

# Green Mountain Garwin CSD District Employee Handbook



2025-2026

**GMG District School**  
**1710 Wallace Avenue**  
**Green Mountain, Iowa 50632**

**Mr. Chris Petersen, Superintendent**  
**Mrs. Stacey Busch, Elementary Principal**  
**Mr. Clyde Tarrence, Secondary Principal**

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It is the policy of the GMG Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a complaint procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a complaint related to this policy, please contact Chris Petersen, Superintendent,, 306 Park Street, Garwin, IA 50632, (641) 499-2005, [cpetersen@gmgschools.org](mailto:cpetersen@gmgschools.org).

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the New Year! The GMG Community School District is proud of its high quality staff and wants to support you in having a highly productive and satisfying year. This employee handbook is designed to provide you with the information needed to understand the expectations, policies and procedures in place for all employees. If there are additional questions related to district expectations, you may want to visit with your direct supervisor or the superintendent, review existing board policies on the district website, or consult with your building level handbook.

This handbook is a general source of information and may not include every possible situation that could arise. It is not intended, and does not constitute a contract between the school district and employees. It is the employee's responsibility to refer to the district policies and/or administrative procedures for further information. Whenever the provisions of this handbook are in conflict with those of a board-adopted policy, an applicable collective bargaining agreement, or any other formal employment contract, the terms of the policy, collective bargaining agreement, and/or employment contract shall govern.

The Board of Directors of the GMG Community School District, No. 86-2682, in the County of Tama and Marshall, State of Iowa, hereinafter referred to as "Board", and the GMG Education Association, hereinafter referred to as "Association", do hereby agree as follows:

## DEFINITIONS

In this handbook, the word "parent" also means "guardian" unless otherwise stated. An administrator's title, such as superintendent or principal, also means that individual's designee unless otherwise stated. The term "licensed employee" means all teachers and nurses, while the term "classified employee" is all other school employees not designated as administrators, directors, or licensed. The term "school grounds" includes the school district facilities, school district property, property within the jurisdiction of the school district or school district premises, school-owned or school-operated buses or vehicles and chartered buses. The term "school facilities" includes school district buildings and vehicles. The term "school activities," means all school activities in which students are involved whether they are school-sponsored or school-approved, whether they are an event or an activity, or whether they are held on or off school grounds.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Leading the Way to a Brighter Future

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT

GMG Community School District will provide equal opportunity to employees and applicants for employment in accordance with applicable equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, directives and regulations of federal, state and local governing bodies. The school district will not discriminate against employees or potential employees based upon race, color, creed, national origin, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment includes hiring, placement, promotion, transfer or demotion, recruitment, advertising or solicitation for employment, treatment during employment, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and layoff or termination. The school district will take affirmative action in major job categories where

women, men, minorities and persons with disabilities are underrepresented. Employees will support and comply with the district's established equal employment opportunity and affirmative action policies. Employees will be given notice of this policy annually.

The board will appoint an affirmative action coordinator. The affirmative action coordinator will have the responsibility for drafting the affirmative action plan. The affirmative action plan will be reviewed by the board at least every two years.

Advertisements and notices for vacancies within the district will contain the following statement: "The GMG Community School District is an EEO/AA employer." The statement will also appear on application forms.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, will be directed to the Affirmative Action Coordinator by writing to the Affirmative Action Coordinator, GMG Community School District, 1710 Wallace Ave, Green Mountain, IA or by telephoning 641-474-2254.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, may also be directed in writing to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commissions, Milwaukee Area Office, Reuss Federal Plaza, 310 West Wisconsin Ave., Suite 800, Milwaukee, WI., 53203-2292, (800) 669-4000 or TTY (800) 669-6820, <http://www.eeoc.gov/field/milwaukee/index.cfm> or the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, 400 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines, IA 50319, (800) 457-4416, <http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc/index.html>. This inquiry or complaint to the federal office may be done instead of, or in addition to, an inquiry or complaint at the local level.

## **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The school calendar can be found at <https://gmgschools.socs.net/>.

## **DISTRICT CONTACTS**

Refer to the GMG Community School District website for all contacts <https://gmgschools.socs.net/>.

## **BOARD POLICIES**

Board policies are established for the success, safety, and protection of all school employees in the performance of their job duties. Board policies are available in each attendance center, administrative office, and on the school's website <https://gmgschools.socs.net/>. Employees are expected to know existing board policies and know to refer to the policies when necessary.

## **HANDBOOK SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Although every effort will be made to update the handbook on a timely basis, GMG Community School 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

contractual agreements and law. GMG Community School District reserves the right, and has the sole discretion, to modify or change any portion of this handbook at any time.

## COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

### COMPENSATION AND SALARY

An employee required to hold a license, authorization, or certification for his/her position is solely responsible for ensuring it is current. Failure to do so could, and likely will, result in termination because by law the district cannot pay an employee who does not have a current license, authorization, or certification. Specific information regarding an employee's license, authorization, or certification may be obtained from the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE). The BOEE may be contacted by calling 515-281-3245 or by visiting their website, located at <http://www.boee.iowa.gov/>.

**Licensed:** The requirements stated in the master contract between employees in the collective bargaining unit and the board regarding base wages will be followed.

**Classified:** The board will determine the compensation to be paid for the classified employees' positions, keeping in mind the education and experience of the classified employee, the educational philosophy of the school district, the financial condition of the school district and any other considerations deemed relevant by the board.

Each employee compensated on an hourly basis, whether full-or part-time, permanent or temporary, will be paid no less than the prevailing minimum wage. Whenever an hourly employee must work more than forty hours in a given work week, the employee is compensated at one and one-half times their regular hourly wage rate. This compensation is in the form of overtime pay or compensatory time. Overtime will not be permitted without prior authorization of the superintendent.

Each hourly employee paid on an hour-by-hour basis must complete a daily time sheet showing the actual number of hours worked. Failure of the employee to maintain, or falsification of, a daily time record will be grounds for disciplinary action.

### REGULAR SALARY

The certified staff base pay for 2025-26 is \$37,500 .

The district may give newly certified employees up to thirteen (13) years of credit for prior experience. Additional credit may be granted at the discretion of the district, particularly if the position is determined to be hard to fill.

Employees who move from one educational lane to a higher educational lane shall move to the corresponding eligible step.

Any days added beyond the agreed upon contract must receive prior approval from administration and will be paid a per diem rate.

Certified staff is salaried and exempt from FLSA provisions, meaning that overtime and comp time are



not applied to certified staff members.

Method of Payment--Payment of services will be on the regular payroll on or before the 20th day of each month or the last scheduled workday before the 20th.

Summer Checks--Summer checks, other than for summer school teachers, shall be by direct deposit or shall be mailed to the address designated by the employee on the 20th or the last scheduled workday before the 20th.

Approved staff may be reimbursed for up to \$1600.00 per contract year for tuition for courses in the employee's assigned field in the school district. The coursework must align with the individual's assignment and must be approved in advance by the Building Administrator or Superintendent. The superintendent, in his/her sole discretion, may approve the reimbursement of a course outside of an employee's assigned field that the superintendent believes may enhance the employee's performance and/or value as a member of the district. **Courses must be preapproved using the district form prior to enrollment.** For reimbursement to occur, documentation of course completion, with a transcript grade of C or better, and proof of payment must be submitted and approved. Verified credits earned and reimbursed under this clause may be applied to advancement on the salary schedule. Final payment is determined when official transcripts are received. **If a said employee is not contracted with GMG Community School District the year following reimbursement, the amount reimbursed must be paid back to the district or it will be deducted from the employee's last paycheck with GMG CSD.** Please use the [Tuition Reimbursement form](#) for this request. This form is available on the district website and in the Appendix.

## PREPARATION TIME

All full-time certified teaching employees shall have an average of forty (40) minutes per day of preparation during the school day, unless mutually agreed by the teacher and superintendent and approved by the Board, not to have the preparation time. Forty (40) minutes averages will be computed on a one-half school year basis.

Any teacher shared between the two buildings on the same day will receive at least 20 minutes of duty-free prep time in each building.

## SALARY ADJUSTMENT

Teachers will follow the guidelines as set forth by the State of Iowa for license renewal and formal professional improvement; see BOEE.

All credit hours above the B.A. Degree must be in the employee's assigned teaching field in the School District before applying to any lanes above the B.A. step. An exception of six (6) of these hours above the B.A. Degree may be under-graduate hours applying to the B.A. plus lanes and must be earned after the B.A. Degree. For courses completed after June 1, 1994, based on the Superintendent's recommendation and at the sole discretion of the Board, credit hours may be applied to salary horizontal advancement when not directly related to the teaching assignment. Still, the Board believes the course may enhance the teacher's performance and/or value as an employee of the district. For advancement to occur, such courses should receive written approval for credit application prior to enrollment from the superintendent. All hours applied above the B.A. plus lanes must be graduate hours (variation in this criterion may be granted by the Superintendent at his/her sole discretion).

The educational credit must follow the guidelines for educational license renewal, which is as follows:

- a. A semester hour of credit completed which leads toward the completion of a planned

- master's, specialist's, or doctor's degree program.
- b. A semester hour of credit completed may not lead to a degree but adds greater depth/breadth to present endorsements held.
- c. A semester hour of credit completed may not lead to a degree but which leads to completion of requirements for an endorsement not currently held.
- d. Lanes on the salary schedule will be determined by the district and association.

Teachers requesting advancement on the salary schedule as a result of additional coursework should notify the Superintendent or designee in writing by April 30th and provide transcripts by September 1st. Failure to provide transcripts by September 1st shall result in a salary adjustment effective with the November payroll. Please use the [Pre-approval and Request for Salary Schedule Lane Advancement](#) form for the pre-approval of classes. All credit hours must be earned after conferring the degree in order to be considered for a salary adjustment.

## **TEACHER SALARY SUPPLEMENT (TSS)**

TSS dollars will be first used to increase the salaries of teachers below the state minimum and then will be distributed equally amongst certified employees. TSS dollars the district receives fluctuates and the amount of distribution to employees is subject to change based on the actual amount of funding the district receives. If funds are not received from the State, the funds will not be distributed.

## **MAKE-UP DAYS**

If a school day is canceled for any reason, the superintendent, in consultation with the Board of Directors, will determine the need for making up the day or time on a case-by-case basis. During "snow days" or other occasions where school is preempted due to weather/nature, faculty may have the ability to work remotely to maintain their contract hours. If school is extended due to additional make-up days, employees must fulfill their contract.

## **EXTRA DUTY**

Compensation for extra duties shall be agreed upon by discussion between the administration and the staff member performing those duties. GMG Employees will be required to supervise a minimum of three (3) athletic/activity assignments during the school year. Any extra duty completed beyond three (3) such assignments in a school year will be compensated at a rate of \$35 per event. Staff will be admitted, at no charge, to regularly scheduled school events.

## **GROUP INSURANCE BENEFITS**

Insurance coverages that are selected as part of the Board-provided Green Mountain Garwin CSD Benefits Plan shall be for twelve (12) consecutive months or until the following August 31 if an employee is hired after September 1, beginning with the first day of the month following the employee's hire date. When necessary, payment of premiums on behalf of the employee shall be made retroactively or prospectively to assure uninterrupted participation and coverage.

Employees on paid leave or covered by the Family Medical Leave Act shall continue to have Board contributions made according to the level described above, subject to the eligibility provisions, set forth by the insurance carrier.

School Liability - Each employee shall be covered by a liability insurance program covering job-related performance duties paid for by the Board of Education.

Workers' Compensation - Each employee shall be covered by Workers' Compensation paid for by the Board. Absence due to illness or injury incurred in the course of the employee's employment shall not be charged against the employee's sick leave days unless the employee elects to receive from the Board the difference between his/her salary and the benefits received under Workers' Compensation for the duration of the employee's absence. If the employee does elect to receive full payment under this proposal, then the Board shall reduce the employee's sick leave days by a prorated formula, computed upon the number of dollars which the Board provides in addition to Workers' Compensation benefits. The number of sick leave days deducted under this full pay provision shall be determined solely by the Board for full pay in relation to the employee average daily pay. All other fringe benefits will remain in effect.

The Board shall provide up to the rate of the single base insurance plan per employee covered by this agreement to participate in the GMG CSD Benefits Plan.

- a. The GMG CSD Benefits Plan shall include the following items:
  - i) Health Insurance - Each full-time (30 hours or more) employee shall be required to choose one of the options as described in the Selection of Benefits Plan unless they can provide proof of coverage in their spouse's group insurance plan, or as current law provides.
  - ii) Life Insurance - Each full-time (30 hours or more) employee is covered in a \$20,000 life insurance policy as described in the Selection of Benefits Plan, paid for by the Board. Administrators are covered up to \$50,000.
  - iii) Long Term Disability - Each full-time (30 hours or more) employee is covered by a long-term disability plan, paid for by the Board.
  - iv) Accidental Death and Dismemberment - Each full-time (30 hours or more) employee is covered by an accidental death and dismemberment plan, paid for by the Board.
  - v) The GMG CSD Benefits Plan may provide optional insurance coverage(s) for dental, vision, flexible savings account, etc.
  - vi) Annuity - An employee may enroll in the state-approved annuity plan.

## **CONTINUATION OF INSURANCE COVERAGE (COBRA)**

If you resign or your employment is otherwise terminated, or if your work hours are reduced, and consequently you or your dependents are no longer eligible to participate in the group health insurance plan offered by the district, you and your eligible dependents may have the right to continue to participate for up to 18 months at your (or your dependents') expense. The 18-month continuation coverage period provided in the event of your termination or reduction in working hours may be extended to 36 months for your spouse and dependent children, if, within that 18-month period, you die or become divorced or legally separated, or if a child ceases to have dependent status. In addition, if you enroll for Medicare during the 18-month period, your spouse and dependent children may be entitled to extend their continuation period to 36 months, starting on the date that you become eligible for Medicare.

If you are determined to be disabled under the Social Security Act at the time of your termination or reduction in hours, you may be entitled to continuation coverage for up to 29 months.

Your eligible dependents may extend coverage, at their expense, for up to 36 months in our group health insurance plans in the event of your death, divorce, legal separation, or enrollment for Medicare benefits, or when a child ceases to be eligible for coverage as a dependent under the terms of the plan. If you or your eligible dependents elect to continue in the group health insurance plan, you will be charged the applicable premium. Failure to make timely payments may result in termination of coverage.

If this election for continuation coverage is made, you and your dependents may have the option to convert this coverage to an individual policy with our insurance carriers at the end of the continuation period.

The district will contact you concerning these options at the time termination occurs or your work hours are reduced. The district will contact your qualified beneficiaries in the event of your death or enrollment for Medicare benefits. However, in the event that you become divorced or legally separated, or one of your dependents ceases to be eligible for coverage under our group health insurance plan, you and/or your dependent is responsible for contacting the district to discuss continuation/conversion rights. You and your qualified beneficiaries are also responsible for notifying the district within 60 days of qualifying for social security disability benefits.

## IOWA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM

The district participates in the Iowa Public Employees' Retirement System (IPERS). This defined benefit plan provides a lifetime retirement benefit to you upon retirement in accordance with a formula based on your age, years of service and the average of your highest five years of wages. For additional information, please contact IPERS at 1-800-622-3849 or visit the IPERS website at [www.ipers.org/index.html](http://www.ipers.org/index.html).

## TRAVEL COMPENSATION - INSIDE THE DISTRICT

The Board will provide reimbursement to the employees who are required to travel from one (1) building to another during their school day assignment.

No employee will receive a travel allowance between his/her home and school. Teachers scheduled to teach in more than one building, or assigned by their supervisor to travel to another building, shall be reimbursed for building assignment to building assignment travel only. There shall be no travel allowance for periodic faculty meetings, curriculum meetings, or programs attended by teachers generally.

Payment will be made in the following manner: Requests for payment must be verified and signed by the employee and the supervising principal, and are to be submitted monthly to the Business Manager. **They will be paid monthly provided that the amount is \$20.00 or more. If this amount is not \$20.00 or more, such request slips will be accumulated until the month the amount is \$20.00 or more. All final payments, whatever the amount, will be made after June 1.** All payment for mileage and expense reimbursement over \$20.00 will be forfeited if not claimed within 120 calendar days of incurring the expense. Please fill out a requisition on WebLink for this reimbursement.

## TRAVEL COMPENSATION - OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT

Employees traveling on behalf of the district and performing approved school district business will be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses. Actual and necessary travel expenses will include, but not be limited to, transportation and/or mileage costs, if a GMG vehicle is not available, lodging

expenses, meal expenses, and registration costs. Personal additional expenses such as additional mileage, hotel amenity charges, and alcohol charges will not be reimbursed.

Travel outside of the school district must be pre-approved on a form provided by the district. Pre-approval will include an evaluation of the necessity of the travel, the reason for the travel, and an estimate of the cost of the travel to qualify as an approved school district business. Travel outside the school district by employees, other than the superintendent, is approved by the superintendent.

Reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses will be allowed for travel outside the school district if the employee received pre-approval for the travel. Prior to reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses, the employee must provide the school district with a detailed receipt, indicating the date, purpose, and nature of the expense for each claim item. Failure to have a detailed receipt will make the expense a personal expense.

Reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses for travel outside the school district will be limited to the pre-approved expenses. Pre-approved expenses for registration are limited to the actual cost of the registration. This form is available on the district website. If out of state travel, the board secretary or superintendent will make the arrangements. The following Meal Allowances will be as followed:

The per diem rate for meals will not exceed the approved daily rate of \$45.00. Meal per diem is as follows:

- Breakfast - \$10.00 (leave before 8:00 a.m.)
- Lunch - \$15.00 (leave before 12:00 noon or return after 1:00 p.m.)
- Dinner - \$20.00 (leave before 5:00 p.m. or return after 6:00 pm.)

## **EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

### **BACKGROUND AND PHYSICAL CHECKS**

Employees are subject to criminal, dependent adult abuse, and child abuse background checks at least every five years. The background check will either be conducted by the school district or another agency. All contracts are approved pending suitable background check and/or fingerprint results. All new employees must have a physical during their first year of employment and every five years thereafter (current district employees need to maintain a five year physical).

### **EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION AND MENTORING**

Employees must know their roles and duties. New employees will participate in an orientation program. Each certified staff member new to the district will go through new teacher orientation for their first year of employment. The district will assign a mentor teacher to all new employees. The employee's immediate supervisor should provide the new employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties. Payroll procedures and employee benefit programs and accompanying forms will be explained to the employee by Betsy Spaur, District Office, 1710 Wallace Avenue, Green Mountain, IA 50632, (641) 474-2254, [bspaur@gmgschools.org](mailto:bspaur@gmgschools.org).

### **EMPLOYEE RECORDS**

The district will maintain personnel records on employees. The records are important for the daily administration of the educational program, for implementing board policy, for budget and financial planning, and for meeting state and federal requirements

The records will include, but not be limited to, records necessary for the daily administration of the school district, salary records, evaluations, application for employment, references, and other items needed to carry out board policy. Employee personnel files are school district records and are generally considered confidential records and therefore are not open to public inspection or accessibility. Only in certain limited instances, when the employee has given a signed consent or the records are open to the public by law, will employee personnel records be accessible to individuals other than the employee or authorized school officials. For example, employee salaries, use of leave, and other basic information are public. In addition, pursuant to Iowa Code Section 22.7(11)(a), certain information relating to individuals employed by a public school district contained in personnel records shall be public records, including the fact that the individual resigned in lieu of termination, was discharged, or was demoted as the result of disciplinary action, and the documented reasons and rationale for the resignation in lieu of termination, the discharge, or the demotion.

Employees may have access to their personnel files, with the exception of letters of reference, and copy items from their personnel files at a time mutually agreed upon between the superintendent and the employee. Employee records are maintained at the district's central office. The school district may charge a reasonable fee for each copy made.

The teacher shall be notified in writing when any complaint, commendation, or informal evaluation is placed in the personnel file.

Exit interviews shall be conducted upon leaving the district for any reason. The questionnaire will be sent to you by the district administration office. This will be maintained in the personal file as well.

## **EMPLOYEE SEARCHES**

Employees should have no expectation of privacy in their classrooms, desks, computers, or other school district-provided space or equipment. The school district may look into these items as warranted. Anything on the school district's computers, server, website, etc., and in school district files, etc. is district property and subject to inspection at any time. If the school district conducts an examination or inspection under the terms of this policy, there will be at least two individuals present at the time of the examination or inspection. Should the school district get a public request to see this information, at that time, a determination will be made whether the information can be withheld as confidential information. The school district assumes no responsibility or liability for any items of personal property which are placed in the desk or workspace which is assigned to employees.

## **EVALUATION**

### **Certified Staff Evaluation**

Effective teacher evaluation is an essential part of the total instructional program. Performance-based evaluation is a continuous process, which relates directly to on-the-job performance. Performance-based evaluation is a cooperative effort between the administration and teaching staff, with the support of the Board of Education. Standards in a performance-based evaluation system reflect measurable, observable, and definable teacher behavior.

#### **A. NOTIFICATION**

Within two (2) weeks after the beginning of each school year or the first day of work, the appropriate administrator shall acquaint newly hired employees under his/her

supervision with the evaluation procedures. Within two (2) weeks after the beginning of each school year, the appropriate administrator shall acquaint all employees with any changes in the evaluation procedures. No evaluation shall take place until such orientation has been completed. All evaluation forms will be made available to certified staff when the orientation is provided.

## **B. REQUIRED OBSERVATION**

### **Teacher Evaluation Tiers and Timelines**

#### **Tier I Faculty (Year One)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
➤ First Formal Observation*	-Within the two months of employment
➤ Second Formal Observation	-Completed by April 15.
➤ Informal Observations	
➤ Annual Individual Professional Development Plan-(will meet with the administration 3 X per year)	
➤ Annual Peer Review	-To be determine

#### **Tier I Faculty (Year Two)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
➤ First Formal Observation*	-Within the first month of employment
➤ Second Formal Observation	-By the end of the second semester
➤ Comprehensive Evaluation (License Conversion)	-Completed by May 1
➤ Informal Observations	-To be determined
➤ IPDP (will meet with the administration 3 X per year)	-Completed by May 15

#### **Tier I Faculty (Year Three)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>IPDP</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
➤ Individual Professional Development Plan		-Prior to October 1
➤ Informal and Formal Observations		-To be determined
➤ Summative Conference		-Completed by May 1

#### **Tier II Career Faculty (Year One)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
➤ Individual Career Plan Designed*	-Prior to October 1
➤ Formal Observation	-Completed by February 1
➤ Informal and Formal Observations	-To be determined

#### **Tier II Career Faculty (Year Two)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
➤ Self-evaluation based on Iowa	-Prior to December 1
➤ Teaching Standards and Criteria	
➤ Conference with Principal	-Prior to December 1
➤ Informal and Formal Observations	-To be determined



## **Tier II Career Teacher (Year Three)**

### **Activity**

- Conference with Administration concerning student performance on local, state, national assessment
- Informal and Formal observations
- Summative Conference (Document-action is needed which supports the Iowa/District teaching standards and criteria)

### **Timeline**

- Prior to May 1
- To be determined
- Completed by May 15

\*The Individual Career Plan may include activities for one, two, or three-year periods.

The plan must be linked to the building student achievement goals or the district comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP) and must be linked to the Iowa Teaching Standards.

## **EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCE**

Complaints alleging the misinterpretation or misapplication of the district employee handbook are addressed in this section. Handbook complaint procedures are a means of internal dispute resolution by which an employee may have their complaints addressed. The goal of the handbook complaint process is to, at the lowest level possible, secure equitable solutions to problems that arise.

1. Grievances shall be processed strictly in accordance with these procedures. Since it is important that grievances be processed as rapidly as possible, the number of days indicated at each level should be considered a maximum, and every effort should be made to expedite the process. However, the time limits may be extended by mutual agreement.
2. All procedures for the processing of any grievance by the grieving teacher shall be conducted so as to result in minimal interference with or interruption whatsoever of the instructional program and related work activities of the grieving teacher of the teaching staff.
3. It is understood that any informal adjustment of a complaint shall not establish a precedent in any comparable situation.
4. Upon failure of the appropriate administrator to act within the stated time period, the grievant may appeal to the next level.
5. Forms for filing grievances will be prepared jointly by the Board and the Association.

### **DEFINITION**

1. A Grievance is a complaint that has been an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of a specific provision of this Agreement.
2. A "grievant" shall mean a teacher or group of teachers (when the issue of the group is similar), or the Association if the aggrieved teacher or teachers provide written authorization to the superintendent.

This section addresses complaints to the employee handbook. Other employee complaint procedures should be in accordance with the district's board policy.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **Level One: Principal or immediate supervisor - informal**



An employee with a complaint shall first discuss it with his or her principal or immediate supervisor, either directly or through his or her chosen representative, with the objective of resolving the matter informally. If the grievance can not be resolved informally, the grievant shall inform the principal that he or she intends to file a written grievance with the superintendent. This notification must be given not less than two (2) working days before the written grievance is given to the superintendent.

### **Level Two: Principal or immediate supervisor - formal**

When the complaint is not resolved informally, the employee(s) may submit a formal complaint in writing within 10 working days of the event or within ten (10) days of learning of the event to the principal or immediate supervisor. The formal complaint must contain a statement of the alleged misinterpretation or misapplication of the handbook or policy, including the facts upon which the complaint is based, the issues involved, the provisions of the handbook involved, the claimed basis for the alleged misinterpretation or misapplication and the resolution that is sought. The person to whom the complaint is submitted shall render his or her decision in writing to the complainant within 10 working days of the submission of the complaint.

### **Level Three: Superintendent of Schools**

If the employee(s) is/are not satisfied with the decision rendered at level two, he/she/they may appeal to the superintendent of schools within ten (10) days of the level two decision. This level requires discussion between the parties in interest and the Superintendent. The superintendent shall render a written decision on the complaint within ten days of receiving the appeal. The decision of the superintendent of schools shall be final.

The arbitration proceeding shall be conducted by an outside person selected by two (2) parties after arbitration is requested. The American Arbitration Association will be requested to provide a list of five (5) candidates. Each of the two (2) parties will alternately strike one (1) name at a time from the panel until only one (1) name remains, the right to strike the first name being determined by drawing lots. The remaining name shall be the arbitrator who shall render an opinion, which shall be binding on both parties.

The opinion written by the arbitrator shall not amend, modify, nullify, ignore, or be added to the provisions of the agreement. The arbitrator's authority shall be strictly limited to deciding only the issue or issues presented to the arbitrator in writing by the school district and the teacher and the arbitrator's decision must be based solely and only upon the arbitrator's interpretation of the meaning or application of the language of the agreement.

No new evidence shall be submitted at the arbitration hearing by one (1) party without first giving it to the other party two (2) days prior to the hearing. The expense for the arbitrator's services shall be borne equally by the teacher and the Board except that witnesses, consultants, and attorneys shall be paid for by the party calling them.

## **MANDATORY COOPERATION IN WORKPLACE INVESTIGATIONS**

Any workplace investigation conducted by administrative staff or their designee will receive complete cooperation of all employees. Employees may be disciplined, up to and including termination, for making any untrue statement or providing information that is dishonest, misleading, inaccurate or incomplete during the course of the investigation and related procedures. Employees may also be disciplined, up to and including termination, for impeding, obstructing or failing to cooperate with the investigation and related procedures. Breach of confidentiality regarding the aforementioned shall also be cause for disciplinary action.

## **MANDATORY REPORTING OF POST-EMPLOYMENT ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS**

Any employee who is arrested or convicted of any criminal charges shall report such information to the superintendent of schools within 24 hours of the event. Failure to do so shall incur discipline, up to and including termination.

## **PROBATIONARY STATUS**

The first three years of a newly licensed teacher's contract is a probationary period unless the teacher has already successfully completed the three-year probationary period in an Iowa school district. Teachers who have successfully completed a probationary period in a previous Iowa school district will serve a two year probationary period.

The probationary period for classified employees is two years unless otherwise stated in an employee contract, letter of assignment or applicable collective bargaining agreement. [Board Policy 405.9](#)

## **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT AN EMPLOYEE**

The board recognizes situations that may arise in the operation of the school district which are of concern to parents, employees, students, and other members of the school district community. Public complaints about an employee shall be addressed as detailed in [Board Policy 213.1](#)

## **QUALIFICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, AND SELECTIONS**

Job applicants for all positions will be considered on the basis of the following: training, experience, and skill; nature of the occupation; demonstrated competence; and possession of, or ability to obtain, state license if required for the position.

All job openings shall be submitted to the Iowa Department of Education for posting on IowaWORKS, the online state job posting system. Additional announcements of the position may occur in a manner which the superintendent believes will inform potential applicants about the position. Whenever possible, the preliminary screening of applicants will be conducted by the administrator who will be directly supervising and overseeing the person being hired.

The board will approve employees after receiving recommendations from the superintendent. The superintendent, however, will have the authority to hire an employee on a temporary basis until a recommendation can be made and action can be taken by the board on the position.

## **STAFF TECHNOLOGY USE / SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Because technology is a vital part of the school district curriculum, the Internet will be made available to employees and students. Appropriate and equitable use of the Internet will allow employees to access resources unavailable through traditional means.

Usage of the school district's computer resources is a privilege, not a right, and use entails responsibility. All information on the school district's computer system may be a public record. Whether there is an exception to keep some narrow, specific content confidential is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Therefore, users of the school district's computer network must not expect, nor does the school district guarantee, privacy for email or use of the school district's computer network including websites visited. The school district reserves the right to access and view any material stored or accessed on school district equipment or any material used in conjunction with the school district's computer network.

Employees shall not post confidential or proprietary information, including photographic images, about the school district, its employees, students, agents, or others on any external website without the consent of the superintendent. The employee shall adhere to all applicable privacy and confidentiality policies adopted by the school district when on external websites. Employees shall not use the school district logos, images, iconography, etc. on external websites. Employees shall not use school district time or property on external sites that are not in direct relation to the employee's job. Employees, students, and volunteers need to realize that the internet is not a closed system and anything posted on an external site may be viewed by others, all over the world. Employees, students, and volunteers who do not want school administrators to know their personal information should refrain from exposing it on the internet. Employees who would like to start a social media site for school district-sanctioned activities should contact the superintendent for approval. Once approved by the superintendent, the employee must work with the district's Technology Director in establishing and maintaining the site.

## **TRANSFERS**

Determining the location where an employee's assignment will be carried out is the responsibility and within the sole discretion of the Superintendent. In making such assignments, the Superintendent will consider the qualifications of each employee and the needs of the school district. [Board Policy 405.7](#)

### **VOLUNTARY TRANSFERS**

A voluntary transfer is the movement of an employee to a different grade level (Pre-K-6), building, or general subject area upon a vacancy therein, at the request of the employee.

Upon receipt of a resignation, the Superintendent shall post a dated list of teaching vacancies on the IowaWORKS website. Vacancies and/or openings will be advertised in accordance with District's policies and procedures on advertising. Employees who desire a voluntary transfer shall submit their request in writing to the IowaWORKS website.

The approval of a request for transfer shall not be automatic. However, the request of the employee shall be granted if it is determined by the administration that the transfer does not conflict with the best interests of the school system and the person is the most highly qualified for the position.

### **INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS**

An involuntary transfer is the movement of an employee to a different grade level (PreK - 6), building, or general subject area at the direction and order of the Superintendent without the employee's consent. When determining which employees will be transferred, the district will consider, but not be limited to:

- The educational needs of the district
- The employee's academic background
- The financial needs of the district
- The applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and
- The number of years the employee has worked for the district

Notice of an employee's involuntary transfer shall be given to the employee within five days (5) of the Superintendent's decision and in normal circumstances shall be given on or before the 1st of July preceding the school year in which the transfer shall be effected.

In unforeseen circumstances the administration may make an emergency involuntary transfer after July 1, to meet the needs of the instructional program.

Involuntary transfers shall not be made for wholly arbitrary or capricious reasons, and in all cases, the employee shall be notified in writing of the reasons for the transfer.

In the event that the employee objects to the involuntary transfer, he/she may appeal the procedures utilized and affecting his/her transfer at the appropriate level of the complaint procedure.

Teachers shall not be involuntarily transferred into a teacher leader and compensation position (TLC).

## **WORKDAY**

Work Day procedures are used to ensure that students will begin and end their day at a consistent time. Parents rely on consistent school work day procedures when preparing their family schedules.

The workday for certified staff members at the GMG CSD is from 7:45 AM to 3:45 PM or 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Employees are to be in their assigned building during the workday. Advance approval to be absent from the school building must be obtained from the principal or supervisor whenever an employee must leave the school building during the workday.

Employees may be required to attend professional meetings or work activities before or after the regular workday without additional compensation.

There will be no more than two personal days per building per day granted for certified staff and the granting of these days is first come, first serve. Requests to exceed this can be made to the superintendent.

Employees who leave the building should follow the building handbook procedures and need to sign out and sign in at the building office.

## **DISTRICT PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES**

### **COPYRIGHT**

Copyright is a form of intellectual property that protects original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works. The copyright laws of the United States make it illegal for anyone to duplicate copyrighted materials without permission. Severe penalties are provided for unauthorized copying of all materials covered by the act unless the copying falls within the bounds of the "fair use" doctrine. Any duplication of copyrighted materials by district employees must be done with the permission of the copyright holder or within the bounds of "fair use."

For additional information about copyright and fair use, please visit the "Frequently Asked Questions about Copyright" section of the United States Copyright Office located at [copyright.gov/help/faq/index.html](http://copyright.gov/help/faq/index.html).

## DISCIPLINE

The Superintendent may discipline a teacher or other employee for violation of the policies, regulations, and rules of the School District or for other conduct that has a major adverse impact on job performance. Such discipline may, without limitation, include suspension without pay or termination.

Warning, reprimands, or other disciplinary action may be in writing, should be communicated to the teacher or other employee, and may be included in the teacher's or other employee's personnel file.

In case of suspension without pay, the Superintendent shall give written notice of the reasons for the suspension without pay and a copy should be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Employee violations of board policy and work rules may result in discipline, up to and including termination. Employees whose employment is terminated will be given the appropriate level of due process as required by law.

The district uses progressive discipline procedures to prevent undesirable employee behavioral issues. In most cases, the district will follow the steps below. However, the district reserves the right to combine or skip steps depending on the facts of each situation and the nature of the offense.

### **Step One – Verbal Warning**

The employee and the principal or immediate supervisor shall meet to bring attention to the existing conduct issue. The principal or immediate supervisor shall discuss the nature of the problem and clearly describe company policies and procedures. The principal or immediate supervisor shall document this meeting.

### **Step Two – Written Warning**

If the issue in Step One is not corrected, the employee and the principal or immediate supervisor shall meet to review the existing behavioral issue and any additional incidents. The principal or immediate supervisor shall outline the consequences for failing to meet conduct expectations to the employee.

The principal or immediate supervisor shall document the Step Two meeting and give a copy of the documentation to the employee. The original copy shall be placed in the employee's personnel file. The documentation shall include actions that will correct the identified behavior and a timeline identifying when the corrective actions should be completed and documented.

### **Step Three – Unpaid Suspension**

If the issue in Step Two is not corrected, the employee may be subject to unpaid suspension as outlined in Iowa Code and in board policy. The principal or immediate supervisor will discuss the appropriate action with the superintendent. The superintendent has the authority to assign a staff member to unpaid suspension.

### **Step Four – Recommendation for Termination of Employment**

If the issue in Step Three is not corrected, the employee may be subject to the termination procedures as outlined in Iowa Code and in board policy. The principal or immediate supervisor will discuss the appropriate action with the superintendent. The superintendent has the authority to recommend the termination of an employee to the Board.

## **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION**

The district recognizes and appreciates the services of its employees. Employees who retire or resign may be honored by the board, administration, and staff in an appropriate manner. Other district awards pertain to service awards based upon time served within the district (one, five, ten, and so on years of service). Office managers maintain the list of the types of awards assigned for each service period, and said awards are purchased at nominal district expense.

If the form of honor deemed appropriate by the administration and employees involves unusual expenses to the school district, the superintendent will seek prior approval from the board.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

High-quality teaching is imperative for student success and professional development plays a key role in this success. Employees are expected to attend all professional development opportunities and staff meetings provided by the school district unless they have been excused by their direct supervisor and the superintendent. Teachers shall be required to meet the standards of professional growth required by the law of the State of Iowa and the rules of the Department of Education.

Requests for attendance or participation in a professional development program, other than those development programs sponsored by the school district, are made to the principal or superintendent by using the weblink requisition process. Approval of the superintendent must be obtained prior to attendance by a licensed employee in a professional development program when the attendance would result in the licensed employee being excused from their duties or when the school district pays the expenses for the program.

## **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Employees should be cognizant of creating an inclusive space for all their students by maintaining a learning environment that is unbiased and objective. Holiday related activities should reflect this learning environment and will be educationally sound and sensitive to religious differences. Employees must not solicit or encourage religious or anti-religious activities/celebrations. Employees should be especially careful in planning activities that are to take place immediately preceding or on a religious holiday.

Employees must not inhibit students from expressing their religious beliefs or non-beliefs during the school day as long as it is non-disruptive to the instructional day, does not violate student behavior rules, and does not impose religious beliefs on other students. Expressions of belief or nonbelief initiated by individual students are permitted in composition, art forms, music, speech and debate. However, employees may not require activities which indoctrinate or force students to contradict their personal beliefs or nonbelief.

## **SCHOOL FEES**

Iowa law identifies the types of fees schools can charge. School districts only have the authority to charge fees for textbooks, school supplies, eye and ear protective devices, summer school, driver's education, and transportation for students not eligible for free transportation. School fees are located in the student handbook in each building. For those that are charged, the fees must be waived or reduced for those

students who meet the eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meals. Employees cannot charge a student fee for anything without the prior consent of the superintendent.

## **SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM**

GMG Community School District operates a lunch and breakfast program. Employees may purchase meals and other items, including milk.

## **SCHOOL PUBLICITY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

GMG CSD staff are the connection between the schools and the community. Employees are expected to work in a professional manner with parents and the community, when appropriate, for their positions. Teachers especially are expected to work closely with parents throughout the school year to ensure the success of all students, as parents are vital partners in the education of their children.

The use of students, the school district name, or its buildings and sites for advertising and promoting products and/or services of entities and organizations operating for a profit is disallowed. Nonprofit entities and organizations may be allowed to use students, the school district name, or its buildings and sites if the purpose is education related and prior approval has been obtained from the board.

## **STAFF MEETINGS**

Meetings for certified staff may extend beyond contract hours, and may be uncompensated. Staff meetings provide an opportunity for the communication of important school district information to be shared between administration and employees.

Employees are expected to attend staff meetings unless they are on leave or excused by an administrator. Additional information detailing district staff meeting procedures shall be included in the district's Professional Development Plan and Calendar.

# **CONDUCT IN THE WORKPLACE**

## **EMPLOYEE USE OF CELL PHONE**

The school district and personal phones and message devices are to be used appropriately at times that do not conflict with the employees' duties. All personal calls should be made during sanctioned breaks. District telephones are only for official school business. Failure to follow this guideline could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Please see Board Policy [401.12](#) for more in depth understanding.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No employee may use his or her position to obtain financial gain or anything of substantial value for the private benefit of himself or herself or his or her immediate family, or for an organization with which he or she is associated. Such actions may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees will not act as an agent or dealer for the sale of textbooks or other school supplies to the school district. Employees will not participate in personal financial remuneration in outside activities



wherein their position on the staff is used to sell goods or services to students or parents. Employees will not engage in outside work or activities where the source of information concerning the customer, client, or employer originates from information obtained because of the employee's position in the school district.

Since employees have access to information and a captive audience that could present a conflict of interest, employees may only solicit other employees or students for personal or financial gain with the prior, advance approval of the superintendent. If the approval of the superintendent is given, the employee must conduct the solicitations within the conditions set by the superintendent. Further, the superintendent may require the employee to cease approved solicitations as a condition of continued employment.

## **EMPLOYEE PUBLICATION OR CREATION OF MATERIALS**

Materials created by employees and/or the financial gain therefrom are the property of the school district if school materials and/or time were used in their creation and/or such materials were created in the scope of the employee's employment unless prior arrangements are made. The employee must seek prior written approval of the superintendent if there is an interest in the individual keeping copies of the materials upon separation from the district.

## **FIGHTING**

Any verbal or physical altercations between or among employees or others will not be tolerated and may subject the employee(s) to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **FRAUD/UNLAWFUL GAIN**

Any deliberate deception which secures an employee's unfair or unlawful gain will be grounds for discipline and may be turned over to law enforcement. The school district will also file a complaint with the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners as a violation of the employee's Code of Ethics and the district will also petition for license revocation.

## **NEGLECT OF DUTIES**

All employees are mindful that students are not to be left unattended and employees should not place themselves in any position where student safety is at risk or neglect of duty could be claimed. Employees, in a supervisory role, needing to leave an area where students are present must ensure another adult is present before leaving.

## **OFFENSIVE OR ABUSIVE LANGUAGE**

Threatening, intimidating, disrespectful, abusive or profane language by school district employees towards others, including derogatory slurs, will not be tolerated. Violation will incur discipline, up to and including termination.

## **PERFORMING UNAUTHORIZED WORK WHILE ON DUTY**

All district employees are prohibited from performing unauthorized work while on duty. Doing so could result in discipline, up to and including termination.



## **USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

The district attempts to maintain equipment and supplies which permit work to be accomplished in the most efficient and effective manner possible. While employees are encouraged to use these items, it is important to understand that they are school district property only to be used for conducting school district business.

Abuse or misuse of school district or non-district owned property is to be reported immediately to the administrator in that building. Failure to do so will limit district responsibility and/or increase employee responsibility. It is expected all employees will use care and caution when using district and non-district property.

Abuse or misuse or unauthorized use of district property, private property, materials, and/or equipment is subject to disciplinary action.

## **USE OF TIME**

An employee is responsible for the time on the job to which they are assigned. Each employee must develop work habits and systems to eliminate backtracking or poor usage of time. This requires initiative and planning on the employee's part. Do not allow students, teachers, fellow workers, or others to interrupt your work with lengthy conversations; simply excuse yourself and say you have work to do.

Actions such as the following are strictly prohibited by employees and will result in discipline, up to and including termination: loafing, loitering, sleeping, engaging in unauthorized personal business, or prolonged visiting while on duty.

## **EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

### **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The district's curriculum leaves room for teacher discretion and academic freedom within the confines of acceptable materials as outlined in each curriculum. Teachers are expected to use good judgment in their pedagogy and consider the culture and climate of the school and community and the age of the students, as they individualize curriculum and provide a learning environment and assignments for their students. Teachers still provide instruction that supports identified standards and grade-level expectations. Teachers are expected to create a learning environment of age-appropriate civil discourse where a variety of viewpoints can be freely shared to enhance student learning.

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

Teachers have discretion whether to use AI in their classrooms. However, prior to using AI tools, classroom teachers will inform the students how AI tools may be used to engage in and complete educational tasks and assignments. All applicable laws will be adhered to in the classroom and by classroom teachers. Classroom teachers will establish appropriate parameters for AI tool usage and will monitor student use of AI tools as appropriate. Students are expected to abide by their classroom teachers' rules. Classroom teachers will utilize AI tools that have been reviewed by the district.

Privacy must be protected when using AI tools. This means no personally identifiable information about other students or staff will be shared with AI tools, without prior written consent from the parent or guardian of the student or from the staff or student when applicable.

## **BREAKS AND MEAL PERIODS**

Leaving the place of duty during a work shift without permission of your direct supervisor, is cause for discipline, up to and including termination. Employees are expected to return to work immediately upon completion of a paid or sanctioned unpaid break. If leaving the building an employee must receive approval from their supervisor and sign out in the office. If the employee leaves, everyday arrangements must be approved by their supervisor.

## **DRESS AND GROOMING**

The Board of Education believes that no mode of attire will be considered proper for school wear that distracts from or disrupts classroom and school decorum. Employees shall dress as professionals on a daily basis, in businesslike casual attire in order to set a good example for students, co-employees, and the general public. Employee dress and grooming shall not detract from the learning/educational environment of students in their classes, school programs or other school-related activities.

It is the responsibility of principals or supervisors to ensure that all employees are properly dressed. Supervisors may make exceptions to the mode of dress in specific situations where deemed appropriate. Any concern of grooming or dress judged by the principal to be inappropriate shall not be allowed. Buildings can implement a more restrictive dress code.

### **Men's Tops**

- Any short or long-sleeved shirts with collars only, including polo shirts
- Ties are acceptable with any dress shirt
- Shirts should be tucked in unless designed to be worn out

### **Women's Tops**

- Blouses, knit shirts, turtlenecks, sweaters
- No tank shirts (unless worn under a jacket, overshirt or sweater)
- No visible cleavage
- Shirts should be tucked in unless designed to be worn out

### **Bottoms, Skirts, and Dresses**

- Inappropriate attire for work includes faded jeans of any color or jeans with prominent holes, sweatpants, exercise pants, and any spandex or other form-fitting pants, unless the buttocks is fully covered.
- Appropriate attire for work includes, but is not limited to, pants, dresses, skirts, capris, short and skorts (to fully cover the buttocks when bending over)

- Blue jeans are able to be worn every Friday or as specified by the administrative team, but are not acceptable for regular daily wear.

### **Spirit Days**

- Spirit Days will be designated by the administration
- District/school spirit shirts include t-shirts, sweatshirts or jackets
- On Spirit Days exceptions to the employee dress code are permissible (jeans)

### **Additional**

- District ID badges or name tags are highly recommended to be worn above the waist at all times.
- Headwear: no hats (unless approved by administration), caps, scarves, visors or bandanas may be worn.
- During special activities such as field trips and other similar events, staff may be exempted from the regulations but are expected to adhere to standards of good taste.
- Certain areas of instruction such as physical education will be allowed to wear knee-length shorts, jogging suits and sweat suits while teaching physical education. However, coaches or others shall wear outer pants or wind suits when going into settings other than gyms and practice fields.
- Employees performing duties in lab settings or extracurricular activities shall dress in a manner befitting their profession or befitting the occasion (which may require work-type clothes, aprons or other protective items, as approved by the principal or supervisor).

### **Conclusion**

If an employee fails to meet dress standards of the district, as determined by the employee's principal or supervisor, the employee will be asked to refrain from wearing the inappropriate item to work in the future. An employee who continues to dress inappropriately may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **EMPLOYEE OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

The board believes that the primary responsibility of employees is to the duties of their position within the school district as outlined in their job description. The board expects that district employees will give the responsibilities of their positions in the school district priority over any other employment. Employees with external employment must keep the two positions separate and the external job cannot impact the school district job. Should a supervisor believe the external position is impacting the internal one, the supervisor will address it with the employee.

The board may request the employee cease the outside employment as a condition of continued employment with the school district.

## **EMPLOYEE POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

Employees have full equality with other citizens in the exercise of their political rights and responsibilities, but employees shall refrain from certain political activities in the workplace and on district property under the jurisdiction of the board. Such prohibitions include, but are not limited to:

1. Engaging in any activity for the solicitation, promotion, election, or defeat of any referendum, candidate for public office (including school board of directors), legislation, or other political action during work hours/while engaged in official duties and in the presence of any student.
2. Soliciting or receiving from any employee or other person any contribution or service for any political purpose during work hours/while engaged in official duties.
3. Using classrooms, buildings, or students for the purpose of solicitation, promotion, election, or defeat of any referendum, candidate for public office, legislation, or other political action. (This provision does not apply to employee use of district facilities if they are related to third-party events/activities authorized by the district that are outside the employee's scope of employment.)
4. Using school equipment or materials for the purpose of solicitation, promotion, election or defeat, or any referendum, candidate for public office, legislation, or other political action.

Engaging in prohibited political activities may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees may request a leave of absence to run for public office. That provision is detailed in the "Political Leave" section of this handbook.

## **ETHICS - BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL EXAMINERS**

School district employees are expected to perform their jobs in an ethical and honest manner consistent with board policy and the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners (BOEE) rules. Any actions deemed unethical or dishonest will incur appropriate discipline. Licensed staff members are expected to know and understand the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics of the BOEE. The BOEE's [Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics](#) constitutes mandatory minimum standards of practice for all licensed employees.

## **FAILURE TO COMPLETE REPORTS**

In order to have the school district function in an efficient manner, all employees are expected to meet deadlines for all assigned paper or electronic reports, including but not limited to: timesheets, grade reports, student records, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) documentation, and testing results. Failure to meet the required deadlines may result in disciplinary action.

## **GIFTS**

Employees will not, either directly or indirectly, solicit, accept or receive any gift or series of gifts, unless the gift is valued at less than three dollars or has a negligible resale value. Honorariums may be received but must be turned over to the school district unless the employee was on his or her own time, the donor does not meet the definition of "restricted donor" or the gift or honorarium does not meet the definition of gift or honorarium.

For more information on Iowa's gift law, please visit <https://educateiowa.gov/resources/laws-and-regulations/legal-lessons/gift-law>.

## **INSUBORDINATION**

Insubordination, disobedience, failure, or refusal to follow the written or oral instructions of supervisory authority or to carry out work assignments will not be tolerated. Insubordination will result in discipline up to and including termination.

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH CO-WORKERS**

School district employees are encouraged to create an environment where co-workers' collaboration and cooperation add to the overall functioning of the district and fulfillment of individual job responsibilities. All employees must have a respectful attitude toward their job and co-workers, and they should not allow students, teachers, fellow workers, or others to interrupt or demean their work.

## **THEFT**

All thefts should be reported immediately to a principal or supervisor. Any employee found to be involved in the theft of the district's or another person's property will result in the appropriate discipline, up to and including termination.

## **TREATMENT OF PATRONS OF THE DISTRICT**

Patrons of the district are to be treated with respect on school grounds and at school events. Employees should be courteous at all times (even when the patron is not), and report to district administration any mistreatment by district patrons.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The board recognizes the valuable resources it has in the members of the Green Mountain - Garwin community. When possible and in concert with the education program, members of the school district community may be asked to make presentations to the students or to assist employees in duties other than teaching. The school district may officially recognize the contributions made by volunteers.

Any individual interested in volunteering for the district should contact Stacey Duden at the District Office for the appropriate paperwork. A background check will be conducted for all volunteers. Volunteers serve at the discretion of building or district level administrators and shall not perform roles equivalent to any district employee.

## **EMPLOYEE EXPRESSION**

The school district shall take reasonable measures as required by law to protect the intellectual freedom of students and employees and protect students and staff from discrimination based on speech.

Employees who file a complaint alleging a violation of their intellectual freedom or discrimination based on speech shall not be retaliated against and shall have whistleblower protections under Iowa law.

Employees who use social media platforms are encouraged to remember that the school community may not be able to separate employees as private citizens from their role within the district. Employee expression on social media platforms that interferes with the district's operations or prevents the district or employee from functioning efficiently and effectively may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

A district employee who acts to protect a student for engaging in free expression or who refuses to infringe on students engaging in free expression and who is acting within the scope of their professional

ethics will not be retaliated against or face any adverse employment action based on their behavior provided that expression is otherwise permitted by law and board policy.

If the board or court finds an employee that is subject to licensure, certification or authorization by the Board of Educational Examiners discriminated against a student or other district employee, the board will refer the employee to the Board of Educational Examiners for additional proceedings as required by law and which may result in discipline up to and including termination.

## **STUDENT AND CLASSROOM ISSUES**

### **ABUSE OF STUDENTS BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE**

School district employees are encouraged to create professional relationships with students so as to assist with their learning. Employees must not create relationships with students that are unhealthy or illegal. Adults must always be in a position to be trusted and caring for students, but the district will not tolerate any inappropriate relationships.

Physical or sexual abuse of students, including sexual behavior, by employees, will not be tolerated. Employees found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The district will respond promptly to allegations of abuse of students by school district employees by investigating or arranging for the investigation of an allegation. Employees are required to assist in the investigation when requested to provide information and to maintain the confidentiality of the reporting and investigation process.

This is the current Iowa law regarding abuse of students by school district employees. Refer to the Iowa Department of Education training manual for supporting materials and forms.

### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

GMG Community School District believes in protecting our students and we strive for them to be productive without outside factors weighing on their ability to learn. In compliance with state law and to provide protection to victims of child abuse, the board believes incidents of alleged child abuse should be reported to the proper authorities. All school employees 18 years of age or older are required as mandatory reporters, to report alleged incidents of child abuse they become aware of within the scope of their professional duties.

Child abuse is the result of the acts or omissions of a person responsible for the care of a person under the age of 18 who has suffered one or more of the categories of child abuse as defined in IOWA CODE 232.68 (physical abuse, mental injury, sexual abuse, denial of critical care, failure to supervise, child prostitution, presence of illegal drugs, manufacturing or possession of a dangerous substance, bestiality in the presence of a minor, allows access by a registered sex offender, or allows access to obscene material or child trafficking).

When a mandatory reporter suspects a student is the victim of child abuse, the mandatory reporter shall make an oral report of the suspected child abuse to the Iowa Department of Human Services within twenty-four hours of becoming aware of the abusive incident and shall make a written report to the Iowa

Department of Human Services within 48 hours following the oral report. If the mandatory reporter believes the child is in immediate danger, the local law enforcement agency will also be notified.

Within six months of their initial employment, mandatory reporters will take a two-hour training course involving the identification and reporting of child and dependent adult abuse or submit evidence they have taken the course within the previous three years. The course will be re-taken at least every three years.

## **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, RESTRAINT, AND SECLUSION OF STUDENTS**

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. School employees may use “reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain” to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property.

State law also places limits on school employees’ abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a student. If a student is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child’s parent. District employees will receive Chapter 103 training on physical restraint and seclusion prior to using these behavior interventions with students.

Non-employees whose duties could require the individual to participate in or be present when physical restraint or seclusion is being used will be invited to join employee training on this subject.

Failure to comply with Chapter 103 training or requirements shall result in discipline, up to and including termination.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

In certain classes, field trips and excursions are authorized and may be taken as an extension of the classroom to contribute to the achievement of the educational goals of the school district. If a field trip is required for a course, students are expected to attend the field trip, unless an appropriate reason prohibits attendance. The field trip must be approved by the building principal in advance.

## **INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to eligible children. Employees are expected to comply with IDEA. For additional information regarding IDEA, please visit The United States Department of Education website, located at <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>. Additionally, employees are expected to follow school district procedures for identifying students who need additional assistance and meet the needs of identified students. For further information, contact the building administrator, district Director of Special Education, or the superintendent.



## HOMework AND GRADING

Each building has established policies and procedures regarding the assignment of homework and grading systems. Please see building-level student handbooks for more details. For additional information on this topic, including student assessment tips, please visit the “Student Assessment” section of the Iowa Department of Education’s website located at <https://www.educateiowa.gov/student-assessment>.

## PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

Building principals will work with teachers on the process for scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences. Teachers are expected to regularly communicate with parents in regards to student welfare and progress.

## SEARCHES OF STUDENTS AND PROPERTY

In order to protect the health and safety of students, employees, and visitors to the school district and for the protection of the school district facilities, students and their belongings and school-owned lockers and desks may be searched or inspected without a search warrant.

Employees must adhere to district policy and administrative regulations regarding the search, pat down or inspection of a student and his or her belongings.

## STANDARDIZED TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an important part of the education process and the school district is committed to ensuring the integrity of testing and assessment practices. Employees are expected to administer standardized tests consistent with Iowa law and the Board of Educational Examiners’ ethical codes that promote the integrity of the assessment and the validity of student responses. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. For additional information regarding the applicable standard in the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics, please visit the Board of Educational Examiners website located at [www.boee.iowa.gov/doc/ethHndot.pdf](http://www.boee.iowa.gov/doc/ethHndot.pdf).

## STUDENT FUNDS AND FUNDRAISING-

Student fundraising for school activities may occur upon approval of the principal on a schedule determined by district policy and with an employee overseeing the fundraising. Funds raised remain in the control of the school district and the board. School-sponsored student organizations must identify a specific purpose for fundraising and secure the approval of the principal prior to spending the money raised. Fundraising- **Form (Form MUST be completed and approved by administration before implementing)**

## STUDENT RECORDS

School employees are entrusted with confidential information – whether it is about students or fellow employees. Employees must not disclose confidential student information unless it is permitted by law. Please contact the building principal if you have a request for student records. Confidential student



records are only available to staff members if there is an educational reason to review the records. All reviews of any confidential student records shall be recorded by the appropriate manager of the records.

Give careful thought to what you discuss concerning school matters whether with parents, colleagues, and members of the community. Rumors and criticism are promoted by outside gossip. Many rumors and unnecessary criticism can be avoided by referring community members to the school principal or appropriate staff members. Employees must exercise significant care and judgment when handling confidential information. A break in confidentiality can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and expose the employee to personal liability for violation of Iowa's privacy law.

<b>Persons Authorized to Review Student Records:</b>		
Superintendent Principal Assigned Secretaries Child's Psychologist Child's Teacher	Director of Special Education Work Experience Instructors Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Others specified by the LEA Adm. Nurse (Health issues only)	Speech Clinician Hearing Clinician School Social Worker Parents Counselor
<b>Persons not authorized to review student records:</b>		
Custodian Practice Teachers	Teachers Not Assigned Secretaries Not Assigned	Interns Para Professionals

## **STUDENT DISCLOSURE OF GENDER IDENTITY**

It is the goal of the district to provide a safe and supportive educational environment in which all students may learn. This includes transparency and collaboration with parents in an effort to support their students. As part of creating that safe educational environment, no employee of the district will provide false or misleading information to the parent/guardian of a student regarding that student's gender identity or intention to transition to a gender that is different from their birth certificate or certificate issued upon adoption.

If a student makes a request to a licensed employee to accommodate a gender identity, name, or pronoun that is different than what was assigned to the student in the student's registration forms or records, the licensed employee is required by Iowa law to report the request to an administrator. The school administrator receiving the report is then required by Iowa law to report the request to the student's parent/guardian. This requirement also applies to all nicknames.

## **TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS BY EMPLOYEES**

Generally, the transportation of students is in a motor vehicle owned by the school district and driven by a school bus driver. Students may be transported in private vehicles for school purposes. It is within the discretion of the superintendent to determine when this is appropriate.

Individuals transporting students for school purposes in private vehicles must have the permission of the superintendent, and meet all applicable requirements set by the district. Private vehicles will be used only when:

- The vehicle is in good condition and meets all applicable safety requirements

- The driver possesses a valid drivers' license
- Proof of insurance has been supplied to the superintendent and insurance satisfies the minimum coverage requirements for driving personal vehicles in the State of Iowa, and
- The parents of the students to be transported must give written permission to the administration prior to the student entering the private vehicle unless designated as an emergency by the superintendent.

## **TUTORING**

Every effort will be made by the licensed employees to help students with learning problems before recommending that the parents engage a tutor. Since there are exceptional cases when tutoring will help students overcome learning deficiencies, tutoring by licensed employees may be approved by the superintendent. Licensed employees may only tutor students other than those for whom the teacher is currently exercising teaching, administrative or supervisory responsibility unless approved by the superintendent.

Tutoring for a fee may not take place within school facilities or during regular school hours unless approved by the superintendent and the fees go to the school district, not the teacher. Any questions about whether a tutoring relationship or activity complies with the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for educators should be directed to the Board of Educational Examiners.

## **HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

### **ADMINISTERING MEDICATION**

The supervision of any medication distribution to students shall be in strict compliance with the rules and regulations of the board. District employees may not dispense or administer any medications, including prescription and non-prescription drugs, to students except as outlined in Board Policy [507.2](#).

### **ANTI-BULLYING AND ANTI-HARASSMENT**

The district is committed to providing all students, employees, and volunteers with a safe and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect.

Bullying and/or harassing behavior can seriously disrupt the ability of school employees to maintain a safe and civil environment, and the ability of students to learn and succeed.

Bullying and/or harassment of or by students, employees, and volunteers is against federal, state, and local policy and is not tolerated by the board.

Accordingly, school employees, volunteers, and students shall not engage in bullying or harassing behavior while on school property, while in school-owned or school-operated vehicles, while attending or participating in school-sponsored or sanctioned activities, and while away from school grounds if the conduct materially interferes with the orderly operation of the educational environment or is likely to do so.

Complaints may be filed with the superintendent or superintendent's designee pursuant to the regulation accompanying this policy. The superintendent is responsible for implementation of this policy

and all accompanying procedures. Complaints will be investigated within a reasonable time frame. Within 24 hours of receiving a report that a student may have been the victim of conduct that constitutes bullying and/or harassment, the district will notify the parent or guardian of the student.

If, as a result of viewing surveillance system data or based on a report from a school district employee, the district determines that a student has suffered bullying or harassment by another student enrolled in the district, a parent or guardian of the student may request to enroll the student in another attendance center within the district that offers classes at the student's grade level, subject to the requirements and limitations established in Iowa law related to this topic.

A school employee, volunteer, or student, or a student's parent or guardian who promptly, reasonably, and in good faith reports an incident of bullying or harassment, in compliance with the procedures in the regulation, to the appropriate school official designated by the school district, shall be immune from civil or criminal liability relating to such report and to participation in any administrative or judicial proceeding resulting from or relating to the report.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

Individuals who knowingly file false bullying or harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation may be subject to discipline by appropriate measures.

Any student found to have violated or retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school employee found to have violated or retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. Any school volunteer found to have violated or retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, removal from service and exclusion from school grounds.

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy, the defined words shall have the following meaning:

- "Electronic" means any communication involving the transmission of information by wire, radio, optic cable, electromagnetic, or other similar means. "Electronic" includes but is not limited to communication via electronic mail, internet-based communications, pager service, cell phones, and electronic text messaging.
- "Harassment" and "bullying" mean any repeated or potentially repeated electronic, written, verbal, or physical act or other ongoing conduct toward an individual based on any trait or characteristic of the individual which creates an objectively hostile school environment that meets one or more of the following conditions:
  - Places the individual in reasonable fear of harm to the individual's person or property.
  - Has a substantial detrimental effect on the individual's physical or mental health.
  - Has the effect of substantially interfering with the individual's academic or career performance.
  - Has the effect of substantially interfering with the individual's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- "Trait or characteristic of the individual" includes but is not limited to age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical

attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status.

“Volunteer” means an individual who has regular, significant contact with students.

### **Filing a Complaint**

An individual who believes that the individual has been harassed or bullied may file a complaint with the superintendent or superintendent’s designee. If the complainant is a school employee, after filing the complaint with the superintendent or superintendent’s designee, the employee may separately notify the parent or guardian of the student alleged to have been harassed or bullied.

An alternate investigator will be designated in the event it is claimed that the superintendent or superintendent’s designee committed the alleged bullying or harassment or some other conflict of interest exists. Complaints shall be filed within 180 days of the event giving rise to the complaint or from the date the Complainant could reasonably become aware of such occurrence. The Complainant will state the nature of the complaint and the remedy requested. The Complainant shall receive assistance as needed.

### **Investigation**

The school district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying or harassment upon receipt of a written complaint. The superintendent or the superintendent’s designee (hereinafter “investigator”) will be responsible for handling all complaints alleging bullying or harassment.

The investigation may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Interviews with the complainant and the individual named in the complaint (“respondent”)
- A request for the complainant to provide a written statement regarding the nature of the complaint.
- A request for the respondent to provide a written statement.
- Interviews with witnesses identified during the course of the investigation
- A request for witnesses identified during the course of the investigation to provide a written statement, and
- Review and collection of documentation or information deemed relevant to the investigation

The investigator shall consider the totality of circumstances presented in determining whether conduct objectively constitutes bullying or harassment as defined in board policy. Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator shall issue a report with respect to the findings and provide a copy of the report to the appropriate building principal or Superintendent if the investigation involved the building principal.

The complaint and identity of the Complainant, Respondent, or witnesses will only be disclosed as reasonably necessary in connection with the investigation or as required by law or policy. Similarly, evidence uncovered in the investigation shall be kept confidential to the extent reasonably possible.

### **School Decision**

The investigator, building principal or superintendent, depending on the individuals involved, shall inform the Complainant and the accused about the outcome of the investigation. If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of the policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include suspension and expulsion. If after an investigation a school employee is found to be in violation of this policy, the employee shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include termination. If after an investigation a school volunteer is found to be in violation of this policy, the volunteer shall be subject to appropriate measures, which may include exclusion from school grounds.

Individuals who knowingly file false bullying and/or harassment complaints and any person who gives false statements in an investigation may be subject to discipline by appropriate measures, as shall any person who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy. Any student found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion. Any school employee found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, termination of employment. Any school volunteer found to have retaliated in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds.

## **BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS**

Annually, all employees will be required to take the training.

The mandatory poster for Job Safety and Health may be located on the United States Department of Labor's website [www.osha.gov/Publications/poster.html](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/poster.html) and the Iowa specific poster may be located on the Iowa Workforce Development website [www.iowadivisionoflabor.gov/iowa-osh-safety-and-health-poster-0](http://www.iowadivisionoflabor.gov/iowa-osh-safety-and-health-poster-0). School districts should also include in this item where the mandatory poster will be displayed.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES - EMPLOYEES**

Employees with a communicable disease will be allowed to perform their customary employment duties provided they are able to perform the essential functions of their position and their presence does not create a substantial risk of illness or transmission to students or other employees. The term "communicable disease" will mean an infectious or contagious disease spread from person to person, or animal to person, or as defined by law.

Prevention and control of communicable diseases are included in the school district's bloodborne pathogens exposure control plan. The procedures will include scope and application, definitions, exposure control, methods of compliance, universal precautions, vaccination, post-exposure evaluation, follow-up, communication of hazards to employees, and record keeping.

## **EMPLOYEE INJURY ON THE JOB**

Employee and student safety is a major district concern. An employee should therefore remove him or herself from and report any situations where employee safety is compromised. If an employee becomes seriously injured on the job, the employee's supervisor will attempt to notify a member of the family, or an individual of a close relationship, as soon as the employee's supervisor becomes aware of the injury.

When an employee becomes seriously injured on the job, the employee's supervisor will attempt to notify a member of the family, or an individual of a close relationship, as soon as the employee's supervisor becomes aware of the injury.

If possible, an employee may administer emergency or minor first aid. An injured employee will be turned over to the care of the employee's family or qualified medical employees as quickly as possible. The school district is not responsible for the medical treatment of an injured employee.

It is the responsibility of the employee injured on the job to inform Betsy Spaur, Human Resources, within twenty-four hours of the occurrence. It is the responsibility of the employee's immediate supervisor to file an accident report within twenty-four hours after the employee reported the injury. In addition, EMC Nurse on Call should be called by the employee, with their supervisor, at (800-524-6877) to be triaged for any possible workman's compensation issue.

## **EMPLOYEE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

The district believes good health is important to job performance. Employees shall present evidence of good health, in the form of a post-offer, pre-employment physical examination report. Employees are subject to required physical examination at least every five years and will provide documentation of that physical by completion of the district form.

The cost of the initial examination for certified employees will be paid by the employee. The form indicating the employee is able to perform the duties, with or without reasonable accommodation, for which the employee was hired, must be returned prior to the performance of duties or receipt of pay.

Employees whose physical or mental health, in the judgment of the administration, may be in doubt must submit to additional examinations that are job-related and consistent with business necessity, when requested to do so, at the expense of the school district. The district will comply with occupational safety and health requirements as applicable to its employees in accordance with the law.

## **HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL DISCLOSURE**

Each employee will annually review information about hazardous substances in the workplace. When a new employee is hired or transferred to a new position or worksite, the information and training, if necessary, is included in the employee's orientation. When an additional hazardous substance enters the workplace, information about it is distributed to all employees, and training is conducted for the appropriate employees. Jay Freese will maintain a file indicating which hazardous substances are present in the workplace and when training and information sessions take place.

The mandatory poster for Job Safety and Health is located at [www.osha.gov/Publications/poster.html](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/poster.html) and the Iowa specific poster may be found at [70-8025.SafetyandHealthPoster.2022-01.pdf](http://70-8025.SafetyandHealthPoster.2022-01.pdf) ([iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov](http://iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov)). School districts should also include in this section where the mandatory poster will be displayed

## **SMOKE AND TOBACCO-FREE WORKPLACE**

The district is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and to promoting the health and well-being of employees. As required by Iowa Code Chapter 142 D, the Iowa Smokefree Air Act, and also motivated by a desire to provide a healthy work environment, the district Board Policy prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco and nicotine products as cited in board policy, on all school grounds and

in school vehicles. Unauthorized use of tobacco substances during work hours, while on district time or property, or while engaging in district business will result in discipline, including immediate dismissal.

## **SUBSTANCE FREE WORKPLACE**

Alcoholic beverages, illegal substances, and legal substances used illegally shall not be consumed at any time during the employee's work shift. It is in violation of school district work rules for an employee to report to work in an unsafe condition, or in a condition that impairs the employee's judgment or performance of job functions due to the use of alcohol or other substances. Unauthorized possession or use of alcoholic beverages or other substances during work hours, while on district time or property, or while engaging in district business will result in discipline, including immediate dismissal.

It is a violation of the federal Substance-Free Workplace law for an employee to unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of in the workplace any narcotic drug, a hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance or alcohol, as defined in Schedules I through V of section 202 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812) and further defined by regulation at 21 C.F.R. 1300.11 through 1300.15 and Iowa Code Chapter 124.

"Workplace" is defined as the site for the performance of work done in the capacity of an employee. This includes school district facilities, other school premises, or school district vehicles. Workplace also includes off-school property if the employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity, event, or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the control of the school district or where the employee is engaged in school business.

Employees who operate school vehicles are subject to mandatory random and scheduled federal drug and alcohol testing if a commercial driver's license is required to operate the vehicle and the vehicle transports sixteen or more persons including the driver.

Employees are further notified it is a condition of their continued employment that they comply with the above policy of the school district and will notify their supervisor of their conviction of any criminal drug statute for a violation committed in the workplace, no later than five days after the conviction.

## **LEAVE AND ABSENCES**

All scheduled leave requests must be submitted for each day of absence and approved by the direct supervisor prior to taking leave. If the leave is the result of a sick/emergency day the employee must submit their leave request within one (1) workday of the absence.

### **ABSENTEEISM**

In order to accomplish the goals and mission of the Van Meter Community School District, daily attendance by all employees is imperative. Employees are encouraged to limit absenteeism to emergencies and appropriate instances that cannot be scheduled outside of a workday.

Employees must notify their building principal or direct supervisor of all times when they will be absent or to submit leave requests. Absences arranged in advance (vacations and personal days) do not require a call when absent or when returning to work, unless outside the scheduled time off. If an employee is absent without proper notification and authorization, the employee shall be considered to have abandoned his or her position and may be terminated. Misuse of leave procedures or misrepresentation of reasons for leave may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Failure to report

promptly at the starting time or leaving before the scheduled quitting time or failure to timely notify the proper supervisor of impending absence or tardiness, prior to designated starting time, is reason for disciplinary action. Leaves of absences without pay are not encouraged. Requests for leave of absence without pay will generally be denied. Every employee should know to whom they report absences and submit leave requests.

Contact your building principal or director supervisor for proper procedures regarding absenteeism.

### **SICK LEAVE**

A regular full-time Licensed or Classified Employee will be granted a leave of absence for illness, pregnancy, or off-the-job injury with full pay in the following amounts:

Each year:       15 work days

The maximum sick leave accumulation is one hundred twenty (120) days. The current school years days allowable are to be granted beyond the accumulated days. In no case shall more than one hundred thirty-five (135) days be available for use in any one school year for an employee.

All accumulated sick leave will be forfeited upon termination of employment.

The Employee shall notify the building principal in advance in cases where the Employee anticipates the illness will result in temporary disability of more than five (5) work days.

To qualify for payment, the Employer has the right to require such medical evidence as it deems necessary to substantiate the absence. It is the Employee's responsibility to notify the building principal or supervisor not later than two hours prior to the regular work day to include those employees teaching the early bird schedule, except in an emergency. If possible, notification should be given the previous day.

Sick leave cannot be used where deferment of treatment of medical service would be possible at a time other than the school year.

The minimum amount of sick leave request that can be granted is one-quarter (1/4) work day. In the event an Employee is off work due to an on-the-job injury, the difference between the Workman's Compensation check and the Employee's regular net earnings will be paid to the Employee and the days absent will be deducted from the Employee's accumulated sick leave.

### **FAMILY SICK LEAVE**

Accumulated sick leave (up to a total of fifteen (15) days per year) may be taken for illness in the Employee's immediate family which is restricted to the Employee's spouse, child, grandchild and/or parents. Said fifteen (15) day maximum may be extended at the discretion of the Superintendent. Medical evidence of family illness may be required by the Superintendent or his/her designee to substantiate the absence.

### **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE**



Attendance of education meetings or visitations to view other instructional techniques or programs are permitted with full pay if such absence is approved by the immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor may require an Employee to attend this type of meeting and under these circumstances, the Employees will be reimbursed for personal car travel and registration fees.

### **JURY DUTY LEAVE**

An Employee required to serve as a juror shall receive regular wages. In order to receive payment for such duty, the Employee must submit certification of service and assign all fees, except mileage and parking allowance, received for such duty to the District. When released from duty during working hours in the a.m., the Employee will report to work and work the p.m. schedule.

### **UNPAID LEAVE**

Unpaid leave may be used to excuse an involuntary absence not provided for in other leave policies of the board. Unpaid leave will only be granted in unique and unusual circumstances. Unpaid leave for employees must be authorized by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent will have complete discretion to grant or deny the requested unpaid leave. In making this determination, the superintendent will consider the effect of the employee's absence on the education program and school district operations, length of service, previous record of absence, the financial condition of the school district, the reason for the requested absence and other factors the superintendent believes are relevant to making this determination.

If unpaid leave is granted, the duration of the leave period will be coordinated with the scheduling of the education program whenever possible to minimize the disruption of the education program and school district operations. Whenever possible, employees will make a written request for unpaid leave three days prior to the beginning date of the requested leave. If the leave is granted, the deductions in salary are made and the employee will be responsible for the cost of the substitute teacher, unless they are waived specifically by the superintendent.

\*All requests requiring the Superintendent's (or his/her designee's) approval should originate with the employee's direct supervisor. The Superintendent or his/her designee will make the requested determination.

### **PERSONAL LEAVE**

Each employee shall be allowed two (2) days each year for leave with full pay, accumulative to five (5) days. Employees who have accumulated 120 sick days at the beginning of the year and use no more than three (3) sick days that year may exchange their 12 unused sick leave days for one (1) additional personal day. Notice shall be given two (2) days in advance of each day of leave, if possible.

For each unused day of personal leave, the employee can choose to be paid at the current year substitute daily rate. Employees will only be reimbursed for a maximum of three remaining personal days annually. Payment will not be made for increments in less than .25 unused days.

Each employee shall make written requests for personal leave to the building principal at least five (5) working days prior to the anticipated leave date. The Superintendent shall notify personnel at least three (3) working days prior to the anticipated leave date of the disposition of the case. Only two (2)

individuals using personal days will be permitted per building per day. As long as the request falls within the guidelines of this section such leave will be approved. Emergency requests shall be considered on an individual basis.

Personal leave shall not be taken within ten (10) days after the beginning of the school year; the day before or after a holiday or vacation; or within fifteen (15) days of the end of the school year; except upon application and approval by the superintendent.

### **EMERGENCY LEAVE**

In the event of an emergency involving hospitalization of an employee's spouse, child, parent, sister, or brother; an emergency leave of up to five school days will first be allowed for each employee each school year. This will be deducted from the employee's family sick balance.

Emergency leaves may also be granted for non-medical emergencies involving the employee including, but not limited to house fire, severe storm damage, car accident, etc. Emergency leaves for this purpose shall be granted only if the employee has used all personal leave days. If the employee's personal leave days have been used, this leave will be granted without loss of pay and shall not be charged against any other employee leave.

More days of emergency leave may be granted at the discretion of the superintendent or principal, and shall be charged against the employee's accumulated days of sick leave. Emergency leaves of absence shall not be accumulated from year to year.

\*All requests requiring the Superintendent's (or his/her designee's) approval should originate with the employee's direct supervisor. The Superintendent or his/her designee will make the requested determination.

### **EMPLOYEE VACATION**

Vacation may be available for those employees who work twelve months a year or as included in an individual contract. Classified Employees on twelve month contracts will be granted two weeks (10 business days) of vacation for their first fifteen years of employment which can only be used after their first six (6) months of employment. Classified Employees on twelve month contracts will be given another week (5 business days) of vacation after being employed for more than 15 years. After 15 years of service, classified employees accumulate one additional day per year until a maximum of 20 is reached. A maximum of five vacation days can be carried over to a maximum of 20. All vacation requests must be made 24 hours prior to the requested time off with a direct supervisor.

### **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT**

Unpaid family and medical leave will be granted up to 12 weeks (or up to 26 weeks of military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness) per year to assist eligible employees in balancing family and work life. Requests for family and medical leave will be made to the superintendent. Employees eligible for family and medical leave must comply with the family and medical leave policy and administrative rules prior to starting family and medical leave.

For additional information regarding FMLA, please contact the Human Resources Director or visit the "Family and Medical Leave Act" section of the United States Department of Labor's website, located at <http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/>.

## **FMLA Leaves Available**

An eligible employee will be granted up to 12 work weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave each 12-month period for any of the following qualifying reasons:

- The birth of and/or need to care for your newborn child.
- The placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care.
- The need to care for your spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; or
- A serious health condition that makes you unable to perform the functions of your job.
- Because of any qualifying exigency (urgent need) 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. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arrangement for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions and attending post deployment reintegration briefings.

## **FMLA - Use of Paid Leave**

The district will require you to use paid leave as part of your FMLA leave as follows:

1. You must use any sick leave for any portion of a FMLA leave to care for your own serious health condition. You may use accumulated personal time for any portion of a FMLA leave to care for your own serious health condition.
2. You must use any accumulated family illness days for any portion of a FMLA leave for birth, adoption, foster placement, or to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition. You may use any accrued personal time for any portion of a FMLA leave for birth, adoption, foster placement, or to care for a child, spouse, or parent with a serious health condition.

When you have used all required paid leave for any portion of a FMLA leave, the balance of the leave will be without pay.

## **MILITARY SERVICE LEAVE**

Employees with military obligations will be granted leaves of absence in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

## **POLITICAL LEAVE**

The board will provide a leave of absence to employees to run for elective public office. The superintendent will grant an employee a leave of absence to campaign as a candidate for an elective public office as unpaid leave.

The request for leave must be in writing to the superintendent of schools at least thirty days prior to the starting date of the requested leave.

## **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

A total of up to ten (10) days of absence per year (maximum five (5) per occurrence) shall be allowed for a death in the immediate family, as defined below, without loss of salary.

The immediate family shall constitute any of the following persons: Employee's spouse, children, children legally in employee's care, siblings, parents, grandparents, parent-in-law, siblings-in-law, grandparents-in-law, grandchildren, grandchildren-in-law, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews .

Attendance at funerals where immediate family is not involved as defined above will be permitted. Certified staff members may be granted up to one (1) full day leave to attend the funeral of a person(s) who in life represented a special kinship or friendship. A written request for leave under this provision defining special kinship must be filed with the principal and approved by the Superintendent. This request should be filed one (1) day prior to the leave day. Approved absences under this provision, beyond one (1) day, will result in loss of pay.

Leave of absence of this nature is not cumulative.

## **HOLIDAYS**

The following days are days off for all certified personnel, if the holiday falls within the contract: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day and Fourth of July.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

### **BUILDING SECURITY**

The district is committed to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff. In order to accomplish this, it is the responsibility of all employees to do their part in creating this safe and secure environment. Employees should contact the superintendent to report any security/safety hazard(s) or condition(s) they identify.

### **DRILLS AND EVACUATIONS**

Periodically the school holds emergency fire and tornado. At the beginning of each semester, teachers must notify students of the procedures to follow in the event of a drill. Emergency procedures and proper exit areas must be posted in all rooms. When drills are staged, every staff member and student must follow proper procedures.

### **ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION**

Asbestos has been an issue of concern for many years. The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986 (AHERA) was designed to determine the extent of asbestos concerns in the schools and to act as a guide in formulating asbestos management policies for the schools. The school district facilities have been inspected by a certified asbestos inspector as required by AHERA. The inspector located, sampled and determined the condition and hazard potential of all material in the school facilities suspected of containing asbestos. The inspection and laboratory analysis records form the basis of the asbestos management plan.

A certified management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for the school district facilities which includes notification letters, training for employees, a set of procedures designed to minimize the disturbance of asbestos-containing materials and plans for regular surveillance of the materials. A copy of the management plan is available for inspection in the office.

## EMERGENCY CLOSING, INCLEMENT WEATHER AND OTHER INTERRUPTIONS

When the superintendent decides the weather threatens the safety of students and employees, he/she will notify local and regional radio/television stations to broadcast a school closing announcement as well as sending notice using the district's JMC telephone/text notification system.

## STAFF IDENTIFICATION BADGES (after school pictures)

An identification badge or name tag shall be issued to each employee. Badges/name tags **shall be worn** when the employee is on duty, and shall be displayed between the waist and the shoulder on the outer garment or on a lanyard. If an employee comes to work without the permanent badge, a temporary badge may be obtained from the district's central office. The loss of a permanent badge shall be immediately reported to the superintendent's assistant, who will issue a replacement badge at a cost to the employee. Badges remain the property of the district and shall be returned to the building principal at the time of resignation, retirement or termination. The badge simply identifies the individual as a district employee – it does not grant access to buildings or provide any other scan capability.

## THREATS OF VIOLENCE

All threats of violence - whether oral, written or symbolic - against students, employees, visitors, or to school facilities are prohibited. All such threats will be promptly investigated. Law enforcement may be contacted. Threats issued and delivered away from school or school activities may be grounds for disciplinary action if the threat impacts the orderly and efficient operation of the school. Employees engaging in threatening behavior will face disciplinary consequences up to and including termination. Please report any incidents to the building level administrator or the superintendent.

## VISITORS/GUESTS

The board welcomes the interest of parents and other members of the community and invites them to visit the school buildings and sites. Visitors, which include persons other than employees or students, must notify the main office of their presence in the facility upon arrival.

Individuals who wish to visit a classroom while school is in session are asked to notify the principal and obtain approval from the principal prior to the visit so appropriate arrangements can be made and class disruption can be minimized.

Visitors will conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with mutual respect and consideration for the rights of others while attending school events. Visitors failing to conduct themselves accordingly may be asked to leave the premises. Children who wish to visit school must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.

It is the responsibility of employees to report inappropriate conduct. It is the responsibility of the superintendent and principals to take the action necessary to cease the inappropriate conduct. If the superintendent or principals are not available, a school district employee is responsible for taking the action necessary to cease the inappropriate conduct.

## WEAPONS

The district believes weapons and other dangerous objects in school district facilities cause material and substantial disruption to the school environment or present a threat to the health and safety of students,

employees, and visitors on the school district premises or property within the jurisdiction of the school district.

Employees are prohibited from bringing weapons and other dangerous objects on school grounds. Weapons under the control of law enforcement officials or other individuals specifically authorized by the board are exempt in accordance with law and board policy. For more information, visit the Iowa Department of Education Legal

## **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

### **DISCHARGE OF TEACHER**

A teacher may be discharged at any time during the contract year for just cause. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee, shall notify the teacher immediately that the superintendent will recommend in writing to the board at a regular or special meeting of the board held not more than fifteen days after notification has been given to the teacher that the teacher's continuing contract be terminated effective immediately following a decision of the board. The procedure for dismissal shall be as provided in section 279.15, subsection 2, and sections 279.16 through 279.19. The superintendent may suspend a teacher under this section pending hearing and determination by the board.

For purposes of this section, "just cause" includes but is not limited to a violation of the code of professional conduct and ethics of the board of educational examiners if the board has taken disciplinary action against a teacher, during the six months following issuance by the board of a final written decision and finding of fact after a disciplinary proceeding.

### **CONTRACT RELEASE - LICENSED EMPLOYEES**

Licensed employees who wish to be released from an executed contract must give at least twenty-one days' advance notice to the superintendent. Licensed employees may be released at the discretion of the board. Only in unusual and extreme circumstances will the board release a licensed employee from a contract. The board will have sole discretion to determine what constitutes unusual and extreme circumstances.

Release from a contract may be made contingent upon finding a suitable replacement. Licensed employees requesting release from a contract after it has been signed and before it expires may be required to pay the board the cost incurred to locate and hire a suitable replacement. Upon written mutual agreement between the employee and the superintendent, the costs may be deducted from the employee's salary. When required, payment of these costs will be a condition for release from the contract. Failure of the licensed employee to pay these expenses when required may result in the district filing a cause of action in small claims court against the employee. Note: Prior to May 1st, a teacher may be released from his/her contract if a suitable replacement can be found, and the teacher will pay for actual expenses incurred in the search for a suitable replacement.

### **RESIGNATION - LICENSED EMPLOYEES AT YEAR END**

In the interest of professional courtesy to the district and their colleagues, a licensed employee who wishes to resign should notify the superintendent by April 1 of each year. This applies to regular

contracts for the licensed employee's regular duties and for an extracurricular contract for extra duty. Resignations of this nature will be accepted by the board and guidelines through the board policy.

## **RESIGNATION - CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES**

Classified employees who wish to resign mid-year or mid-assignment, must give the school district at least two weeks notice. Those resigning at year end or at the end of an assignment must give notice by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **REDUCTION IN FORCE/FURLOUGH**

The board has the exclusive authority to determine the appropriate number of employees. A reduction of employees may occur as a result of, but not be limited to, changes in the education program, staff realignment, changes in the size or nature of the student population, financial situation considerations, and other reasons deemed relevant by the board.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to make a recommendation for termination to the board. The superintendent shall consider the following criteria in making the recommendations:

- Endorsements and educational preparation within the grade level and subject areas in which the employee is now performing;
- Relative skills, ability and demonstrated performance;
- Qualifications for co-curricular programs; and
- Number of continuous years of service to the school district. This will be considered only when the foregoing factors are relatively equal between licensed employees.

Due process for termination due to a reduction in force will be followed.

## **RETIREMENT**

Employees who will complete their current contract with the board may apply for retirement. No employee will be required to retire at a specific age.

Employees requesting the retirement incentive must submit a written request to the Superintendent by February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year stating the intent to retire at the end of the current contract year and the request for the incentive. Applications made after the date set by the board for the return of the employee's contract to the board may be considered by the board if special circumstances exist. It is within the discretion of the board to determine whether special circumstances exist.

Board action to approve an employee's application for retirement is final and such action constitutes nonrenewal of the employee's contract for the next school year.

The district will annually decide whether to offer an early retirement incentive under local board policy 402.52. That decision is normally made at the December board meeting, and will be made with enough time to meet the February 1 deadline each year.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

I acknowledge that I have received or can access a copy of the Green Mountain Garwin Community School District Employee Handbook . I understand the employee handbook contains important information about the district and my role, responsibilities, and duties as an employee. I acknowledge I am expected to be familiar with the contents. I also understand that I should consult the superintendent with any questions I have about the contents of the employee handbook or any questions that I feel were not addressed.

I understand that the employee handbook is a general source of information and may not include every possible situation that may arise. I acknowledge that the Employee Handbook is not intended, and does not constitute a contract between the ***district*** and any one or all of its employees.

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Employee's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Employee's Name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_ Assignment/Building \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE – COPY PROVIDED TO EMPLOYEE**