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VISION:

All kids are engaged in learning today … for life tomorrow.

MISSION:

We successfully educate students to navigate their future.

WE BELIEVE:

- All students deserve teachers and staff who thrive on student success.
- Each student will have fair and equitable opportunity for quality instruction and academic success.
- All students learn when their individual needs are met through a personalized school experience.
- All students and staff learn and work best in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment.
- Highly skilled and committed personnel are our greatest asset.
- Quality education is a partnership of students, staff, family, and community engagement.
- Dedication to acknowledging, affirming, and including diversity enriches the educational experiences for all.
- District resources, programs and staff are flexible, adaptable and provide choice to meet the changing needs of all students.
- A well-educated community is the foundation of our democracy.

GREAT FALLS - GREAT SCHOOLS - GREATER TOMORROWS
PREFACE

This handbook is intended as a method of communicating to Teacher Aides regarding general District information, rules, and regulations.

Because this handbook is a general source of information, it is not intended to be, and should not be interpreted as, a contract. It is not an all-encompassing document and may not cover every possible situation or unusual circumstance. If a conflict exists between information in this handbook and Board policy or administrative procedures, the policies or procedures govern. It is the employee’s responsibility to refer to the actual policies and/or administrative procedures for further information. Complete copies of the personnel policies can be found at:

http://www.gfps.k12.mt.us/content/5000-series-personnel

Any employee is free to review official policies and procedures and is expected to be familiar with those related to his/her job responsibilities.

Although every effort will be made to update the handbook on a timely basis, the District reserves the right, and has the sole discretion, to change any policies, procedures, benefits, and terms of employment without notice, consultation, or publication, except as may be required by law. The District reserves the right, and has the sole discretion, to modify or change any portion of this handbook at any time. The District reserves the right to not change Handbook and carry-over provisions from year to year as allowed by law and policy.

WELCOME

We welcome you as an employee of the Great Falls Public Schools. As reflected in our mission statement, we take our commitment to serving the future of our society—our children—very seriously.

The work you perform as an employee is ultimately for the purpose of serving the students of the District. You have a valuable role in making the District an effective and efficient organization that educates and serves our students. We wish you success and happiness in your position with the District.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Website: www.gfps.k12.mt.us

Elementary Schools

Chief Joseph—268-6675        Riverview—268-7015
Lewis and Clark—268-6705     Roosevelt—268-7045
Lincoln—268-6800              Sacajawea—268-7080
Longfellow—268-6845          Sunnyside—268-7115
Loy—268-6885                 Valley View—268-7145
Meadow Lark—268-7300         West Elementary—268-7180
Morningside—268-6960         Whittier—268-7230
Mountain View—268-7305       Early Learning Skyline Center—268-6400

Middle Schools

East Middle School—268-6500
North Middle School—268-6525

High Schools

C.M. Russell High School—268-6100
Great Falls High School—268-6250
Paris Gibson Education Center—268-6600

A complete list of District schools, offices, and staff, along with contact information, is available on the website.
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
The Board of Trustees is composed of seven elected officials who serve as the governing body for the District. They establish the broad operating policies under which the District functions, drawing on the counsel and advice of the District’s chief administrator, the Superintendent of Schools.

Administration of the District’s operations is delegated by the Board of Trustees to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent is assisted in this task by a staff of District educational, business, and financial administrators; managers; supervisors; professionals; and others in a variety of areas.

The Board of Trustees meet the 2nd and 4th Mondays most months of the year. A listing of meetings, agendas and minutes can be found at this website:

http://www.gfps.k12.mt.us/content/meeting-agendas

BOARD PERSONNEL GOAL
The Board believes that highly skilled and committed personnel are the District’s greatest asset. Therefore, the District will provide leadership in human resource and personnel practices that make the District the employer of choice in Montana. The Board seeks always to employ highly qualified individuals for all positions in the District.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS
• Always be prompt both in reporting for work and in completing assigned tasks. If an emergency makes it necessary for you to be late to work or leave early from work, notify or ask your supervisor for permission as soon as possible.
• Establish a good attendance record. Only be absent from work when it is absolutely necessary or when you are on a pre-approved leave.
• Courtesy and cooperation are two basic elements of success in your job and every job in the District. Be courteous and cooperative with the public, fellow workers, prospective employees, teachers, students, and parents who are all a part of the District you serve.
• Maintain open lines of communication. If any instructions given by your supervisor are not clear, ask for further explanation to make certain that you understand exactly what is expected of you.
• Try to be as clear and concise as possible when explaining matters to the public and to your fellow employees. Use language that can be understood by everyone and avoid using slang or jargon.
• Always try to work carefully. Mistakes can be costly and at times, dangerous. If you make a mistake, be sure to find out exactly what happened and how to avoid making the same mistake again. Notify your supervisor of the mistake.
• Remember to keep all District business confidential. While many things that happen at the District are a matter of public record, releasing information about them is the responsibility of specific offices and individuals. Refer any unusual requests for information to the appropriate authority.
• Dress appropriately for your type of work. Maintain a well-groomed, modest, clean, neat, and business-like appearance at all times. Remember, you are representing the District to students and the public.
• GFPS believes that employees’ concerns are usually most effectively addressed at the lowest possible level within the organization. Therefore, employees are ordinarily expected to address issues and concerns with their immediate supervisor first. If the issue cannot be resolved at that level, the employee should move to the next level within that employee’s chain-of-command. Board Policy 5215 further delineates the formal Complaint Procedures.
Notification of Absences
It is extremely important that you notify your supervisor as soon as possible of any unanticipated absences so that, if necessary, alternate arrangements can be made. An absent employee must report his/her absence to a supervisor (or other designated person) before the start of the employee’s workday or as soon as practical given the nature of the absence. It is not sufficient for an employee to notify a co-worker or secretary, unless such person has been designated by the supervisor as the appropriate contact for this purpose. Ask your supervisor what the procedure is for reporting absences at your location, as procedures may vary.

For anticipated absences, contact your supervisor in advance to discuss the procedures he or she expects and to complete necessary paperwork.

Bereavement Leave
Teacher Aides shall be allowed to use up to five (5) days of bereavement leave for each occurrence of death in the employee's immediate family. Immediate family shall be defined as father, mother, sister, brother, spouse, child, spouse's child, spouse's father, spouse's mother, grandparents, grandchildren, brother's wife, sister's husband, spouse's sister or spouse's brother, child’s spouse, step child’s spouse. A Leave Request Form (Appendix A) must be completed for this leave. Vacation or leave without pay may be requested for the death of a person not listed above. Verification for bereavement absences may be requested by the District.

Family Medical Leave (FMLA)
Eligibility
An employee is eligible to take FMLA leave if the employee has been employed for at least twelve (12) months, and has worked at least one thousand two hundred fifty (1,250) hours during the twelve (12) months immediately prior to the date when the leave is requested. Employees will be required to use appropriate paid leave while on FMLA Leave. Workers Compensation absences will be designated FMLA Leave. At the discretion of the Superintendent, medical certification may be required to determine FMLA initial or continued eligibility as well as fitness for duty.

Length/Purpose of Leave
In accordance with provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), a leave of absence of up to sixty (60) work days during a twelve-(12)-month period may be granted to an eligible employee for the following reasons: 1) birth of a child; 2) placement of a child for adoption or foster care; 3) a serious health condition which makes the employee unable to perform functions of the job; 4) to care for the employee’s spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition; 5) because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the spouse or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation.

Servicemember Family Leave
Subject to Section 103 of the FMLA of 1993, as amended, an eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered servicemember shall be entitled to a total of twenty-six (26) workweeks of leave during a twelve-(12)-month period to care for the servicemember. The leave described in this paragraph shall only be available during a single twelve-(12)-month period. (Refer to policy 5328 & 5328P)
**Holidays**
Teacher Aides are paid for the hours normally worked on these holidays in accordance with MCA 20-1-305: New Year's Day (January 1); Memorial Day (last Monday in May); Independence Day (July 4 and only if working immediately before and after July 4); Labor Day (first Monday in September); Thanksgiving Day (fourth Thursday in November); and Christmas Day (December 25).

**Jury/Witness Duty Leave**
A Teacher Aide who is summoned to jury duty or subpoenaed to serve as a witness may elect to receive regular salary or to take annual leave. An employee who elects not to take annual leave, however, must remit to the District all juror and witness fees and allowances (except for expenses and mileage). A Leave Request Form (Appendix A) must be completed for this leave.

**Medical Leave of Absence**
Teacher Aides may use sick leave for long-term illness or temporary disability, and, upon the expiration of sick leave, the Board may grant a Medical Leave of Absence. A Medical Leave of Absence, if granted, shall commence only after sick leave has been exhausted. The length of the Medical Leave of Absence is for a period of up to one school year, but no longer than the last day of the current school year, and may upon request, be renewed or extended by action of the Board. (Refer to Board Policy 5329 for more information.)

**Military Leave**
Pursuant to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and the Montana Military Service Employment Rights, the Superintendent shall grant military leave to employees for voluntary or involuntary service in the uniformed services of the United States, upon receipt of the required notice. (Refer to Board Policy 5322 for more information.)

**Sick Leave**
Teacher Aides shall be granted sick leave benefits in accordance with § 2-18-618, MCA. For Teacher Aides, “sick leave” means a leave of absence, with pay, for a sickness suffered by an employee or a member of his or her immediate family. The employees’ immediate family shall be defined as father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, spouse’s father, spouse’s mother, grandchildren, grandparents, brother’s wife, sister’s husband, spouse’s sister, spouse’s brother, child’s spouse, step child’s spouse.

Teacher Aides are not entitled to be paid for sick leave until they have been continuously employed by the District for ninety (90) days.

A Teacher Aide who terminates employment with the District is entitled to a payment equal to one-fourth (1/4) of the accumulated sick leave at the Teacher Aide’s hourly rate. Teacher Aides are only eligible for this payment after being continuously employed by the District for ninety (90) days.

Abuse of sick leave is cause for disciplinary action or dismissal.

**Sick Leave Pool**
To be eligible for the sick leave pool the employee must have been employed by the Great Falls Public Schools as a Teacher Aide for a minimum of one (1) school year. If donor and receiver are both eligible to use sick leave, a Teacher Aide may donate, in writing, up to five (5) days accrued, unused sick leave per year to a fellow Teacher Aide. A Teacher Aide shall not be able to receive donated sick leave until he/she has incurred five (5) days loss of pay as a result of exhaustion of accrued sick leave and annual leave. No employee may receive more than twenty (20) days of donated sick leave during any fiscal
year. While incurring the five (5) days loss of pay, or using the twenty (20) days of donated sick leave, the receiving employee may not receive pay or compensation from any other plan in which the District participates in whole or part.

**Vacation**
Teacher Aides shall accrue annual vacation leave benefits in accordance with §§ 2-18-611, 2-18-612, 2-18-614 through 2-18-617 and 2-18-621, MCA. Nothing in this policy guarantees approval of the granting of specific days as vacation leave in any instance. Each request will be judged by the District in accordance with staffing needs. Teacher Aides who have worked for the District less than six (6) calendar months will accrue vacation benefits, but cannot use them until after six (6) calendar months.

Annual leave time accrued as per state law and that not used at the time of termination shall be paid to the Teacher Aide at the Teacher Aide’s hourly rate if the Teacher Aide has been employed by the District for six (6) calendar months.

Use of vacation must be requested in advance on the Vacation Request Form. (Appendix B)

**Without Pay**
Leave Without Pay may not be taken in lieu of accrued sick and vacation leave. If an absence is due to a sickness suffered by an employee or a member of his or her immediate family (as defined in policy), then sick leave must be indicated on the time card. If the employee has met the conditions noted in the vacation policy, has accrued vacation leave and must be gone, then vacation must be indicated on the time card.

**BREAKS AND LUNCH**

**Breaks:**
Teacher Aides, with approval of their immediate supervisor, may take a paid fifteen (15) minute break during each three and one half (3-1/2) hour period they are scheduled to work. The time of the break(s) will be determined by the immediate supervisor.

**Lunch Break:**
All Teacher Aides who regularly work at least seven (7) hours per day shall be entitled to a thirty (30) minute unpaid duty-free lunch break. The time of the lunch break, when applicable, shall be determined by the immediate supervisor. In case of emergency, an employee shall take his/her lunch break at another time during the workday if requested to do so by the immediate supervisor.

**Examples:**
- If an aide works at least seven (7) hours per day, the aide is entitled to a thirty (30) minute unpaid duty-free lunch break and two paid fifteen (15) minute breaks during the day.
- If an aide works less than seven (7) hours a day, the district does not have to allow a lunch period. If the District grants a thirty (30) minute lunch break, the aide won’t be able to take a break too.

**COMMUNICATION**
The District seeks to communicate and collaborate with students, staff, parents and the community at large to ensure sound, trusting relationships. Internal and external communications are important to creating open, two-way communication among the Board of Trustees, administration, staff, students, parents and the GFPS communities.

To that end, Teacher Aides are encouraged to access the Newsbits and the District website regularly as they serve as major means of communication for the District.
The District website is:  www.gfps.k12.mt.us
Newsbits can be found at:  http://www.gfps.k12.mt.us/newsbits

DISTRICT AND PERSONAL PROPERTY
All staff members are encouraged to exercise continuous and vigilant care of all district-owned property. Incidents of theft or willful destruction of district property through vandalism or malicious mischief should be reported immediately to the building principal.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your handbag, wallet, and other personal property are kept in a safe place. The District shall not assume responsibility for the maintenance, repair or replacement of any privately-owned property brought to a school or District function unless the use or presence of such property has been specifically requested in writing by the Superintendent. (See Board Policy 8320 for more information.)

CHECK IN/CHECK OUT AND TIMECARDS
Teacher Aides are to follow building procedures for checking in at the start of the shift and checking out at the conclusion of the shift. Checking in and out indicates the aide’s actual physical presence and therefore must be done exclusively by the employee. The timecard must coincide exactly with physical presence or with leave taken. Falsifying timecards will not be tolerated and will result in discipline or discharge.

CHILD ABUSE AND MANDATORY REPORTING
By Montana law, all GFPS employees are MANDATORY REPORTERS. All GFPS employees must report to DPHHS if they know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused, neglected or abandoned. Regardless of whom the perpetrator is thought to be, school staff must report all suspected cases of abuse or neglect to the Child Abuse Hotline. If you think an act could be a crime, call the SRO or police immediately. If a GFPS employee is uncertain whether to report or to whom to report suspected child mistreatment, call the CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE.

In addition to reporting to DPHHS, GFPS employees are expected to report their concerns to their principal or supervising administrator. Reporting to the principal or supervisor, however, does not replace the duty to report to DPHHS. If the suspected perpetrator is a GFPS staff member, you are directed by GFPS to notify a GFPS principal, supervisor, or other administrator immediately in addition to your mandatory reporting obligations.

   DPHHS Hot Line # 866-820-5437

Failure to report a suspected child abuse is a violation punishable by law and by District disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. (Refer to Policy 5232)

A staff member who, based on reasonable grounds, participates in the good-faith making of a child abuse report shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as provided by law.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES
Staff member complaints contending a violation, misinterpretation, or inappropriate application of District personnel policies and/or administrative regulations should be directed to the building principal for informal discussion and resolution.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, formal complaint procedures may be initiated by staff in accordance with Board policy and administrative regulations. (See Board Policy 5215 for more information.)
COMPENSATION
The Board shall determine the salary and wages for classified personnel. See Appendix C for the 12-13 wage schedule. Payday for Teacher Aides shall be the last working day of each month. If payday falls on a holiday or weekend, the last day worked prior to the holiday or weekend will be considered payday.

CRIMINAL RECORDS
Any Teacher Aide recommended for hire shall submit to a name-based and fingerprint criminal background investigation conducted by the appropriate law enforcement agency. Employment is contingent upon results of the fingerprint criminal background check, which must be acceptable to the Board, in its sole discretion. Any requirement of an applicant to submit to a fingerprint background check shall be in compliance with the Volunteers for Children Act of 1998 and applicable federal regulations.

DISCIPLINE AND DISCHARGE
Teacher Aides who fail to fulfill their job responsibilities or follow the reasonable directions of their supervisors or who conduct themselves on or off the job in ways that affect their effectiveness on the job or in other such ways that the law determines to be good cause shall be subject to discipline. Behavior, conduct or action which may institute disciplinary action or dismissal may include, but is not limited to, reasonable job-related grounds based on a failure to satisfactorily perform job duties, disruption of the District’s operation, or other legitimate business reason. (See Board Policy 5255 for more information.)

DRESS AND GROOMING
Teacher Aides are expected to be neat, clean, and to wear appropriate dress for work that is modest, in good taste and suitable for the job at hand.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE
All District workplaces are drug- and alcohol-free workplaces. All employees are prohibited from:
- Unlawful manufacture, dispensing, distribution, possession, use, or being under the influence of a controlled substance while on District premises or while performing work for the District.
- Distribution, consumption, use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol while on District premises or while performing work for the District.

For purposes of this policy, a controlled substance is one which is:
- not legally obtainable;
- being used in a manner different than prescribed;
- legally obtainable, but has not been legally obtained; or
- referenced in federal or state controlled substance acts.

As a condition of employment, each employee shall:
- abide by the terms of the District policy respecting a drug- and alcohol-free workplace; and
- notify his or her supervisor of his or her conviction under any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring on the District premises or while performing work for the District, no later than five (5) days after such a conviction.

District Action Upon Violation of Policy: An employee who violates this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination. Alternatively, the Board may require an employee to successfully complete an appropriate drug- or alcohol-abuse, employee-assistance rehabilitation program. (See Board Policy 5227 for more information.)

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
Teacher Aides should consult with the building principal regarding procedures for emergencies.
**ELECTRONIC MAIL AND ON-LINE SERVICES**

The District computers, e-mail and Internet/network systems are intended to be used for educational or work-related purposes only. Use for informal or personal purposes is permissible within reasonable limits. All e-mail/Internet/network records are considered District records and should be transmitted only to individuals who have a need to receive them. Additionally, District records, e-mail/Internet/network records are subject to disclosure to law enforcement or government officials or to other third parties through subpoena or other process. Consequently, users should always ensure that the educational information contained in e-mail/Internet messages is accurate, appropriate and lawful. E-mail/Internet messages by users may not necessarily reflect the views of the District.

Abuse of computers, e-mail, Internet, or network systems, through excessive personal use, or use in violation of the law or District policies, will result in disciplinary action, up to or including termination of employment. Each person who uses electronic mail and/or on-line services must read and document in writing understanding and willingness to comply with the Great Falls Public Schools’ “Code of Ethics for Use of Electronic Mail and On-Line Services.” Failure to comply with the “Code of Ethics for Use of Electronic Mail and On-Line Services” may result in disciplinary action up to or including termination of employment.

The District may review e-mail/Internet/network records; users have no right or expectation of privacy in e-mail, the Internet or the network. The District owns the networking system and permits users to access it in the performance of their duties for the District. E-mail messages and electronic records are to be treated like shared paper files, with the expectation that anything in them is available for review. (See Board Policy 5450 for more information.)

**EVALUATION**

Supervision and evaluation of Teacher Aides is intended to be conducted in a positive and helpful manner, with the intent of improving performance. Teacher Aides will be evaluated by the Teacher Aide’s building administrator. The evaluation process includes scheduled evaluations, on forms applicable to the job classification and description, and day-to-day appraisals.

The administrator shall provide a copy of the completed evaluation to the Teacher Aide and shall provide an opportunity to discuss the evaluation. The original should be signed by the Teacher Aide and filed in the Personnel File at the Human Resource Office. If the staff member refuses to sign the evaluation, the administrator should note the refusal and submit the evaluation.

**HAZING/HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION/BULLYING/MENACING**

The Board will strive to provide a positive and productive learning and working environment. Hazing, harassment, intimidation, menacing, or bullying by students, staff, or third parties is strictly prohibited in the District and shall not be tolerated.

All complaints about behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated. Any Teacher Aide who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this policy or feels he/she has been a victim of hazing, harassment, intimidation, bullying, or menacing in violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report his/her concerns to the building principal. Complaints against the building principal shall be filed with the appropriate Assistant Superintendent.

Staff whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. Retaliation is prohibited against any person who reports or is thought to have reported a violation, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry. False charges shall also be regarded
as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions. (See Board Policy 5226 for more information.)

**HEALTH**
All staff members are expected to conduct their work in compliance with first aid and infection control procedures established by the district. Staff members are encouraged to maintain optimum health through the practice of good health habits.

An employee with a communicable disease shall not report to work during the period of time in which the employee is infectious. An employee afflicted with a communicable disease capable of being readily transmitted in the school setting (e.g., airborne transmission of tuberculosis) shall be encouraged to report the existence of the illness in case there are precautions that must be taken to protect the health of others. The District reserves the right to require a statement from the employee’s primary care provider prior to the employee's return to work. In all instances, District personnel shall respect the individual’s right to privacy and treat any medical diagnosis as confidential information. (See Board Policies 5130 and 5230 for more information.)

**HIGHLY QUALIFIED REQUIREMENTS**
All Teacher Aides with instructional duties must be highly qualified in the areas of reading, writing and math. In order to be highly qualified, a Teacher Aide must demonstrate one of the following:
- Completion of at least two (2) years of study (minimum of 48 semester credits) at an accredited institution of higher education with evidence of successful coursework in reading, writing and math (proof at time of hire required);
- Obtainment of any Associate’s or higher degree (proof at time of hire required); or
- The knowledge of and ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, or mathematics or the instruction of the readiness of these subjects as demonstrated by a rigorous standard of quality through a formal local academic assessment. This will be accomplished by taking a proctored on-line assessment (to be passed within 30 days of hire) after completing a preparation course.

For more information about highly qualified attainment, please contact Tammie Schield-Hickey, Adult Education Program, 771-5108 or Cindy Gordon, Human Resources, 268-6010.

**HOURS**
Hours will vary depending on your building and assignment. Be aware of the hours you are scheduled to work each day. You may not exceed the number of hours you were hired to work. You should be ready to begin work at your start time.

**PERSONAL CONDUCT**
Teacher Aides have a professional responsibility to protect a pupil’s health, safety and welfare. All school staff members have the public’s trust and confidence to protect the well-being of all pupils in the District. To that end, all school staff are held to the highest level of professional responsibility in their conduct. Inappropriate conduct and conduct unbecoming a school staff member will not be tolerated. A staff member’s conduct will be held to the professional standards established by the Montana Board of Education. The Professional Educators of Montana Code of Ethics can be found at: [http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/cert/EthicsCode.pdf](http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/cert/EthicsCode.pdf)

Administrators and supervisors may set forth specific rules and regulations governing an employee’s conduct on the job within a particular building. Teacher Aides are required to report to their building principal any possible violations of this policy. In the event the report alleges conduct by the building principal, the Teacher Aide may report directly to the District Office Administration.
PERSONNEL RECORDS
The District maintains a complete personnel record for every current employee and former employee. The employees’ personnel records shall be maintained in the District’s Human Resource Office. An employee will be given access to his or her personnel records upon making an appointment with the Human Resource Office to view the records. (See Board Policy 5231 and 5231R for more information.)

PHONE USE
Personal phone calls should be made on landlines or cell phones only during breaks and lunch. Texting should also only be done when on break or at lunch. Cell phones should be in quiet mode at all times.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD
A 120 working day probationary period is applicable to Teacher Aides. A Teacher Aide may be discharged during the probationary period for any or no reason.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
The District believes that a well-trained and skilled workforce is its most important asset; therefore the District may provide opportunities for professional development for Teacher Aides. Teacher Aides are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities. For more information about on-line professional development opportunities, please contact Tammie Schield-Hickey, Adult Education Program, 771-5108.

RESIGNATIONS
Teacher Aides intending to resign should notify the Superintendent as early as possible and no less than fourteen (14) days prior to their resignation date. The Board authorizes the Superintendent and/or his/her designee to accept on its behalf resignations from any school district employee. The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall provide written acceptance of the resignation, including the date of acceptance, to the employee setting forth the effective date of the resignation. Once the Superintendent and/or his/her designee has accepted the resignation it may not be withdrawn by the employee. The resignation and its acceptance should be reported as information to the Board at the next regular or special meeting.

RETIREMENT PROGRAMS
Teacher Aides shall participate in retirement programs under the Federal Social Security Act and the Public Employees’ Retirement System in accordance with state retirement regulations.

The District will contribute to the PERS whenever a classified employee is employed for more than the 5.5 hours per day. Employees who are scheduled for less than 5.5 hours per day may elect PERS coverage, at their option and in accordance with § 19-3-412, MCA.

SAFETY
GFPS recognizes the importance of providing a safe learning and working environment for students, staff and visitors. Safety education, accident prevention, and a formal loss control program all play a part in creating a safe environment. Attention to safety on the part of each individual Teacher Aide is also an important part of a safe environment. Pro-actively devoting serious attention and effort towards safety and making it an integral part of day-to-day work is expected.

Teacher Aides should be familiar with and consult the contents of the Safety Manual that is provided each employee. A building Safety Committee has been established to help implement the District’s safety program and as part of an on-going effort to help ensure the safety and health of students, staff and others while on District property.
All injuries to students, employees, or guests that occur on District property must be reported to the proper authority no matter how trivial they seem. Be alert to safety hazards, the presence of strangers, and other unusual or suspicious situations and immediately report to the proper authority any incidents in which you witness an accident or are yourself injured.

**SUBSTITUTING**
At times, Teacher Aides may be asked to serve as Substitute Teachers within their building assignment. In order to be paid as a Substitute Teacher, the Teacher Aide must be formally hired as a Substitute Teacher. Please contact the Human Resource Office for more information on how to become a Substitute Teacher.

**TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT**
The District maintains tobacco free buildings and grounds. Tobacco includes, but is not limited to any substance intended for human consumption that contains tobacco, including cigarettes, cigars, snuff, smoking tobacco, and smokeless tobacco.

Use of tobacco products in a public school building or on public school property is prohibited, unless the use of a tobacco product in a classroom or on other school property as part of a lecture, demonstration, or educational forum sanctioned by a school administrator or faculty member, concerning the risks associated with using tobacco products.

For this purpose, “public school building or public school property” means:
- Public land, fixtures, buildings, or other property owned or occupied by an institution for the teaching of minor children that is established and maintained under the laws of the state of Montana at public expense; and
- Includes playgrounds, school steps, parking lots, administration buildings, athletic facilities, gymnasiums, locker rooms, and school buses.

**VACANCIES AND TRANSFERS**
When the District determines that a Teacher Aide vacancy exists, it may be advertised in-District only via Newsbits and/or on the website, or it may be advertised in-District and through other means outside the District. A vacancy need not be advertised if so determined by the District. The District seeks always to employ highly qualified individuals for all positions in the District.

The right of assignment, reassignment, and transfer shall be that of the District. Written notice of a reassignment or involuntary transfer shall be given to the employee, with an opportunity to discuss the proposed transfer or reassignment with the District.

**UNEMPLOYMENT**
39-51-2108(1) MCA does not allow school employees to draw unemployment benefits, based on school wages, between two academic years or on school breaks when there is reasonable assurance that the employee will continue to work for the school the following year and after the break.

**WORKERS’ COMPENSATION**
All employees of the District are covered by workers’ compensation benefits. In the event of an industrial accident, a Teacher Aide should:
1. Attend to first aid and/or medical treatment during an emergency;
2. Correct or report as needing correction a hazardous situation as soon as possible after an emergency situation is stabilized;
3. Report the injury or disabling condition, whether actual or possible, to the Administrative Assistant in the Principal’s office at your building within forty-eight (48) hours.
4. The Administrative Assistant will complete the Accident/Injury Report with you and will give you a form to take to the doctor should you decide to go.

5. Pertinent information will be forwarded to District offices and to the workers’ comp insurance carrier. GFPS supports a “Return to Work” philosophy which supports temporary transitional duty when appropriate and available.

**CONCLUSION**

Teacher Aides are encouraged to consult with their supervisor any time there are questions about information contained in this Handbook or on other District policies and practices. Teacher Aides also may contact their Office of Human Resources for such assistance.

Thank you for being an important part of the educational team for Great Falls Public Schools.

---

**What is Success?**

*By Ralph Waldo Emerson*

To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty;
To find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived;
This is to have succeeded.
# Appendix A—Leave Request Form

## SAMPLE

## LEAVE REQUEST FORM

*Read and follow procedures on back.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF REQUEST</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AU Assoc./Union</td>
<td></td>
<td>BE Bereavement</td>
<td>BN Bereavement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Unit Approval)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Relationship)</td>
<td>(Non Family Certified Only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD Jury Duty</td>
<td></td>
<td>MD Military Duty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Verification Required)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Verification Required)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD Witness Duty</td>
<td></td>
<td>WP Leave W/out Pay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Verification Required)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Teachers must complete an additional WP request form)</td>
<td></td>
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## DATES AFFECTED

**Work Date(s) Affected**

---

--- AM --- PM --- ALL DAY

---

Requestor’s Signature

Principal/Supervisor’s Signature

Human Resource’s Signature

Other Signature (determined by HR)

Other Signature (determined by HR)

## DISPOSITION OF REQUEST

For Office Use ONLY

- Approved – No Loss of Pay
- Approved – Deduction of Pay
- Approved – Non-Duty Day
- Not Approved

---

Final Distribution (White – Human Resources, Yellow – Bus Office; Pink – School/Dept.; Goldenrod – Employee)

REV 04/12
Appendix B—Vacation Request Form

Great Falls Public Schools

Vacation Request

Form must be completed in advance.

Name________________________________ Position____________________

Request for vacation: Work dates requested________________________________________

Number of days__________________________

________________________________________

Employee Signature Date

________________________________________

Direct Supervisor Signature (when applicable) Date

☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

NCR 2Part Form: WHITE (direct supervisor); YELLOW (employee)
SP41 Rev. (8/04)
Appendix C—12-13 Wage Schedule

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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>33</td>
<td>$9.25</td>
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* Each year of service is credited on August 1. For example, if a Teacher Aide was hired in January of 2012, they would have been placed at 0 years. On August 1, the Teacher Aide would move to 1 year of service. The next August, the Teacher Aide would move to 2 years of service, etc. Years of service are granted for teacher aide experience only.