider IAQ when planning construction and renovation projects. The  
21 Building and Grounds director and superintendent or designee, will discuss major structural changes that  
22 may impact IAQ. The findings from walkthrough inspections and building systems evaluations should be  
23 considered when planning renovations.

24 To the extent possible, major renovations should be performed when school is not in session. If renovation  
25 projects must be performed while school is in session, the return air from any area being renovated should  
26 be isolated from the main ventilation system. Engineering controls should be used to contain and  
27 minimize the distribution of dust and other contaminants produced by construction activities. Cleaning  
28 operations should be more frequent during and after renovation.

## 29 **Microbial Management**

30 Microbial organisms, such as mold, bacteria, and viruses, are a significant cause of illness, health  
31 symptoms, and discomfort. School staff should be aware that the easiest way to control microbial growth  
32 is to control moisture.

33 Signs of water intrusion and microbial growth should be investigated during the walkthrough inspections,  
34 building system evaluations, and other efforts. The maintenance staff should be informed about damaged  
35 buildings systems and components that cause water leaks and water condensation. School staff must  
36 make the necessary repairs and adjustments in a prompt manner. Materials damaged by water should be  
37 replaced when possible. Damp or wet materials must be dried within 48 hours (preferably within 24  
38 hours).

1 Materials contaminated with microbial organisms should be promptly cleaned or replaced. Mold growth  
2 should be removed from non-porous surfaces with a strong brush and non-ammonia containing detergent  
3 and thorough drying. Remediation projects that cannot be handled by district staff should be contracted  
4 to a professional. Large-scale remediation projects may require specific control and protection measures.  
5 For additional information on mold remediation, refer to EPA's guide, "Mold Remediation in Schools and  
6 Commercial Buildings". See also [www.epa.gov/mold](http://www.epa.gov/mold)

#### 7 **Staff Education**

8 All district employees play an important role in maintaining and improving air quality since their behavior  
9 can affect the quality of the air present in school buildings. For example, placing objects on unit  
10 ventilators, adjusting room thermostats, or turning off unit ventilators can worsen the quality of air in a  
11 room. An educated employee is more likely to take steps to maintain good air quality. In addition, an  
12 employee with an understanding of IAQ is more likely to report IAQ concerns quickly and accurately. For  
13 these reasons, the district staff must be educated about IAQ. The Great Falls Public Schools IAQ  
14 coordinator will provide annual updates to the IAQ guidelines for all staff.

#### 15 **Communication**

16 Communication is a critical element to successful IAQ management. The IAQ Coordinator and other  
17 district authorities try to limit misinformation and confusion through the use of effective communication.  
18 In order to develop and maintain the trust of the community and staff, the IAQ Coordinator and other  
19 designated district employees should communicate with relevant parties in a prompt, honest, and  
20 courteous manner until the issue is resolved. Every time an IAQ concern is addressed or resolved, the IAQ  
21 Coordinator should report the measures taken and the resolution of the identified concern to the  
22 appropriate parties.

23 In the unlikely event of an IAQ emergency, the district will accommodate the needs of students, parents,  
24 and staff. One or more contacts shall be selected to handle the media and update the community during  
25 a crisis. No one other than the district representative(s) should discuss IAQ-related issues with the press.  
26 The media will be alerted by the superintendent or designee when it is necessary to provide information  
27 to a broader audience. Every effort will be made to share appropriate information as soon as it becomes  
28 available to the school district.

#### 29 **Responsibilities**

30 All staff members are responsible for improving and maintaining good IAQ:

- 31 • Teachers are encouraged to not interfere with airflow from ventilators (e.g., do not stack books  
32 or other items on ventilators, cover vents with posters, or turn off the fan due to noise), remove  
33 clutter in their classrooms, properly dispose of hazardous waste, and enforce the school's IAQ  
34 policies in their classrooms. Due to the sensitivity of some staff and students to airborne  
35 particulates, odor emitting devices (scented candles, etc.) are strongly discouraged in offices and  
36 classroom areas.
- 37 • Administrators will ensure that the school is implementing IAQ policies appropriately.
- 38 • Students and Visitors will follow guidelines established within this policy.

- 1 • Facility operators must identify HVAC systems that are not operating properly and recommend  
2 that they are repaired in a timely manner. In addition, operators will ensure that buildings are  
3 maintained adequately and cleaned regularly.
- 4 • Engineers need to follow all policies regarding cleaning chemicals, ensure that the school is  
5 regularly vacuumed and swept, clean drain pans, empty trash cans, and check drain pipes  
6 regularly. They should also look for signs of pest problems and inform the appropriate people of  
7 any issues.
- 8 • School Nurses shall track allergies and illnesses, such as asthma, that may provide an early warning  
9 of IAQ problems consistent with the Nurses Practices Act.

#### 10 Emergency Response

11 An emergency is defined as an unforeseen circumstance that requires immediate action, assistance, or  
12 relief. This includes situations that are potentially life threatening, such as:

- 13 • Spills of hazardous materials;
- 14 • Complaints of severe headaches, nausea, and combustion odors.

15 In addition, emergencies include situations where there is limited time available to prevent serious  
16 property damage, such as flooding in a carpeted area or health problems.

17 It is up to the discretion of the school administrators to identify and react to emergencies on a case-by-  
18 case basis, using the above definition as a general guideline only. If doubt exists about whether exposure  
19 to a specific hazard constitutes an emergency, a precautionary approach may be used where the matter  
20 is handled as an emergency.

21 District officials must respond to emergencies immediately. If the problem cannot be resolved with in-  
22 house resources, external help should be acquired (e.g., local health agency, IAQ professionals). If a hazard  
23 poses an immediate health threat to the students and staff, the affected building areas must be  
24 evacuated. All avenues of communication need to be utilized to warn and inform affected or interested  
25 parties in a prompt manner.

#### 26 Policy History:

27 Adopted on: June 10, 2013