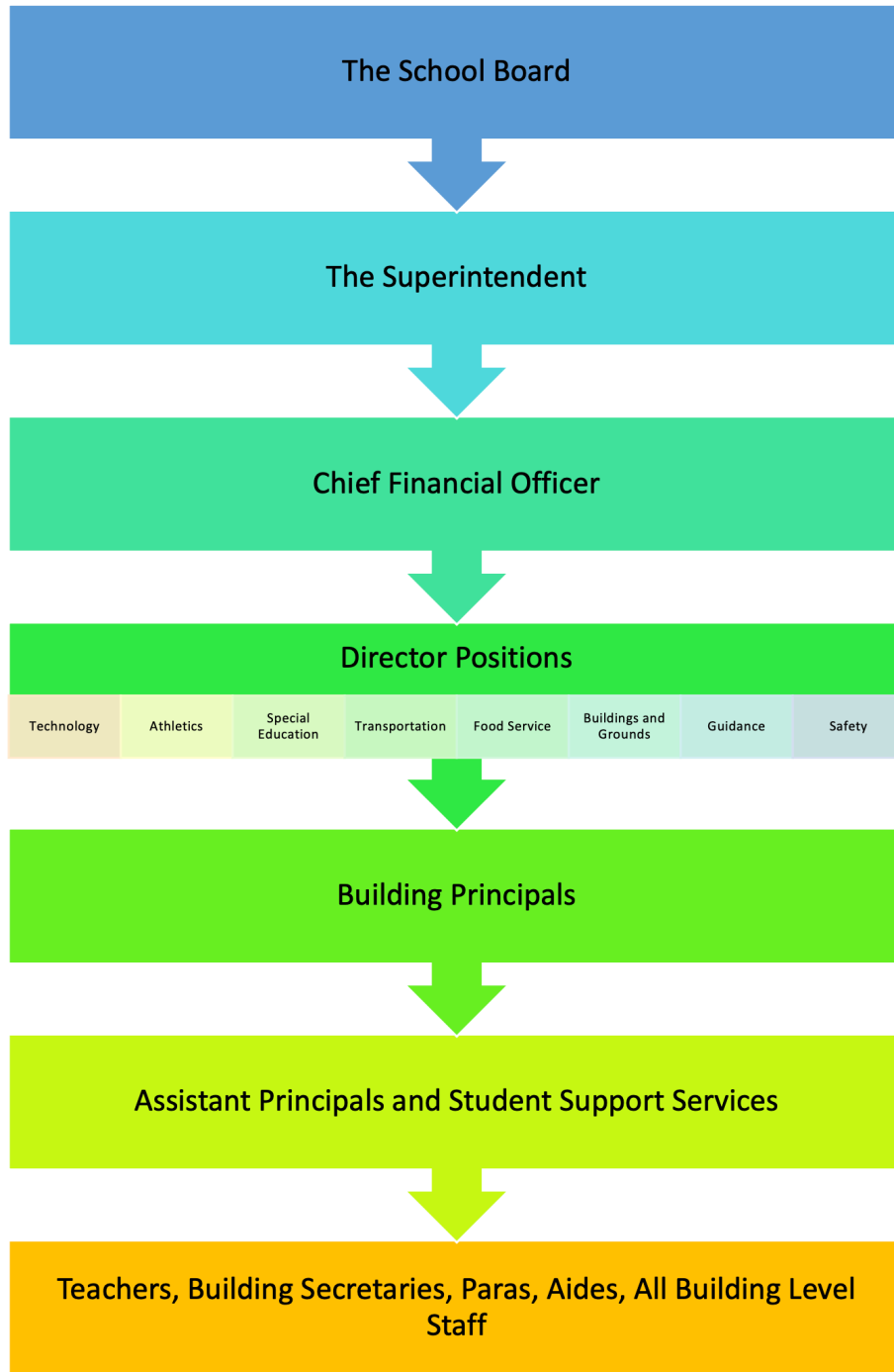


# **Griffith Public School Corporation Employee Handbook**

**Board Approved June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Updated October 24, 2023

# Griffith Public Schools Organization Chart



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## FOREWORD

Whether you have just joined our staff or have been at Griffith Public Schools (GPS) for a while, we are confident that you will find our school corporation a dynamic and rewarding place in which to work, and we look forward to a productive and successful association. We consider the employees of GPS to be one of our most valuable resources.

This handbook has been written to serve as a guide for the employer/employee relationship. It contains only general information and guidelines; it is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures described. If you have any questions concerning eligibility for a particular benefit or the applicability of a policy or practice, please address your questions to the administration office.

For classified staff, neither this handbook nor any other corporation document confers any contractual right, either expressed or implied, to remain in the corporation's employ. Nor does it guarantee any fixed terms and conditions of your employment. Your employment is not for any specific time and may be terminated at will with or without cause and without prior notice by the corporation; you may resign for any reason at any time. No supervisor or other representative of the corporation (except the Superintendent) has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period or to make any agreement contrary to the above.

The procedures, practices, policies and benefits described here may be modified or discontinued from time to time. GPS will inform you of any changes as they occur.

The policies in this handbook are not intended to alter or alleviate any requirement created by federal, state or local law, and any such law supersedes a policy in this handbook when a conflict exists. All GPS employees are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state and local laws. Any penalty imposed for violating a policy in this Handbook is disciplinary in nature and in no way affects any obligation or penalty that may be imposed under law.

Since this handbook serves as an outline, some topics described in this handbook are covered in detail in official policy documents. Copies of all policies may be obtained at <http://www.neola.com/griffith-in/>. Refer to these documents for specific information because the handbook only briefly summarizes those guidelines and benefits.

## Vision

Achieving Success  Academic Excellence  Panther Pride

## Mission

Griffith Public Schools leads the way as a diverse school and community driven by continual improvements in academic excellence focused on producing lifelong learners.

## Core Values

**Griffith Public Schools is committed to:**

- Purposeful Professional Development
- Diverse, progressive curriculum which integrates technology.
- Strong stakeholder communication
- Intentional community and parental partnerships
- Fiscal responsibility
- Celebrating every child's accomplishment
- Preparing students for graduation with employability skills to meet a competitive marketplace.

# BOARD-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

## Policy 3112 - BOARD-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The School Board desires to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

### 1. Staff Communications to the Board

All official communications from staff members to the board or its committees shall be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure is not intended to deny any staff member the right to appeal to the Board on important matters through established procedures.

### 2. Board Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of the Board of staff interest, and concern to the staff will be communicated through the Superintendent, who shall also keep staff members fully informed of the board's problems, concerns, and actions.

### 3. Social Interaction

Both staff and Board members share a keen interest in the schools and in education generally, and it is to be expected that when they meet at social affairs and other functions, they will informally discuss such matters as educational trends, issues, and innovations, and general activities of the Corporation; however, since individual Board members have no special authority except when they are convened at a legal meeting of the Board or vested with special authority by Board action, discussions between staff, and Board members of personalities or personnel grievances will be considered to be unethical conduct.

## 9130 - PUBLIC COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Any person or group having a legitimate interest in the operations of this Corporation shall have the right to present a request, suggestion, complaint, or concern relating to Corporation personnel, the program, or the operations of the Corporation. At the same time, the School Board has a duty to protect its staff from unnecessary harassment. It is the intent of this policy to provide the means for judging each public complaint and concern in a fair and impartial manner and to seek a remedy where appropriate. The handling of such complaints will be conducted in compliance with Indiana's Open Door Law (*Ind. Code § 5-14-1.5-1*).

It is the desire of the Board to rectify any misunderstandings between the public and the Corporation by direct discussions of an informal type among the interested parties. It is only when such informal meetings fail to resolve the differences, shall more formal procedures be employed.

Any requests, suggestions, complaints, or concerns reaching the Board, Board members, and the administration shall be referred to the Superintendent for consideration according to the following procedure.

## **Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member**

- A. First Level
  - 1. If it is a matter specifically directed toward a professional staff member, the matter must be addressed, initially, to the concerned staff member who shall discuss it promptly with the complainant and make every effort to provide a reasonable explanation or take appropriate action within his/her authority and Corporation administrative guidelines.
  - 2. This level does not apply if the matter involves suspected child abuse, substance abuse, or any other serious allegation which may require investigation or inquiry by school officials prior to approaching the professional staff member.
  - 3. As appropriate, the staff member shall report the matter and whatever action may be taken to the immediate supervisor.
- B. Second Level
  - 1. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the First Level, it shall be discussed by the complainant with the staff member's supervisor and in compliance with provisions of a collective bargaining agreement, if applicable.
- C. Third Level
  - 1. If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the supervisor, a written request for a conference shall be submitted to the Superintendent. This request should include:
    - 2. The specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the facts giving rise to it.
    - 3. The respect in which it is alleged that the complainant (or child of the complainant) has been affected adversely.
    - 4. The action which the complainant wishes to be taken and the reasons why it is felt that such action be taken.
      - 1. Should the matter be resolved in conference with the Superintendent, the Board may be advised of the resolution.
- D. Fourth Level
  - 1. Should the matter still not be resolved, or if it is one beyond the Superintendent's authority and requires a Board decision or action, the complainant shall request in writing a hearing by the Board.
  - 2. The Board, after reviewing all material relating to the case.
  - 3. The complainant shall be advised, in writing, of the Board's decision, as quickly as possible. The Board's decision on the matter will be final, and it will not provide a hearing to other complainants on the same issue.

If the complainant contacts an individual Board member to discuss the matter, the Board member shall inform the complainant that s/he has no authority to act in his/her individual capacity and that the complainant must follow the procedure described in this policy.

## **Matters Regarding an Administrative Staff Member**

Since administrators are considered members of the Corporation's professional staff, the general procedure specified in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member" shall be followed.

## **Matters Regarding a Support Staff Member**

In the case of a support staff member, the same procedure is to be followed as for "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member".

## **Matters Regarding Corporation Services or Operations**

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or concern relates to a matter of Corporation procedure or operation, it should be addressed, initially, to the building principal and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member."

## **Matters Regarding the Educational Program**

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or concern relates to a matter of Corporation program, it should be addressed, initially, to the building principal and then brought, in turn, to higher levels of authority in the manner prescribed in "Matters Regarding a Professional Staff Member."

## **Matters Regarding Instructional Materials**

If the request, suggestion, complaint, or concern relates to instructional materials such as textbooks, library books, reference works, and other instructional aids used in the Corporation, the following procedure shall be followed:

- A. The criticism is to be addressed to the principal or his/her designee, in writing, and shall include:
  1. Author
  2. Title
  3. Publisher
  4. The complainant's familiarity with the material objected to.
  5. Sections objected to by page, and item.
  6. Reasons for objection.
- B. Upon receipt of the information, the principal may appoint a review committee which may consist of:
  1. One (1) or more professional staff members including the school librarian.
  2. One (1) or more lay persons knowledgeable in the area.
- C. The Superintendent may be an ex officio member of the committee.
- D. The committee, in evaluating the questioned material, shall be guided by the following criteria:
  1. The appropriateness of the material for the age and maturity level of the students with whom it is being used.
  2. The accuracy of the material.
  3. The objectivity of the material.
  4. The use being made of the material.
- E. The material in question may be withdrawn from use pending the committee's recommendation to the Superintendent.
- F. The committee's recommendation shall be reported to the Superintendent in writing. The Superintendent will advise the complainant, in writing, of the committee's recommendation and advise the Board of the action taken or recommended.
- G. The complainant may appeal this decision, within ten (10) business days, to the Board through a written request to the Superintendent, who shall forward the request and all written material relating to the matter to the Board.
- H. The board shall review the case and advise the complainant, in writing, of its decision.

**No challenged material may be removed from the curriculum or from a collection of resource materials except by action of the Board, and no challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some.**

## **Equal Employment Opportunity Statement**

Griffith Public School (GPS) provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty or status as a covered veteran in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. GPS complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every building location. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including hiring, placement, promotion, termination, non-renewal, reduction in force (RIF), transfers, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

GPS expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, genetic information, disability or veteran status. Improper interference with the ability of GPS employees to perform their expected job duties is not tolerated.

### **Anti-harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure**

GPS is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Everyone has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, GPS expects that all relationships among persons in the offices and schools will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice and harassment.

It is the policy of GPS to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination or harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, amnesty or status as a covered veteran. GPS prohibits any such discrimination or harassment.

GPS encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of GPS to promptly and thoroughly investigate such reports. GPS prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports.

### **Definitions of Harassment**

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Harassment based on any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by law or

that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or c) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping, threatening, intimidating or hostile acts, denigrating jokes, and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace, on corporation time or using corporation equipment via e-mail, phone (including voice messages), text messages, tweets, blogs, social networking sites or other means.

### **Individuals and Conduct Covered**

These policies apply to all applicants and employees, whether related to conduct engaged in by fellow employees or someone not directly connected to GPS.

Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

### **Complaint Process**

Individuals who believe they have been the victims of conduct prohibited by this policy statement or who believe they have witnessed such conduct should discuss their concerns with their school principal, administration office or Superintendent.

When possible, GPS encourages individuals who believe they are being subjected to such conduct to promptly advise the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and request that it be discontinued. Often this action alone will resolve the problem. GPS recognizes, however, that an individual may prefer to pursue the matter through complaint procedures.

GPS encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken before relationships become irreparably strained. Therefore, although no fixed reporting period has been established, early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment.

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed.

Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately.

If a party to a complaint does not agree with its resolution that party may appeal to Griffith Public Schools Superintendent.

False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA)**

Griffith Public Schools complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) which makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment against a qualified individual with a disability. The ADA also outlaws discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the workplace. In support of the ADA, GPS offers the following summary of rights under the Act:

**ADA Protection-** An employee with a disability and qualified to do a job is protected by the ADA from job discrimination based on that disability. Under the ADA, a disability includes a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, walking, breathing, and performing manual tasks, caring for oneself, learning or working.

The employee must satisfy the employer's requirements for the job, such as education, employment experience, skills or licenses. An employee must also be qualified to perform the essential functions or duties of a job, with or without reasonable accommodation, to be protected from job discrimination by the ADA. Essential functions are the fundamental job duties that an employee must be able to perform on his/her own or with the help of reasonable accommodation. An employer cannot refuse to hire an employee because his/her disability prevents them from performing duties that are not essential to the job.

**Reasonable Accommodation-** Any change or adjustment to a job or work environment that permits a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the job application process, to perform the essential functions of a job, or to enjoy benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by employees without disabilities. For example, reasonable accommodation may include:

Providing or modifying equipment or devices, job restructuring, modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies, providing readers and interpreters, and making the workplace readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities.

An employer is required to provide a reasonable accommodation to a qualified applicant or employee with a disability unless the employer can show that the accommodation would be an undue hardship – an accommodation that would require significant difficulty or expense.

**Covered Employment Practices-** The ADA makes it unlawful to discriminate in all employment practices such as: • Recruitment, firing, hiring, training, job assignments, promotions, pay, benefits, lay off, leave, and all other employment related activities.

It is also unlawful for an employer to retaliate against an employee for asserting his/her rights under the ADA. The Act also protects an employee if he/she is a victim of discrimination because of family, business, social or other relationship or association with an individual with a disability.

**Medical Examinations and Inquiries About a Disability-** When applying for a job, an employer cannot ask a candidate for hire if they are disabled or ask about the nature or severity of a disability. An employer can ask if the candidate can perform the duties of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. An employer can also ask a candidate to describe or to demonstrate how, with or without reasonable accommodation, he/she will perform the duties of the job.

An employer cannot require a candidate to take a medical examination before a job is offered. Following a job offer, an employer can condition the offer on the candidate passing a required medical examination, but only if all entering employees for that job category must take the examination. However, an employer cannot reject a candidate because of information about the disability revealed by the medical examination unless the reasons for rejection are job-related and necessary for the conduct of the employer's business. The employer cannot refuse to hire an individual because of a disability if that candidate can perform the essential functions of the job with accommodation.

Once hired and started work, an employer cannot require that an employee take a medical examination or ask questions about a disability unless they are related to the job and necessary for the conduct of business. An employer may conduct voluntary medical examinations that are part of an employee health program.

In compliance with ADA, the results of all medical examinations, as well as statements from a medical provider regarding an employee's health, will be kept confidential and maintained in a separate medical file, and not in the employee's personnel file. An exception to this policy applies to medical information required or gained due to a work-related injury covered by Indiana's workers' compensation laws.

***Drug Abuse and the ADA-*** Anyone who is currently using drugs illegally is not protected by the ADA and may be denied employment or fired based on such use. The ADA does not prevent employers from testing applicants or employees for current illegal drug use.

# EMPLOYMENT

## Background and Reference Checks

To ensure that individuals who join GPS are well qualified and to ensure that GPS maintains a safe and productive work environment, it is our policy to conduct background checks on all applicants who accept an offer of employment, school volunteers and anyone with contact to students. Background checks may include verification of any information on the applicant's resume or application form.

All offers of employment are conditioned on receipt of a background check report that is acceptable to GPS. All background checks are conducted in conformity with the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act. No information shall be sought that violates the Americans with Disabilities Act, or state or federal privacy and antidiscrimination laws. Reports are kept confidential and are only viewed by individuals involved in the hiring process.

If information obtained in a background check would lead GPS to deny employment, a copy of the report will be provided to the applicant, and the applicant will have the opportunity to dispute the report's accuracy. Background checks may include a criminal record check, although a criminal conviction does not automatically bar an applicant from employment.

Additional checks such as a driving record or credit report may be made on applicants for particular job categories if appropriate and job related.

GPS will require a background check for current employees every 5 years in accordance to Indiana State HEA 1079.

## Employee Classification Categories

All employees are designated as either nonexempt or exempt under state and federal wage and hour laws. The following is intended to help employees understand employment classifications and employees' employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period. The right to terminate the employment- at-will relationship at any time is retained by both the employee and Griffith Public Schools (GPS).

**Nonexempt employees** are employees whose work is covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). They are NOT exempt from the law's requirements concerning minimum wage and overtime.

**Exempt employees** are generally managers or professional, administrative or technical staff who ARE exempt from the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the FLSA. Exempt employees hold jobs that meet the standards and criteria established under the FLSA by the US Department of Labor.

GPS has established the following categories for both nonexempt and exempt employees:

**Regular, full time:** Employees who are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work the corporation's full-time schedule of 30 to 40 hours per week. Generally, these employees are eligible for the full benefits package, subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of each benefits program.

- **Regular, part time:** Employees who are not in a temporary status and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours each week. Regular, part-time employees are eligible for some of the benefits offered by the corporation subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of each benefits program.
- **Temporary, full time:** Employees who are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project and who are

temporarily scheduled to work the corporation's full-time schedule for a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status.

- **Temporary, part time:** Employees who are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project and who are temporarily scheduled to work less than the corporation's full-time schedule for a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status.

Temporary workers are not eligible for corporation benefits unless specifically stated otherwise in corporation policy or are deemed eligible according to plan documents.

### **Job Openings/Promotions/Transfers**

Employees may apply to other jobs as vacancies become available and will be considered along with other applicants. At the same time, the corporation may initiate transfers of employees between departments and facilities to meet specified work requirements and reassignment of work requirements.

GPS offers employees promotions to higher-level positions when appropriate. The Administration prefers to promote from within and may first consider current employees with the necessary qualifications and skills to fill vacancies above entry level, unless outside recruitment is in the corporation's best interest.

To be considered, employees must have a satisfactory performance record and have no disciplinary actions. The Administration retains the discretion to make exceptions to the policy.

### **Progressive Discipline**

Every employee has the duty and the responsibility to be aware of and abide by existing rules and policies. Employees also have the responsibility to perform his/her duties to the best of his/her ability and to the standards as set forth in his/her job description or as otherwise established.

GPS supports the use of progressive discipline to address issues such as poor work performance or misconduct. Our progressive discipline policy is designed to provide a corrective action process to improve and prevent a recurrence of undesirable behavior and/or performance issues. Our progressive discipline policy has been designed consistent with our organizational values, HR best practices and employment laws.

Outlined below are the steps of our progressive discipline policy and procedure. GPS reserves the right to combine or skip steps in this process depending on the facts of each situation and the nature of the offense. The level of disciplinary intervention may also vary. Some of the factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling and/or training; the employee's work record; and the impact the conduct and performance issues have on our organization.

The following outlines GPS's progressive discipline process:

- **Verbal warning:** A supervisor verbally counsels an employee about an issue of concern, and a written record of the discussion is placed in the employee's personnel file for future reference.
- **Written warning:** Written warnings are used for behavior or violations that a supervisor considers serious or in situations when a verbal warning has not helped change unacceptable behavior. Written warnings are placed in an employee's personnel file. Employees should recognize the grave nature of the written warning. **(Please note: Certified staff on a teacher's contract may**

**have their Evaluation negatively impacted by a written warning under the CORE Professionalism component. Such a warning or disciplinary action may negatively affect the teacher's evaluation by one total point depending on the severity.)**

- **Suspension:** Suspensions are used for very serious violations of policy or procedure that require a stronger response than a verbal or written warning. A suspension can be from one to five days without pay. A copy of the written notice of suspension will be kept in the employee's personnel file. An employee who is suspended should realize that repeated behavior will result in termination. **(Please note: Certified staff on a teacher's contract may have their Evaluation negatively impacted by a written warning under the CORE Professionalism component. Such a warning or disciplinary action may negatively affect the teacher's evaluation by one total point depending on the severity.)**
- **Performance improvement plan:** Whenever an employee has been involved in a disciplinary situation that has not been readily resolved or when he/she has demonstrated an inability to perform assigned work responsibilities efficiently, the employee may be given a final warning or placed on a performance improvement plan (PIP). PIP status will last for a predetermined amount of time not to exceed 90 days. Within this time period, the employee must demonstrate a willingness and ability to meet and maintain the conduct and/or work requirements as specified by the supervisor and the organization. At the end of the performance improvement period, the performance improvement plan may be closed or, if established goals are not met, dismissal may occur.

Employees have the right to submit a statement whether rebuttal or just stating more information to include with write up. This will be attached to the performance discussion form signed by both parties and included in the personnel file. GPS reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of discipline for any inappropriate conduct, including verbal and written warnings, suspension with or without pay, demotion and discharge.

## **Nepotism, Employment of Relatives and Personal Relationships**

GPS wants to ensure that corporate practices do not create situations such as conflict of interest or favoritism. This extends to practices that involve employee hiring, promotion and transfer. Close relatives, partners, those in a dating relationship or members of the same household are not permitted to be in positions that have a reporting responsibility to each other. Close relatives are defined as husband, wife, domestic partner, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step relatives, cousins and domestic partner relatives.

If employees begin a dating relationship or become relatives, partners or members of the same household and if one party is in a supervisory position, that person is required to inform the administration office of the relationship, and it may result in a transfer for one or both employees. Supervisors are discouraged from dating employees under their direct supervision.

GPS reserves the right to apply this policy to situations where there is a conflict or the potential for conflict because of the relationship between employees, even if there is no direct-reporting relationship or authority involved.

Our Board policy 3120 states "Relatives of staff members may be employed by the Board, provided the staff member being employed is not placed in a position in which s/he would be supervised directly by the relative staff member. All extra-curricular and co-curricular positions are excluded and/or exempt from this policy".

## Separation of Employment

Separation of employment within an organization can occur for several different reasons.

1. **Resignation:** Although we hope your employment with us will be a mutually rewarding experience, we understand that varying circumstances cause employees to voluntarily resign their employment. Resigning employees are encouraged to provide two weeks' notice, preferably in writing, to facilitate a smooth transition out of the organization. Management reserves the right to provide an employee with two weeks' pay in lieu of notice in situations where a job or business needs warrant such action. If an employee provides less notice than requested, the employer may deem the individual to be ineligible for rehire depending on the circumstances regarding the notice given. Employees who are separated due to resignation are ineligible to receive accrued benefits.
2. **Retirement:** Employees who wish to retire are required to notify their principal or supervisor and the administration office in writing at least one (1) month before the planned retirement date. If your handbook or agreement state different terms, please follow those guidelines.
3. **Job abandonment:** Employees who fail to report to work or contact their supervisor for three (3) consecutive workdays shall be considered to have abandoned the job without notice, effective at the end of their normal shift on the third day. The supervisor shall notify the administration office at the expiration of the third workday and initiate the paperwork to terminate the employee. Employees who are separated due to job abandonment are ineligible to receive accrued benefits and are ineligible for rehire.
4. **Termination:** Employees of GPS are employed on an at-will basis, and the corporation retains the right to terminate an employee at any time. For certified staff we will follow the teachers' contract and the Indiana School Boards Association guidelines for terminations.

### Return of Corporation Property

Employees are responsible for items issued to them by the Griffith Public Schools or in their possession or control such as keys, identification badges, manuals, tools, equipment, written materials. All school property must be returned by employees on or before their last day of work. Failure to return some items may result in deductions from the final paycheck. An employee will be required to sign the Wage Deduction Authorization Agreement to deduct the costs of such items from the final paycheck.

Health insurance terminates the last day of the month of employment. Employees will be required to pay their share of the dependent health, vision and dental premiums through the end of the month. Information for Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation (COBRA) continued health coverage will be provided to the employee once employment ends and in accordance with law.

### Rehire

Former employees, who left GPS in good standing and were classified as eligible for rehire, may be considered for reemployment. An application must be submitted to the administration office, and the applicant must meet all minimum qualifications and requirements for the position, including any qualifying exam, when required.

Supervisors must obtain approval from the administration office or designee prior to rehiring a former employee. Rehired employees begin benefits just as any other new employee. Previous tenure will not be considered in calculating longevity, leave accruals or any other benefits.

An applicant or employee who is terminated for violating policy or who resigned in lieu of termination from employment due to a policy violation will be ineligible for rehire.

# WORKPLACE SAFETY

## Drug-Free Workplace

Griffith Public Schools (GPS) has a longstanding commitment to provide a safe and productive work and school environment. Alcohol and drug abuse pose a threat to the health and safety of employees and students, plus the security of our equipment and facilities. For these reasons, GPS is committed to the elimination of drug and/or alcohol use and abuse in the workplace.

This policy outlines the practice and procedure designed to correct instances of identified alcohol and/or drug use in the workplace. This policy applies to all employees and all applicants for employment of GPS. The administration office is responsible for policy administration.

### Employee Assistance and Drug-Free Awareness

Illegal drug use and alcohol misuse have a number of adverse health and safety consequences. Information about those consequences and sources of help for drug/alcohol problems is available from the administration office, whose members have been trained to make referrals and assist employees with drug/alcohol problems.

GPS will assist and support employees who voluntarily seek help for such problems before becoming subject to discipline and/or termination under this or other policies. Such employees may be allowed to use accrued paid time off, placed on leaves of absence, referred to treatment providers and otherwise accommodated as required by law. Such employees may be required to document that they are successfully following prescribed treatment and to take and pass follow-up tests if they hold jobs that are safety sensitive or that require driving.

Employees should report to work fit for duty and free of any adverse effects of illegal drugs or alcohol. This policy does not prohibit employees from the lawful use and possession of prescribed medications. Employees must, however, consult with their medical provider about the medications' effect on their fitness for duty and ability to work safely, and promptly disclose any work restrictions to their supervisor. Employees should not, however, disclose underlying medical conditions or specific medications unless directed to do so by a medical provider.

### Work Rules

The following work rules apply to all employees:

Whenever employees are working, operating any corporation vehicle, present on corporation premises, or conducting related work off-site, they are prohibited from:

1. Using, possessing, buying, selling, manufacturing or dispensing an illegal drug (to include possession of drug paraphernalia).
2. Being under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug as defined in this policy.
3. The presence of any detectable amount of any illegal drug or illegal controlled substance in an employee's body while performing corporation business or while in a corporation facility is prohibited.
4. GPS will not allow any employee to perform their duties while taking prescribed drugs that are adversely affecting the employee's ability to safely and effectively perform their job duties. Employees taking a prescribed medication must carry it in the container labeled by a licensed pharmacist or be prepared to produce it if asked.

**Note: Any illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia will be turned over to an appropriate law enforcement agency and may result in criminal prosecution.**

### **Required Testing**

The corporation retains the right to require tests for the following reasons:

- **Reasonable suspicion:** Employees are subject to testing based on observations by a supervisor of apparent workplace use, possession or impairment. Human Resources must be consulted before sending an employee for reasonable suspicion testing.
- **Post-accident:** Employees are subject to testing when they cause or contribute to accidents that seriously damage a corporation vehicle, machinery, equipment or property and/or result in an injury to themselves or another employee requiring off-site medical attention. In any of these instances, the investigation and subsequent testing must take place within two (2) hours following the accident, if not sooner. In compliance with OSHA regulation (29 CFR § 1904.35(b)(1)(i)) an employee who did not cause or contribute to an accident will not be tested. An exception to this regulation is made if the employee possesses a commercial driver's license (CDL), and in which testing is therefore required by applicable state or federal law.

### **Consequences**

Employees who refuse to cooperate in required tests or who use, possess, buy, sell, manufacture or dispense an illegal drug in violation of this policy will be terminated.

### **Confidentiality**

Information and records relating to positive test results, drug and alcohol dependencies and legitimate medical explanations provided to the medical review officer (MRO) shall be kept confidential to the extent required by law and maintained in secure files separate from normal personnel files.

### **Inspections**

GPS reserves the right to inspect all portions of its premises for drugs, alcohol or other contraband. All employees, contract employees and visitors may be asked to cooperate in inspections of their persons, work areas and property that might conceal a drug, alcohol or other contraband. Employees who possess such contraband or refuse to cooperate in such inspections are subject to appropriate discipline up to and including discharge.

### **Crimes Involving Drugs**

GPS prohibits all employees from manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing or using an illegal drug in or on corporation premises or while conducting corporation business. Employees are also prohibited from misusing legally prescribed or over-the-counter (OTC) drugs. Law enforcement personnel shall be notified, as appropriate, when criminal activity is suspected.

### **Workplace Bullying & Cyber Bullying**

GPS defines bullying as "repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment." Such behavior violates the corporation Code of Ethics, which clearly states that all employees will be treated with dignity and respect.

The purpose of this policy is to communicate to all employees, including supervisors, managers and executives, that the corporation will not tolerate bullying behavior. Employees found in violation of this policy will be disciplined up to and including termination.

Bullying may be intentional or unintentional. However, it must be noted that where an allegation of bullying is made, the intention of the alleged bully is irrelevant and will not be given consideration when meeting out discipline. As in sexual harassment, it is the effect of the behavior upon the individual that is important. GPS considers the following types of behavior examples of bullying:

- **Verbal bullying:** Slandering, ridiculing or maligning a person or his/her family; persistent name calling that is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; using a person as the butt of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks. This includes in person or on social media.
- **Physical bullying:** Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, assault or threat of physical assault; damage to a person's work area or property.
- **Gesture bullying:** Nonverbal threatening gestures or glances that convey threatening messages.
- **Exclusion:** Socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in work-related activities.

### **Violence in the Workplace**

All employees, students, volunteers, vendors and business associates must be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from conduct that may be dangerous to others.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates or coerces another employee, student, volunteer, vendor or business associate will not be tolerated. GPS resources may not be used to threaten, stalk or harass anyone at the workplace or outside the workplace. GPS treats threats coming from an abusive personal relationship as it does other forms of violence.

Indirect or direct threats of violence, incidents of actual violence and suspicious individuals or activities should be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor, security personnel, principal, administration office or superintendent. When reporting a threat or incident of violence, the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible. Employees should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during an incident.

Employees should promptly inform the administration office of any protective or restraining order that they have obtained that lists the workplace as a protected area. Employees are encouraged to report safety concerns regarding intimate partner violence. GPS will not retaliate against employees making good-faith reports. GPS is committed to supporting victims of intimate partner violence by providing referrals to GPS's employee assistance program (EAP) and community resources and providing time off for reasons related to intimate partner violence.

GPS will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of violence or incidents of actual violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making the report will be protected as much as possible. GPS will not retaliate against employees making good-faith reports of violence, threats or suspicious individuals or activities. To maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, GPS may suspend employees suspected of workplace violence or threats of violence, either with or without pay, pending investigation.

Anyone found to be responsible for threats of or actual violence or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

GPS encourages employees to bring their disputes to the attention of their supervisors or administration office before the situation escalates. GPS will not discipline employees for raising such concerns.

## **Safety**

It is the responsibility of each employee to conduct all tasks in a safe and efficient manner complying with all local, state and federal safety and health regulations and program standards, and with any special safety concerns for use in a particular area or with a client.

Although most safety regulations are consistent throughout each department and program, each employee has the responsibility to identify and familiarize her/himself with the emergency plan for his/her

Working area. Each facility shall have posted an emergency plan, detailing procedures in handling emergencies such as fire, weather-related events and medical crises.

It is the responsibility of the employee to complete an Accident and Incident Report for each safety and health infraction that occurs by an employee or that the employee witnesses. Failure to report such an infraction may result in employee disciplinary action, including termination.

Furthermore, the school corporation requires that every person in the organization assumes the responsibility of individual and organizational safety. Failure to follow corporation safety and health guidelines or engaging in conduct that places the employee, client or corporation property at risk can lead to employee disciplinary action and/or termination.

The Health and Safety Committee shall have the responsibility to develop and the authority to implement the safety and health program in the interest of a safer work environment.

## **Smoke-Free Workplace**

It is the policy of Griffith Public Schools (GPS) to prohibit smoking on all corporation premises to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work and school environment for all employees, students and guests. The law defines smoking as the "act of lighting, smoking or carrying a lighted or smoldering cigar, cigarette or pipe of any kind" and electronic smoking devices.

The smoke-free workplace policy applies to:

- All areas of corporation buildings.
- All school owned property.
- All corporation-sponsored off-site conferences and meetings.
- All vehicles owned or leased by the corporation.
- All visitors (customers and vendors) to the corporation premises.
- All contractors, consultants and/or their employees working on the corporation premises.
- All employees, temporary employees, students, and volunteers.

Employees who violate the smoking policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate discharge.

## **School Closings**

Griffith Public School's priority is the safety of students and personnel. GPS' website ([www.griffith.k12.in.us](http://www.griffith.k12.in.us)) contains detailed information of the many factors go into the decision to close or delay the opening of school. Factors that are considered include: conditions of the roads and sidewalks, freezing rain/sleet, snowfall, extreme cold, windchill, reliable heat and power and other issues that may make travel to and from school dangerous.

Once a decision is made to close or delay school, that decision is made available by radio, television, the internet, Schoology, social media, and by phone (via the K12 Swift Notification program).

## WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

### Liability of Staff for Student Welfare

Professional staff members shall maintain a standard of care for the supervision, control, and protection of students commensurate with their assigned duties and responsibilities and are expected to establish and maintain professional staff-student boundaries that are consistent with their legal, professional, and ethical duty of care for students. Please refer to policy 3213/4213 for further details; Copies of all policies may be obtained <http://www.neola.com/griffith-in/>. Each professional staff member:

- Should not leave students unattended.
- Should not leave an unqualified person in charge of students. Student Teacher may not be classified as an unqualified person.
- Should accompany students wherever they are assigned and remain with them until supervision is assumed by another responsible person.
- Should ensure students do not use non-corporation owned and/or maintained equipment or other equipment which may be potentially dangerous.
- Should ensure students do not use facilities or equipment except for the intended purpose.
- Should organize classroom materials and equipment to minimize danger of injury to students and to self.
- Should utilize the curriculum and curriculum tools approved and purchased by the district. No teacher is to solely teach from platforms, technology, and/or books the district is unfamiliar with or has not approved.
- Should respond to parental concerns within 48 business hours.
- Should post objectives, standards, and weekly information on Schoology every week, including but not limited to homework, grades, policies, supplies, and what students are learning.
- Should post classroom teacher introductions, rules, expectations, and basic curriculum information on Schoology at the start of each semester.
- Should have a variety of grades within their gradebook, including quizzes, tests, and a variety of student work.
- Should update and synch grades and assignments weekly between Schoology and PowerSchool.
- Should adhere to assessment protocols, procedures and timelines, ex. NWEA, CogAT, ILEARN, etc.
- Should provide written lesson plans for the substitute if a teacher is absent and, after the third day due to an illness, a doctor's note is expected.
- Should behave in a polite, professional manner while at work, including school activities and professional development.
- Should maintain a professional barrier between themselves and the students.
- Should keep the classroom door open when talking individually with students in the hallway.
- Follow all safety protocols and drills.
- Should limit discussion of their personal lives with students unless appropriate.
- Should not socialize with students on social media of any kind. Please note: It is understood that some staff members have young family members and close familial friends inside the community.

- Should utilize Schoology, school email, and/or PowerSchool when communicating with students and parents. No employee is to communicate with students individually via telephone calls, texts, or any other social media platform.
- May attempt to assist a student with questions regarding a personal problem related to sexual behaviors, substance abuse, mental or physical health and/or family relationships, etc., by facilitating contact with certified, licensed individuals in the corporation who specialize in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of the student's stated problem. However, under no circumstances should a staff member attempt, unless properly licensed and authorized to do so, to counsel, assess, diagnose, or treat the student's problem or behavior. This is in addition to the reporting mandates from the Department of Education.

**NOTE: Sexual conduct/relationships with students by Corporation employee or any other adult member of the School Corporation community is prohibited, and any teacher, administrator, coach or other school authority, or staff member who engages in certain sexual conduct with a student may be disciplined up to and including termination and may also be guilty of the criminal charge of "sexual battery" as set forth in Indiana Code 35-42-4-8. In the case of a child under fourteen (14) years of age, the person may also be guilty of "child molesting" under Indiana Code 35-42-4-3. In the case of a child between the ages of fourteen (14) and sixteen (16), the person may also be guilty of "sexual misconduct with a minor" under Indiana Code 35-42-4-9. The issue of consent is irrelevant regarding the latter two (2) criminal charges. Any employee accused of sexual relations with a student may be placed on leave with pay until school administrative proceedings are completed. Proven sexual relationships with a student regardless of the age of the student will initiate the termination process for the employee.**

### **Nursing Professionals**

All nursing staff employees have an expectation to render aid to our students, pre-k through high school; therefore, if there is a need in another building or an emergency, a nursing staff employee may be directed to move to that location within the district.

### **Confidentiality**

Our students and parents with whom we interact entrust the school corporation with essential information. It is our policy that all information considered confidential will not be disclosed to external parties or to employees without a "need to know." If an employee questions whether certain information is considered confidential, he/she should first check with his/her immediate supervisor.

This policy is intended to always alert employees to the need for discretion and is not intended to inhibit normal business communications.

**All inquiries from the media must be referred to the Superintendent.**

### **Outside Employment**

Employees are permitted to engage in outside work or to hold other jobs, subject to certain restrictions as outlined below.

Activities and conduct away from the job must not compete with, conflict with, or compromise the corporation interests or adversely affect job performance and the ability to fulfill all job responsibilities. Employees are prohibited from performing any services for customers on Griffith Public Schools work time. This prohibition also extends to the unauthorized use of any corporation tools or equipment and the

unauthorized use or application of any confidential information. In addition, employees are not to solicit or conduct any outside business during paid working time.

Employees are cautioned to carefully consider the demands that additional work activity will create before accepting outside employment. Outside employment will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early or refusal to work scheduled hours. If unable to work when notified at the last minute, this does not equal refusal to work. If GPS determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment.

Employees who have accepted outside employment may not use paid sick, vacation and/or personal business leave to work on the outside job. Fraudulent use of sick, vacation and/or personal business leave will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Vacation and holidays must be scheduled with one's supervisor in advance. Sick leave may be used in the case of emergency or sudden illness without prior scheduling. Patterns of absenteeism or tardiness may result in discipline even if the employee has not yet exhausted available paid time off. Absences due to illnesses or injuries that qualify under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will not be counted against an employee's attendance record. Medical documentation within the guidelines of the FMLA may be required in these instances.

Not reporting to work and not calling to report the absence is a no-call/no-show and is a serious matter. The first instance of a no call/no show will result in a final written warning. The second separate offense may result in termination of employment with no additional disciplinary steps. A no call/no show lasting three days may be considered job abandonment and may be deemed an employee's voluntary resignation of employment.

Timely and regular attendance is a performance expectation of all Griffith employees. Consequently, those employees who have exhibited unsatisfactory attendance which resulted in disciplinary action (written or final) during the course of the year may have the behavior documented in their evaluation. For Professional staff, poor attendance and poor punctuality may affect their Core Professionalism domain, resulting in a reduction of the overall evaluation rating.

Habitually late reporting (less than 2 hours before your start time) of an impending absence could result in progressive discipline that could include recommendation for termination. Extenuating circumstances (i.e., sick, weather, etc.) will be evaluated on an individual basis.

### ***Absence Reporting Procedures for Certified Staff***

Griffith Public Schools utilizes Frontline, which was formerly Aesop, system for managing teacher absences and placing substitutes into teaching positions. All substitute teachers must have a Frontline account to be considered for a teaching placement. Substitutes and Griffith staff members can access <https://www.frontlineeducation.com/signin/>. All certified job assignments must be made through the Frontline system.

#### **Reporting Absences- Faculty**

As soon as an employee knows they will be absent, they should log into Frontline, report their absence, and request a substitute. Remember, it is important that absences be entered in Frontline at least two (2) hours before the scheduled start time. If an employee is unable to report an absence in Frontline due to

missing the morning cut-off time, they will need to contact their school secretary or principal directly to report the absence, providing a reason for the late call-in."

1 <sup>st</sup> Occurrence within a 6-month period	Verbal Warning – Documented
2 <sup>nd</sup> Occurrence within a 6-month period	Written Warning
3 <sup>rd</sup> Occurrence within a 6-month period	Put on an improvement plan
4 <sup>th</sup> Occurrence within a 6-month period	1 Day Suspension
5 <sup>th</sup> Occurrence within a 6-month period	Possible Termination

If an employee has received prior approval for a personal or professional day, that absence should be logged into Frontline immediately – even months in advance as soon as the date is known.

When entering an absence, the employee should wait until they receive a confirmation number before they terminate the phone call or close their internet browser window. The transaction is not complete until the employee receives a confirmation number.

**Personal Business** – If five (5) consecutive days are requested, the teacher must notify the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee, in writing, a minimum of two weeks prior to the time off. These days are discouraged from being used to extend a school vacation or holiday.

**Bereavement** – In the event an employee needs to take bereavement time, the relationship of the deceased must be included in the “notes to administrator” section. Bereavement days can only be taken for those relationships indicated in the bargaining agreement.

### For Substitutes

Individuals interested in covering an absence must be an approved substitute for the Griffith Public School system. To become approved, you must submit the appropriate paperwork to the District Superintendent’s office. Please email Elaine Jelenski at [ejelenski@griffith.k12.in.us](mailto:ejelenski@griffith.k12.in.us) or call 219-924-4250 for details.

### Secretary’s Responsibilities Regarding Staff Absences

For Griffith employees whose absence was not filled in Frontline, please manually enter in Frontline the substitute who filled this position.

## Non-Certified Absence Reporting

All non-certified staff members should enter their absence in Frontline and report their absence to their direct supervisor as soon as possible, no later than 6:30 AM the day of the absences. The individual’s department policy regarding timeliness of calling off, planned vacation or personal time must be followed. A progressive discipline process for excessive call offs and untimely reporting will be followed.

## Attire and Grooming

The School Board believes that staff members set an example in dress and grooming for students to follow. A staff member who understands these guidelines and adheres to it enlarges the importance of his/her task, presents an image of dignity, and encourages respect for authority. These factors act in a positive manner towards the maintenance of discipline.

The Board retains the authority to specify the following dress and grooming guidelines for staff that will prevent such matters from having an adverse impact on the educational process.

All staff members shall be physically clean, neat, and well groomed.

1. Business Casual environment unless notified by building administrator of dress down days. Business casual is defined as: less formal attire than business professional but appropriate to the job functions being performed and the professional image of Griffith Public Schools.
2. Clothing/footwear considered acceptable includes but is not limited to the judgment and common sense when selecting clothing appropriate for the business casual dress code.

While employees are expected to use good judgement, the following are general guidelines of items that are acceptable.

- Khaki pants or any other type of pants generally viewed as business casual
- Golf or polo shirts
- Dresses or jumpers
- Denim shirts, Griffith logo shirts and School Spiritwear shirts
- Dresses/skirts no shorter than 3 inches above the knee
- Leggings with a long top or sweater that covers the bottom
- Teachers are permitted to wear dark denim, grey, or black jeans with a professional top. Jeans are not to be excessively tight or baggy. Jeans are always at the principal's discretion.

Clothing/footwear considered inappropriate and unacceptable include:

- Items that are worn, ripped, frayed, torn or unkempt
- Tight fitting pants or shirts
- Items containing obscene, profane, discriminatory, provocative or inflammatory words or pictures
- Items advertising alcoholic beverages, drugs, drug paraphernalia or tobacco products
- Sweatshirts/sweatpants/leggings with a short top that does not cover the bottom/shorts
- See-through garments, halter tops, bare midriff/back tops, tank tops/muscle shirts, low-cut blouses and pants
- Pool/beach attire including beach sandals and thongs/flip flops
- Worn out sneakers

Employees should err on the side of caution; if an item is questionable, another item of clothing should be selected. Other departments, where a uniform is required, or a specific dress code is defined, are exempt from this policy, but may choose to participate if appropriate based on job duties. If a conflict arises between a supervisor and employee regarding relaxed dress attire that cannot be resolved within the department or with that principal, the director of human resources should be consulted for resolution of the conflict.

1. Dress in a manner consistent with their professional responsibilities, this may include the wearing of required uniforms.
2. No knit hats/gloves worn during work-day (unless designated, etc.).
3. Dress in a manner that communicates to students a pride in personal appearance.
4. Be groomed in such a way that their hair style or dress does not disrupt the educational process nor cause a health or safety hazard.

Employees who wear attire that is deemed inappropriate in this workplace will be addressed on an individual basis rather than subjecting all employees to a more stringent dress code for appropriate

business attire. In a severe case, the employee may be sent home to change clothes. Continued disregard of this policy may be cause for disciplinary action, which may result in termination.

## **Responsible Use Policy for Electronic Resources**

All Griffith Public Schools (GPS) staff are responsible for their actions and activities involving the school district's computers, electronic devices, network and Internet services, and for their computer files, passwords and accounts. These rules provide general guidance concerning the use of school computers and other electronic devices and provide examples of prohibited uses. The rules and guidelines detail responsible use of electronic information resources under which staff and all members of the GPS community, herein referred to as "users," will be held accountable. The rules do not attempt to describe every possible prohibited activity. School staff who have questions about whether a particular activity is prohibited are encouraged to contact a building administrator. These rules apply to all school computers, all school-provided electronic devices wherever used, all uses of school servers, and Internet access and networks regardless of how they are accessed.

### **Responsible Use**

1. School computers, network and Internet services, and electronic resources are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with GPS's educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals.
2. Users must comply with all Board policies, the student handbook, and school rules and expectations concerning conduct and communications when using school computers or school-issued electronic resources, whether on or off school property.

### **Prohibited Uses:**

Unacceptable uses of school electronic resources include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Accessing or Communicating Inappropriate Materials – Users may not access, submit, post, publish, forward, download, scan or display defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, sexually suggestive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, bullying and/or illegal materials or messages.
2. Illegal Activities – Users may not use the school district's computers, electronic devices, networks, or Internet services for any illegal activity or in violation of any Board policy/procedure or school rules. GPS and its employees and agents assume no responsibility for illegal activities of students while using school computers or school-issued electronic resources.
3. Violating Copyrights or Software Licenses – Downloading, copying, duplicating and distributing software, music, sound files, movies, images or other copyrighted materials without the specific written permission of the copyright owner is prohibited, except when the use falls within the Fair Use Doctrine of the United States Copyright Law (Title 17, USC) and content is cited appropriately.
4. Plagiarism – Users may not represent as their own work any materials obtained on the Internet (such as term papers, articles, music, etc.). When using other sources, credit must be given to the copyright holder.
5. Use for Non-School-Related Purposes - School district's computers, electronic devices, networks and Internet services are provided for purposes related to educational programs, school operations, and performance of job responsibilities. Incidental personal use of school devices is permitted as long as such use: 1) does not interfere with the user's responsibilities and performance; 2) does not interfere with system operations or other system users; and 3) does not violate this policy and the accompanying rules, or any other Board policy, procedure or school rules. "Incidental personal use" is defined as use by an individual for occasional personal communications.

6. Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access – Users may not share passwords; use other users' passwords; access or use other users' accounts; or attempt to circumvent network security systems.
7. Malicious Use/Vandalism – Users may not engage in any malicious use, disruption or harm to the school district's computers, electronic devices, network and Internet services, including but not limited to hacking activities and creation/uploading of computer viruses.
8. Avoiding School Filters – Users may not attempt to or use any software, utilities or other means to access Internet sites or content blocked by the school filters.
9. Unauthorized Access to Blogs/Social Networking Sites, Etc. – Users may not access blogs, social networking sites, etc. prohibited by building administration or the GPS Technology Department. Teachers and students using authorized social networking sites for educational projects or activities shall follow the age requirements and legal requirements that govern the use of social networking sites in addition to the guidelines established in this policy.
10. Wasting System Resources - Users shall not use the network in such a way that would waste system resources or disrupt the use of the network by others. This includes but is not limited to excessive printing, file storage, online games, and video/audio streaming not directly related to educational projects, as determined by the supervising instructor or building administrator.
11. Unauthorized Equipment - Users may not attach unauthorized equipment, including personal laptops, tablets, and handheld devices, to the district's secured network without permission from the GPS Technology Department.

### **Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages**

1. In the event an electronic device is lost, stolen or damaged, the individual staff member will be responsible for the cost of the repair and/or cost of replacement as determined by school administrators. Multiple instances of damage may result in the loss of device or other disciplinary actions.
2. Purposeful, malicious damage or vandalism as determined by school administrators will be subject to the full replacement value of said device.
3. In addition, all users may be responsible for compensating the school district for any losses, costs or damages incurred for violations of Board policies/procedures and school rules, including the cost of investigating such violations. The school district assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or costs incurred by users while using school district computers, devices, or the school network.

### **Student Security**

1. Users may not reveal personal information, including a home address and phone number, about themselves or another individual on any unsecured electronic medium, such as web sites, blogs, podcasts, videos, wikis, or social networking sites. If users encounter dangerous or inappropriate information or messages, they shall notify the school administration immediately.
2. Staff may post student pictures on district/ school/classroom "public" websites if the student's name or other identifying information is not included. Students' grades, test results, or identifying pictures may be stored only on district-approved secure sites that require a username and password for authorized individuals to access.
3. All Griffith Community Schools are closed campuses. GPS retains all rights concerning any recording and/or publishing of any student's or staff member's work(s) or image(s). Students must obtain permission from a GPS staff member to publish a photograph or video of any school-related activity. It is best practice and common courtesy to ask permission before recording an individual or groups.
4. The use of cameras in any type of electronic device is strictly prohibited in locker rooms and restrooms.
5. GPS staff must maintain the confidentiality of student data in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

6. Students may be issued a school email address to improve student communication and collaboration on school projects. Email shall be used only for educational purposes that directly relates to a school project or assignment.

### **Technology Privacy**

All computers, telephone systems, voice mail systems, electronic mail, and electronic communication systems are the district's property. The district retains the right to access and review all electronic and voice mail, computer files, databases, and any other electronic transmissions contained in or used in conjunction with district's computer system, telephone system, electronic mail system, and voice mail system. Students and staff should have no expectation that any information contained on such systems is confidential or private.

### **System Security**

Any user who identifies a security problem must notify his/her teacher or building administrator immediately. The user shall not demonstrate the problem to others or access unauthorized material. Staff shall immediately report any potential security breaches to the GPS Technology Department.

### **Personal Devices**

All users are prohibited from using privately-owned electronic devices in school unless explicitly authorized by the teacher, building Principal or GPS district administration.

#### **Additional Rules for Laptops, iPads, or other Electronic Devices Issued to Staff**

1. Electronic devices loaned or leased to students or staff shall be used only for educational purposes that directly relate to a school project or assignment, unless otherwise explicitly authorized by building administration.
2. Users are responsible for the proper care of electronic devices at all times, whether on or off school property, including costs associated with repairing or replacing the device.
3. Users must report a lost or stolen device to the building administration immediately. If a device is stolen, a report also should be made immediately with the school safety officer and/or local police.
4. The policy and rules apply to the use of the electronic device at any time or place, on or off school property.
5. The device configuration shall not be altered in any way by users. No software applications shall be installed, removed, or altered on the device unless permission is explicitly given by the building administrator or Director of Technology.
6. The device is to be used only by the student or staff member to whom it is issued. The person to whom the device is issued will be responsible for any activity or action performed on the device.
7. The device must be returned in acceptable working order by the last day of each school year, upon withdrawal or exit date from the school district, and whenever requested by school staff.

### **Terms of Use**

GPS reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges and/or take other disciplinary action, including suspensions or expulsion from school, for violations of this policy. Additionally, all handbook regulations apply to the use of the GPS network, Internet, and electronic resources.

Disclaimer – GPS, its employees and agents, make no warranties of any kind, neither expressed nor implied, concerning the network, Internet access, and electronic resources it is providing. Furthermore, GPS is not responsible for:

1. The accuracy, nature, quality, or privacy of information stored on local servers or devices or information gathered through Internet access.
2. Any damages suffered by a user (whether the cause is accidental or not) including but not limited to, loss of data, delays or interruptions in service, and the infection of viruses or other malware on personal computers or other devices.
3. Unauthorized financial obligations resulting from the use of GPS electronic resources.

### **Social Media—Acceptable Use**

Employees may not post confidential, sensitive or proprietary or non-public financial information about the corporation, clients, employees or applicants.

Employees may not post obscenities, slurs or personal attacks that can damage the reputation of the corporation, clients, employees or applicants.

When posting on social media sites, employees must use the following disclaimer when discussing job-related matters.

***“The opinions expressed on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of Griffith Public Schools.”***

GPS may monitor content on the Internet. Policy violations may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

### **Solicitations, Distributions and Posting of Materials**

GPS prohibits the solicitation, distribution and posting of materials on or at corporation property by any employee or nonemployee, except as may be permitted by this policy. The sole exceptions to this policy are charitable and community activities supported by GPS and school-sponsored programs.

Provisions:

- Nonemployees may not solicit employees or distribute literature of any kind on corporation premises at any time.
- Employees may only admit nonemployees to work areas with management approval or as part of a school-sponsored program. These visits should not disrupt workflow. An employee must accompany the nonemployee at all times. Former employees are not permitted onto corporation property except for official corporation business.
- Employees may not solicit other employees during work times, except in connection with a corporation-approved or sponsored event.
- Employees may not distribute literature of any kind during work times or in any work area at any time, except in connection with a corporation-sponsored event.
- The posting of materials or electronic announcements are permitted with approval from administration office.
- Violations of this policy should be reported to administration office.

### **Employee Personnel Files**

Employee files are maintained by the administration office and are considered confidential. Principals and supervisors may only have access to personnel file information on a need-to-know basis.

A principal or supervisor must not maintain original documents or separate employee files. All paperwork related to an employee's employment must be sent to the administration office for security and confidentiality compliance.

A principal or supervisor considering the hire of a former employee or transfer of a current employee may be granted access to the file, or limited parts of it, in accordance with antidiscrimination laws.

Personnel file access by current employees and former employees upon request will generally be permitted within three days of the request unless otherwise required under state law. Personnel files are to be reviewed in the administration office. Personnel files may not be taken outside the office.

Representatives of government or law enforcement agencies, in the course of their duties, may be allowed access to file information.

## Evaluations

Evaluations will take place for **certified staff** following the below guidelines.

The following guidelines meet all the components outlined in Indiana Code 20-28-11.5-4 Educator Evaluation Plan:

- 1) All teachers shall receive one summative performance evaluation every year that includes performance evaluations reported through the Griffith Teachers Effectiveness Rubric which requires classroom observations.
  - a) Observation requirements
    - i) A minimum of 1 observation must be completed either in the first semester of the school year or within the first three months of a teacher's start date.
    - ii) All required observations must be completed one month before the last student day of school. Additional observations, those outside the required observations, may be completed during the last month.
    - iii) Additional observations may be conducted by trained employees who are outside of the collective bargaining unit.
    - iv) Teachers will be provided observation documentation notes not later than seven (7) school days after the observation is conducted. The observation documentation notes should be signed by the teacher to verify receipt, not agreement, of the notes. Both parties should receive a signed copy of the notes. Either party has 5 days after receipt of observation documentation to establish a meeting between both parties.
    - v) Observations may be short or long in length.
    - vi) A Post Observation Notes Form that explains background information pertaining to the observed lesson may be provided by the teacher or requested by the observer.
  - b) The number of observations will vary by category of teacher:
    - i) Category 1 - First and second year at Griffith teachers. These teachers will receive a minimum of 3 short observations and 2 long observations. One long observation will be conducted each semester. Teachers who start after the beginning of the school year will have the number of observations pro-rated based on their start date. For example, a mid-year hire would receive 1 long observation and 2 short observations.
    - ii) Category 2 - Teachers who have been teaching at least 2 years in Griffith and whose prior year rating was either effective or highly effective. These teachers will receive a minimum of 2 short observations and 1 long observation.
    - iii) Category 3 - Any teacher who had been previously rated as "improvement necessary" or "ineffective". These teachers will receive a minimum of 3 short observations and 2 long

- observations. One long observation will be conducted each semester. These teachers will also be placed on an improvement plan.
- c) The summative performance evaluation must be completed by a building administrator or the direct supervisor.
    - i) The building administrator will meet with the certificated employee to share and discuss the evaluation, if requested by the certified employee to do so.
    - ii) A copy of the completed summative performance evaluation, including any documentation related to the summative performance evaluation, must be provided to a certificated employee not later than seven (7) school days after the summative performance evaluation meeting is conducted.
    - iii) Summative performance evaluation meetings will be conducted in the spring to include a review of all documentation and a final score on the Griffith Teacher Effectiveness Rubric.
    - iv) Final summative evaluation scores will be calculated once all scores are made available, including the school accountability score released by the state. The final summative evaluation score will be delivered to the teacher on the Final Summative Evaluation Form. A meeting is not mandatory but may be requested by either party.
- 2) The teacher's final summative evaluation score which must include performance evaluations and objective measures of student achievement and growth shall be derived from the following:
- a) 15% of their score must be derived from objective measures of student achievement and growth that are obtained from the school's state accountability score (i.e. State assigned school letter grade). For teachers who work in multiple schools, they will receive the score of their primary school (the school where they spend most of their day). For a teacher whose time is split equally between buildings, that teacher shall receive the score from the higher performing school.
  - b) 85% of a teacher's rating must be derived from the Griffith Teacher Effectiveness Rubric
    - i) The Griffith Teacher Effectiveness Rubric contains 3 weighted domains. The following outlines the weight of each domain.
      - Domain 1: Purposeful Planning: 10%
      - Domain 2: Effective Instruction: 75%
      - Domain 3: Teacher Development and Communication: 15%

**Special Note: Domain 4 regards a teacher's core professionalism and may affect a teacher's overall score with a deduction of total points if professional expectations are not adhered to.**
    - ii) The Griffith Teacher Effectiveness Rubric contains indicators within each domain. The indicators are scored in the following rating categories:
      - (A) Highly effective.
      - (B) Effective.
      - (C) Improvement necessary.
      - (D) Ineffective.
- 3) The following guideline pertains to teachers in need of improvement and/or for teachers who receive a rating of "Improvement necessary" or "Ineffective".
- a) The following determines a teacher as one "in need of improvement":
    - i) Observations, review of documentation, dialogue with stakeholders, etc. that reveal a pattern of unacceptable performance.
  - b) Once the evaluator determines that a teacher is "in need of improvement", then the following will occur: (refer to 3.d)
  - c) The following circumstances may determine a teacher as one who receives a rating of "Improvement necessary" or "Ineffective".
    - i) Once the summative performance evaluation meeting is held with the teacher in spring to review the Teacher Effectiveness Rubric and that teacher rates a final score as "improvement necessary" or "ineffective".
    - ii) Once a final summative evaluation score for a teacher rate as "improvement necessary" or "ineffective".

- d) For teachers in need of improvement and/or for teachers who receive a rating of “Improvement necessary” or “Ineffective”, evaluators will outline an improvement plan for that teacher.
    - i) The improvement plan must state the specific indicators where improvement is necessary.
    - ii) The improvement plan must contain a time frame for which improvement is expected. The evaluator and the certificated employee shall develop a remediation plan of not more than ninety (90) school days in length to correct the deficiencies noted in the certificated employee's evaluation.
    - iii) The improvement plan must require the use of the certificated employee's license renewal credits in professional development activities intended to help the certificated employee achieve an effective rating on the next performance evaluation.
    - iv) Once the improvement plan is initiated, a follow-up short or long observation will be conducted by the evaluator.
  - e) A teacher who receives a rating of ineffective may file a request for a private conference with the superintendent or the superintendent's designee not later than five (5) school days after receiving notice that the teacher received a rating of ineffective. The teacher is entitled to a private conference with the superintendent or superintendent's designee and will receive documentation of the meeting followed up in writing not later than five (5) school days.  
 \*If a timeframe is not met by an observer or administrator, the teacher has the right to invalidate any documentation. If circumstances occur that may not permit the observer or administrator to meet the deadline, an agreement between the observer/administrator and teacher may be reached and documented in writing.
- 4) The following documentation will be available for staff:
- a) Documentation:
    - i) Griffith Teacher Evaluation and Development Guidelines (this document).
    - ii) Griffith Teacher Evaluation Rubric
    - iii) Classroom Observation Form
    - iv) Post Observation Notes Form
    - v) Final Summative Performance Evaluation Score Form
- 5) Miscellaneous situations
- a) Student teachers.
    - i) All student teachers should be observed a minimum of two times during their student-teaching experience.
    - ii) One observation should be conducted by the supervising teacher and another by a building administrator.
    - iii) These observations along with a summative performance evaluation form should be completed and placed in the teacher's personnel file to be forwarded to any potential employers.
  - b) Temporary teachers.
    - i) All temporary teachers should be observed a minimum of one time during their teaching experience.
    - ii) One observation should be conducted by a building administrator.
    - iii) All observations along with a summative performance evaluation form should be completed and placed in the teacher's personnel file to be forwarded to any potential employers.
- 6) A teacher evaluation committee shall be established to review the current teacher evaluation plan in order to make any necessary adjustments and/or clarifications. This committee will meet at minimum one time per year.

For **Classified employees**, performance reviews are conducted, at the minimum, on an annual cycle. For new employees, they will receive one before their probationary time ends and again on at least an annual cycle. The probationary time limit can be found in your position's separate handbook. Employees will receive a performance review by the end of May of each year. The performance review will be discussed, and both the employee and manager will sign the form to ensure that all strengths, areas for improvement

and job goals for the next review period have been clearly communicated. Performance evaluation forms will be retained in the employee's personnel file.

Merit increases are based on corporation performance review and financials and are not guaranteed. A performance review does not always result in an automatic salary increase. The employee's overall performance and salary level relative to his/her position responsibilities are evaluated to determine if a salary increase would be warranted. The employee must have worked 120 days within the calendar year to receive a salary increase.

Budget allocations for merit increases are planned for and allocated before the start of each school year. The annual salary increase is designed to assist in planning and allocating merit and promotional increases that reward individual performance.

Salary adjustments are occasionally requested or warranted at times other than the employee's scheduled annual salary reviews. Out-of-cycle salary increases must be preapproved by the administration office.

Primary Evaluations occur departmentally and follow the chain of command. Secondary evaluators may work with the primary evaluator. An example would be the secretarial staff. Although the CFO is the primary evaluator, a secondary evaluator would usually be the building principal and/or assistant principals. Please note: The Superintendent and/or designee can evaluate all staff.

### **Personnel Data Changes**

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify the Griffith Public Schools office of any changes in personnel data, including spouse and dependent information. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, dependent or marital status, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishments, and other such information should be accurate and current at all times.

## **COMPENSATION**

### **Payment of Wages**

Paydays are usually biweekly on every other Friday. It is the corporation's policy that employee paychecks will be paid only through direct deposit of funds to either a savings or checking account at the financial institution of their choice.

If the normal payday falls on a bank-recognized holiday, paychecks will be distributed one workday before the aforementioned schedule.

If an employee's marital status changes or the number of exemptions previously claimed increases or decreases, a new Form W-4 must be submitted to the payroll department.

No salary advances will be made.

### **Extra-Curriculars**

Full-time employees who receive a paycheck over 26 pays, clubs and/or sponsorships will be paid throughout the contract.

All coaches/sports will be paid over (2) pays: one at the midway point and one at the end of season. The payroll schedule for extra-curricular pay is as follows:

**Fall Sports** - Last pay in September & Last pay in November.

**Winter Sports** - Last pay in December & Last pay in February

**Spring Sports** - Last pay in March & Last pay in May

For those employees who are sponsors of an after-school club that runs all year and are not contracted employees, the Mid and End Season pay schedule will be: Last pay in December & Last pay in May.

## Time Reporting

We utilize electronic systems to record time worked for payroll purposes for classified employees. Each non-administrative hourly-paid employee is required to clock IN at the start of the shift and clock OUT at the end of the scheduled workday. Hourly paid employees with an unpaid 30-minute lunch period are to clock OUT and IN for lunch.

Employees should not clock in more than seven (7) minutes before their assigned starting time or seven (7) minutes after their assigned quitting time without authorization from their supervisor. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action. Employees are expected to clock in during the seven (7) minutes immediately before their assigned starting time and be at their work area ready to begin working at the assigned starting time.

It is expected that employees will respect the time limits of their break, lunch, or dinner periods, and refrain from taking unauthorized absences from their work area.

Employees will not clock another Employee IN or OUT under any circumstances. In the event a mistake is made notify your supervisor immediately. It is very important that the time records are accurate.

FLSA allows an employer to round the number of minutes worked and GPS applies the 15-minute rule. If an employee clocks in or out between 1-7 minutes before or after the scheduled time, the time will be rounded down. If an employee clocks in or out between 8-15 minutes before or after the scheduled time, the time will be rounded up. A work hour is any hour of the day that is worked and should be recorded to the nearest quarter of an hour.

:53 to :07 equals :00    :08 to :22 equals :15    :23 to :37 equals :30    :38 to :52 equals :45

A written request to the supervisor must be submitted for approval in advance when working outside the parameters of the scheduled shift.

Under certain conditions (such as trainings at an off-site location, extracurricular events, etc.) when an employee cannot "clock in" at their worksite, the employee should report time worked to their supervisor in an email so their time worked can be manually entered into the system.

The workday is defined as the 24-hour period starting at 12:00 a.m. and ending at 11:59 p.m. The workweek covers seven consecutive days beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday. The usual workweek period is 37.5/40 hours.

Employees will clock in and out in Frontline Time and Attendance system on the computers located inside the school building. No one is to clock in or out on a mobile device without prior written authorization by

the CFO. Each week the employee's supervisor will review and approve employee hours in the electronic system. If an error is made the employee will need to submit an email to their supervisor who upon confirmation will forward to Payroll.

Clocking in late for work or returning from lunch is not considered an error unless work was being performed that delayed such clock in. Time worked is all time spent on the job performing assigned duties. All absences from work schedules should be appropriately recorded with the proper forms and documentation presented to the school's designated employees attendance coordinator.

Any misreporting of time worked, or abuse of GPS policies may be considered "time theft" and are grounds for disciplinary actions including termination. Supervisors are responsible for verification of all hours reported by the employee and should report any discrepancies to the CFO and Director of HR for further investigation.

Supervisors of employees that clock in and out may also become responsible for that time, once the time is approved for payroll.

### **Meal/Rest Periods**

The scheduling of meal periods at GPS is set by the employee's immediate supervisor with the goal of providing the least possible disruption to corporation operations.

### **Mandatory Meal Period**

Employee meal periods are important to corporation productivity and employee health. Employees who work at least 6 consecutive hours will be provided a meal break not to exceed 30 minutes. The meal period will not be included in the total hours of work per day and is not compensable unless the employee is required by a supervisor to perform work. Nonexempt employees are to be completely relieved of all job duties while on meal break.

### **Rest Breaks**

Nonexempt employees are permitted a 15-minute rest break for each four hours of work. Nonexempt employees on rest breaks are not required to clock in and clock out because this time is considered "time worked" and is compensable.

### **Impermissible Use of Meal Period and/or Rest Breaks**

Neither the lunch period nor the rest break(s) may be used to account for an employee's late arrival or early departure or to cover time off for other purposes. For example, rest breaks may not be accumulated to extend a meal period, and rest breaks may not be combined to allow one half-hour long break.

### **Overtime Pay (Non-Exempt Employees)**

The Corporation does not allow overtime without written authorization by the supervisor.

Actual hours worked must be more than forty (40) hours in a week to be considered overtime. It will be calculated and compensated at 1.5 hours for every hour over the forty (40) hours worked.

Paid leave, such as personal, sick or vacation pay, does not apply toward work time. Supervisors are required to obtain approval prior to the use of overtime.

Employees who anticipate the need for overtime to complete the week's work must notify the supervisor in advance and obtain approval before working hours that extend beyond their normal schedule.

### **Employee Travel and Reimbursement**

Employees will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with approved travel on behalf of the corporation. Meals are not reimbursed for a one (1) day conference.

Travelers seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid the appearance of impropriety. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in the travel policies, the most conservative course of action should be adopted.

Travel for staff must be authorized in advance. Travelers should verify that planned travel is eligible for reimbursement before making travel arrangements. Upon completion of the trip, and within 30 days, the traveler must submit a Travel Reimbursement Form and supporting documentation to obtain reimbursement of expenses. For more details, refer to the corporation policy for detailed travel policies, procedures and authorization and reimbursement forms.

Exempt employees will be paid their regular salary for weeks in which they travel. Nonexempt employees will be paid for travel time in accordance with federal and state wage payment laws.

## **TIME OFF/LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

### **Holiday Pay**

Please refer to your position's agreement as to the Holiday's paid and observed and how much vacation/personal business/sick time allowed.

**All classified employees must be present the workday before and the workday after a paid holiday in order to qualify for holiday pay. The use of sick time, unapproved personal time or non-paid days will disqualify the employee from receiving payment for the holiday, unless the employee is on an approved FMLA leave or a doctor's note is provided to the administration office.**

### **Reasonable Assurance**

GPS would like to provide classified employees reasonable assurance that they will be re- employed after the fall, winter, spring and summer breaks of the 2023-2024 school year. Please be aware that this is not a contract of employment.

### **Vacation**

Employees should refer to the conditions of employment for their respective positions to determine applicable vacation days. Vacation can only be used after it has been granted. Vacation leave will not be approved during an unpaid leave of absence. Employees are required to take vacation in increments of 1/2 day or a full day. For employees working in a school building, vacation days should be scheduled when the school is not in session. All vacation days for GPS employees are expected to be utilized by December 31st of each year, unless otherwise specified in their position's agreement.

Administrators, who plan vacations during the school year, are encouraged to take vacation time when students are not in the building; therefore, all vacations must be submitted to the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee two weeks prior to requested time off.

To schedule vacation time, employees should submit a completed leave form to the supervisor at least two weeks before the requested leave. Employees must ensure that they have enough leave time available to cover the dates requested. The supervisor should return the leave request to the employee within three business days of the date it is submitted indicating that the request has been approved or denied. If the request for vacation leave is denied, the supervisor should provide an appropriate reason on the form returned to the employee.

Vacation will be paid at the employee's base rate at the time the leave is taken. Vacation pay is not included in overtime calculation and does not include any special forms of compensation such as incentives, commissions, bonuses or shift differentials. If a holiday falls during the employee's vacation, the day will be charged to holiday pay rather than to vacation pay.

All classified employees must be present the workday before and the workday after a paid vacation, to qualify for the vacation, pay unless a doctor's note is provided.

### **Sick Leave**

The use of sick time before or after a paid holiday or vacation time will not be permitted unless a medical provider's note is provided.

Employees should refer to their position's conditions of employment for information on applicable hours provided. GPS defines this as the illness or accident of the employee.

Additional days may be taken from available sick leave for a serious illness involving a member of the immediate household upon approval of the Superintendent. Documentation of the extended illness may be required. Sick leaves will be figured by the hour. Any time taken off to go to the doctor (medical/dental) can be counted as sick leave.

### **Personal Leave**

Upon filing a Personal Business Leave request and on the recommendation of an employee's immediate supervisor, the Superintendent may grant paid personal days based on the employees classified conditions category; for business that cannot normally be conducted outside his/her regular workday. This leave may be used for time lost during school delays. This leave is not to be used to extend vacation periods. The supervisor must approve the leave prior to the absence unless circumstances warrant after-the-fact consideration. Unused personal business leave will be transferred to an employee's accumulated sick leave on January 1 or September 1 of each year. Please see the agreement per position of employment for number of personal days allowed.

### **Bereavement Leave**

An employee shall be granted bereavement leave to handle matters related to death and grieving of five (5) workdays within one calendar year for each death in the immediate family, which is defined to mean parent, sibling, spouse, child, stepchild, or step-parent. If bereavement leave is not taken immediately, documentation of the need may be required.

An employee shall be granted bereavement leave to handle matters related to death and grieving of three (3) work days within one calendar year for death of mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandchild, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent, stepfather, stepmother, or step-grandchildren

of employee or employee's spouse. If bereavement leave is not taken immediately, documentation of death business may be required.

Bereavement leaves for other persons or additional days due to the loss of any of the above relatives may be approved by the Superintendent of schools as he/she deems appropriate.

Paid bereavement leave may be subject to an employee's positions' agreement or conditions for employment.

### **Jury Duty**

Upon written application by the employee and presentation of satisfactory evidence of proof of jury duty, an employee who is required to serve jury duty shall be paid his/her regular rate of pay during such jury service, less any pay received for such service. Any fees for travel, food or other reimbursement will not be considered in calculating the difference between jury pay and the employee's regular pay.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act**

Upon hire, Griffith Public Schools (GPS) provides all new employees with notices required by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) pertaining to the use and eligibility for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The function of this policy is to provide employees with a general description of their FMLA rights. In the event of any conflict between this policy and FMLA, employees will be afforded all rights required by law.

In case of any questions, concerns, or disputes related to this policy, it is necessary to contact the Personnel and Benefits Coordinator at the administration office.

### **General Provisions**

Under this policy, GPS will grant 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) during a 12-month period to eligible employees. The leave may be paid, unpaid or a combination of paid and unpaid leave. GPS has chosen to count all leave, paid or unpaid as part of the 12 weeks (or up to 26 weeks of military caregiver leave) when an approved FMLA leave occurs.

### **Eligibility**

To qualify to take family or medical leave under this policy, the employee must meet the following conditions:

- **The employee must have worked for the corporation for 12 months or 52 weeks.** The 12 months or 52 weeks need not have been consecutive. For eligibility purposes, an employee will be considered to have been employed for an entire week even if the employee was on the payroll for only part of a week or if the employee is on leave during the week.
- **The employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately before the date when the leave is requested to commence.** The principles established under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) determine the number of hours worked by an employee. The FLSA does not include time spent on paid or unpaid leave as hours worked. Consequently, these hours of leave should not be counted in determining the 1,250 hours eligibility test for an employee under FMLA.

### Type of Leave Covered

To qualify as FMLA leave under this policy, the employee must be taking leave for one of the reasons listed below:

- The birth of a child and to care for that child.
- The placement of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for a newly placed child.
- To care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition (Under the FMLA, a “spouse” means a husband or wife as defined under the law in the state where the employee resides, including same-sex marriages).
- The serious health condition (described below) of the employee.

An employee may take leave because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee’s position.

A serious health condition is defined as a condition that requires inpatient care at a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care or as a condition that requires continuing care by a licensed health care provider.

This policy covers illnesses of a serious and long-term nature, resulting in recurring or lengthy absences. Generally, a chronic or long-term health condition that would result in a period of three consecutive days of incapacity with the first visit to the health care provider within seven days of the onset of the incapacity and a second visit within 30 days of the incapacity would be considered a serious health condition. For chronic conditions requiring periodic health care visits for treatment, such visits must take place at least twice a year.

If an employee takes paid sick leave for a condition that progresses into a serious health condition and the employee requests unpaid leave as provided under this policy, the corporation may designate all or some portion of related leave taken as leave under this policy, to the extent that the earlier leave meets the necessary qualifications.

Qualifying exigency leave for families of members of the National Guard or Reserves or of a regular component of the Armed Forces when the covered military member is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty.

An employee whose spouse, son, daughter, or parent has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active military duty or who is already on covered active duty may take up to 12 weeks of leave for reasons related to or affected by the family member’s call-up or service. The qualifying exigency must be one of the following: a) short-notice deployment, b) military events and activities, c) childcare and school activities, d) financial and legal arrangements, e) counseling, f) rest and recuperation, g) post-deployment activities, and h) additional activities that arise out of active duty, provided that the employer and employee agree, including agreement on timing and duration of the leave.

*Covered active duty* means:

- o In the case of a member of a regular component of the Armed Forces, duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country.
- o In the case of a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces, duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country under a call or order to active duty under a provision of law referred to in Title 10 U.S.C. §101(a)(13)(B).

The leave may commence as soon as the individual receives the call-up notice. (*Child* for this type of FMLA leave is defined the same as for *child* for other types of FMLA leave.) This type of leave would be counted toward the employee's 12-week maximum of FMLA leave in a 12-month period.

Military caregiver leave (also known as covered service member leave) to care for an injured or ill service member or veteran.

An employee whose son, daughter, parent or next of kin is a covered service member may take up to 26 weeks in a single 12-month period to take care of leave to care for that service member. *Next of kin* is defined as the closest blood relative of the injured or recovering service member. The term *covered service member* means:

A member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy or is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness.

A veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) at any time during the period of five years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation or therapy.

The term *serious injury or illness* means:

In the case of a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves), an injury or illness that was incurred by the member in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces (or that existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by service in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces) and that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank or rating.

In the case of a veteran who was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) at any time during a period when the person was a covered service member, a qualifying (as defined by the Secretary of Labor) injury or illness that was incurred by the member in line of duty on an active duty in the Armed Forces (or that existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by service in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces) and that manifested itself before or after the member became a veteran.

### **Amount of Leave**

An eligible employee may take up to 12 weeks for the first five FMLA circumstances above (under heading "Type of Leave Covered") under this policy during any 12-month period. The corporation will measure the 12-month period as a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee first uses any leave under this policy. Each time an employee takes leave, the corporation will compute the amount of leave the employee has taken under this policy in the last 12 months and subtract it from the 12 weeks of available leave, and the balance remaining is the amount of time the employee is entitled to take at that time.

An eligible employee can take up to 26 weeks for the FMLA military caregiver leave circumstance above during a single 12-month period. For this military caregiver leave, the corporation will measure the 12-month period as a rolling 12-month period measured forward. FMLA leave already taken for other FMLA circumstances will be deducted from the total of 26 weeks available.

If a husband and wife both work for the corporation and each wishes to take leave for the birth of a child, adoption or placement of a child in foster care, or to care for a parent (but not a parent "in-law") with a serious health condition, the husband and wife may only take a combined total of 12 weeks of leave. If

spouses both work for the corporation and each wish to take leave to care for a covered injured or ill service member, the husband and wife may only take a combined total of 26 weeks of leave.

### **Employee Status and Benefits during Leave**

While an employee is on leave, the corporation will continue the employee's health benefits during the leave period at the same level and under the same conditions as if the employee had continued to work.

### **Employee Status After Leave**

An employee who takes leave under this policy may be asked to provide a fitness for duty (FFD) clearance from the health care provider.

### **Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave**

All paid vacation, personal and sick leave runs concurrently with FMLA leave.

Disability leave for the birth of a child and for an employee's serious health condition, including workers' compensation leave (to the extent that it qualifies), will be designated as FMLA leave and will run concurrently with FMLA.

### **Intermittent Leave or a Reduced Work Schedule**

The employee may take FMLA leave in 12 consecutive weeks, may use the leave intermittently (take a day periodically when needed over the year) or, under certain circumstances, may use the leave to reduce the workweek or workday, resulting in a reduced-hour schedule. In all cases, the leave may not exceed a total of 12 workweeks (or 26 workweeks to care for an injured or ill service member over a 12-month period).

### **Certification for the Employee's Serious Health Condition**

The corporation will require certification for the employee's serious health condition. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay.

Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave.

### **Certification for the Family Member's Serious Health Condition**

The corporation will require certification for the family member's serious health condition. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave.

### **Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave**

The corporation will require certification of the qualifying exigency for military family leave. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave.

### **Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Service Member for Military Family Leave**

The corporation will require certification for the serious injury or illness of the covered service member. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave.

### **Recertification**

The corporation may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member when circumstances have changed significantly, or if the employer receives information casting doubt on the reason given for the absence, or if the employee seeks an extension of his or her leave. Otherwise, the corporation may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member every six months in connection with an FMLA absence.

### **Procedure for Requesting FMLA Leave**

All employees requesting FMLA leave must provide the administration office with verbal or written notice of the need for the leave. Within five business days after the employee has provided this notice, the personnel and benefits coordinator will provide the employee with the DOL Notice of Eligibility and Rights.

When the need for the leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide the employer with at least 30 days' notice. When an employee becomes aware of a need for FMLA leave less than 30 days in advance, the employee must provide notice of the need for the leave either the same day or the next business day. When the need for FMLA leave is not foreseeable, the employee must comply with the corporation's usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave.

### **Designation of FMLA Leave**

Within five business days after the employee has submitted the appropriate certification form, the personnel and benefits coordinator will provide the employee with a written response to the employee's request for FMLA leave.

### **Intent to Return to Work from FMLA Leave**

The corporation may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically on the employee's status and intent to return to work.

### **Definitions**

The following definitions will be used as they relate to FMLA:

A "child" refers to a biological, adopted, foster, or "step" child, a legal ward, or a person less than eighteen (18) years of age, for whom the employee has the responsibility to provide care and support. Additionally, a "child" is considered a person eighteen (18) years or older who is incapable of self-care due to a physical or mental disability. A "parent" refers to an individual's natural parent or a parent who has/had legal custody of a child as described above.

Health care provider includes:

- Doctor of Medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine.
- Podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, optometrists, chiropractors, nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, clinical social workers (each performing within their scope of practice)
- Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist of Boston, or
- any health care provider recognized by the GPS group health plan.

## **Military Leave of Absence**

Griffith Public Schools encourages and supports employees who choose to serve our nation in the armed forces. In certain cases where an employee is called to military service, either for active duty or annual training, that employee may be entitled to reinstatement reemployment and other rights under the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (“USERRA”) and subsequent amendments. Further, employees who serve in the National Guard or Reserves of the US Armed Forces are provided benefits under Indiana Code IC 10-16-7.

GPS is committed to protecting the job rights of employees absent on military leave. In accordance with federal and state law, it is the corporation’s policy that no employee (full or part-time) or prospective employee will be subjected to any form of discrimination on the basis of that person's membership in or obligation to perform service for any of the Uniformed Services of the United States. Specifically, no person will be denied employment, reemployment, promotion or other benefit of employment on the basis of such membership. Furthermore, no person will be subjected to retaliation or adverse employment action because such person has exercised his or her rights under applicable law or corporation policy. If any employee believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination in violation of corporation policy, the employee should immediately contact the administration office.

Employees taking part in a variety of military duties are eligible for benefits under this policy. Such military duties include leaves of absence taken by members of the uniformed services, including Reservists and National Guard members, for training, periods of active military service and funeral honors duty, as well as time spent being examined to determine fitness to perform such service. Subject to certain exceptions under the applicable laws, these benefits are generally limited to five years of leave of absence.

**Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (“USERRA”)-** The Act provides a series of rights to employees serving in the U.S. Armed Forces:

***Reemployment Rights-*** An employee has the right to be reemployed in his/her civilian job if leave is taken to perform service in the uniformed service and:

- Advanced written or verbal notice of that service was given.
- The employee had five (5) years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services while with that employer.
- The employee returns to work or applies for reemployment in a timely manner after conclusion of service; and
- The employee had not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than honorable conditions.

In meeting the aforementioned conditions, an employee must be restored to the job (or a comparable job) and benefits the employee would have attained if he/she had not been absent due to military service.

***Right to Be Free from Discrimination and Retaliation-*** An employee who is a past or present member of the uniformed service; has applied for membership in the uniformed service; or is obligated to serve in the uniformed service; may not be denied:

- Initial employment.
- Reemployment.
- Retention in employment.
- Promotion; or
- Any benefit of employment because of his/her status.

In addition, retaliation may not occur against anyone assisting in the enforcement of USERRA rights, including testifying or making a statement in connection with a proceeding under USERRA, even if that person has no service connection.

**Health Insurance Protection-** An employee who leaves his/her job to perform military service, has the right to elect to continue existing employer-based health plan coverage for the employee and that employee's dependents for up to twenty-four (24) months while in the military. In the event that the employee does not elect to continue coverage during military service, the employee has the right to be reinstated in the employer's health plan when he/she is reemployed, generally without any waiting periods, or exclusions (e.g., pre-existing condition exclusions) except for service-connected illnesses or injuries.

If the employee accepts other employment during any period of military leave, he/she will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned. If the employee remains on active duty in the military for a period greater than four years, the city is no longer obligated to return him/her to employment.

Arrangements need to be made to arrange for continuation of health insurance coverage and payment of the applicable premium while on military leave. An employee in military service for less than thirty-one (31) days only will be required to pay the standard employee premium for continuation of coverage. For absences exceeding thirty-one (31) days, the employee may be required to pay the full cost of the premium, similar to the amount paid by employees who elect continuation of coverage following termination of employment. Specifically, employees may continue coverage during military leave granted more than thirty-one (31) days at the employee's own expense through the provisions of Federal law based on the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act ("COBRA").

**Indiana National Guard and Reserves- In accordance with Indiana Code IC 10-16-7, a** member of the Indiana National Guard or Reserves who is employed by a school district is entitled to receive from the member's employer a leave of absence from the member's respective duties in addition to regular vacation period without loss of time or pay for the time that the member is:

1. on training duties of the state under the order of the governor as commander in chief  
or
2. a member of any reserve component under the order of the reserve component authority

for any consecutive or nonconsecutive period that does not exceed a total of fifteen (15) days in any calendar year.

The above guidelines set forth the general parameters concerning military leave. Any questions should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

## BENEFITS

Benefits for covered Griffith Public Schools (GPS) employees are provided through the Porter County Schools Employees' Insurance Trust. The following is a general summary of those benefits; specific benefits are contained and defined in the summary plan description.

### Porter County Schools Employees' Insurance Trust

October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023 Benefit Summary

Benefits	Health 1 (PPO Plan 1)	Health 2 (BAHSA Plan 1 \$3k/\$6k Ded.)	Health 3 (BAHSA Plan 2 \$6k/\$12k Ded.)
	<i>Network/Non-Network</i>	<i>Network/Non-Network</i>	<i>Network/Non-Network</i>
Deductible Single	\$250 / \$500	\$3,000 / \$6,000	\$6,000 / \$12,000
Family	\$500 / \$1,000	\$6,000 / \$12,000	\$12,000 / \$24,000
Coinsurance	90% / 70%	0% / 70%	0% / 70%
Maximum Out-of-Pocket Single (w/ Deductible)	\$1,500 / \$3,000	\$3,000 / \$12,000	\$6,000 / \$12,000
Family (w/ Deductible)	\$3,000 / \$6,000	\$6,000 / \$24,000	\$12,000 / \$24,000
Hospital Services	90% / 70%	Ded/Coins.	Ded/Coins.
Office Visit	\$30 copay / 70%	Ded/Coins.	Ded/Coins.
Urgent Care Facility	\$40 copay / 70%	Ded/Coins.	Ded/Coins.
Emergency Room	\$150 copay then 100%	Ded/Coins.	Ded/Coins.
Outpatient Facility	90% / 70%	Ded/Coins.	Ded/Coins.
Preventive Services	\$0	\$0	\$0
Retail Prescription Drug Copay	\$10 Tier 1 \$20 Tier 2 \$30 Tier 3	Rx subject to deductible and coinsurance	Rx subject to deductible and coinsurance
Mail Order Prescription Drug Copay	\$20 Tier 1 \$40 Tier 2 \$60 Tier 3	Rx subject to deductible and coinsurance	Rx subject to deductible and coinsurance
Rx Maximum Out-of-Pocket Single	\$5,100 / \$10,200	Rx subject to deductible	Rx subject to deductible
Family	\$10,200 / \$20,400	& coinsurance	& coinsurance

*See Anthem Certificate for full detail.*

### Medical, Dental and Vision Insurance

The corporation currently offers full-time employees regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours per week enrollment in medical, dental and vision insurance coverage options on the first of the month following their date of employment.

Employees have up to 30 days from their date of hire to make medical, dental and vision plan elections. Once made, elections are fixed for the remainder of the plan year. Changes in family status, as defined in the Plan document, allow employees to make midyear changes in coverage consistent with the family status change. Please contact the administration office to determine if a family status change qualifies under the Plan document and federal regulations.

In August of each calendar year during open enrollment, employees may change medical, dental & vision elections to be effective from October-September.

### **Group Life Insurance**

GPS currently offers regular full-time employees regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 30 hours per week, enrollment in life insurance on the first of the month following their date of employment. This is an employee cost of \$.50 per year. Each policy generally pays a death benefit equal to his or her base contracted salary rounded to the nearest \$1,000. Staff may participate in a supplemental group life insurance program at their own expense.

### **403(b) Plan**

GPS offers a voluntary pretax or post tax salary reduction plan in which all employees, who are 18 years of age or older, may elect to participate beginning with the first payroll period administratively feasible after employment.

### **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

It is the goal of Griffith Public Schools that all employees receive prompt medical treatment if they have sustained a work-related injury. Indiana Public Employer's Plan (IPEP) is our worker compensation carrier. We have designated Occupational Health Community Healthcare System and Immediate Care Center as our Occupational Provider for prompt and compassionate treatment for our employees.

If an employee has sustained a work-related injury, the following steps must be followed:

1. Complete a **Worker's Compensation Employee Statement**. This may be obtained from the building principal, supervisor or administration building representative.
2. An **Employers Authorization for Care** form will be completed by the building principal, supervisor or administration building representative. This form **must** be taken with the employee to the Occupational Health or Immediate Care Center to receive medical treatment.

#### **Occupational Health Office Hours**

Monday thru Friday – 7:30 am to 7:00 pm  
They are a walk-in clinic with no appointment required. 9200 Calumet Ave.  
Suite N-502  
Munster, IN 46321  
(219) 440-5286

#### **Immediate Care Center Hours**

Monday thru Sunday – 7:30 am to 7:00 pm  
They are a walk-in clinic with no appointment required. (219) 769-1362

Or after 7:00 pm

**Community Hospital**  
219-836-1600

3. Return all paperwork received by Occupational Health or Immediate Care Center to the Administration Office as soon as possible after receiving treatment.

Should a supervisor determine from the physical aspects, appearance, or behavior of a staff member that s/he might be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, said staff member may be immediately taken to a local health facility for further diagnosis. Reference policy 3170 and 4170.

If the Corporation does not believe the injury entitles the employee to receive worker compensation benefits, it shall so notify the employee and the Worker Compensation Board within thirty (30) days of the date at which the alleged disability begins, in accordance with the procedures prescribed by the Board. (I.C. 22-3-7)

### **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

Through the employee assistance program (EAP), GPS provides confidential access to professional counseling services. An employee is entitled to three in-person assessments and counseling sessions. The EAP, available to all employees and their immediate family members, offers problem assessment, short-term counseling and referral to appropriate community and private services. This service is provided on behalf of the Griffith Public Schools by National Insurance Services. To set up an appointment, call 1-866-451-5465 or online at [www.niseap.com](http://www.niseap.com) password NISenhanced.

The EAP is strictly confidential and is designed to safeguard an employee's privacy and rights. There is no cost for an employee to consult with an EAP counselor. If further counseling is necessary, the EAP counselor will outline community and private services available. The counselor will also let employees know whether any costs associated with private services may be covered by their health insurance plan. Costs that are not covered are the responsibility of the employee.

### **Optional Insurance**

Additional insurance is available to employees at the employee's expense. The Board makes the plans available on an optional basis to those employees who may want them. Eligibility after the 30-day probationary period.

### **Flexible Benefits Plan (Section 125).**

A flexible benefits plan is available to provide employees with a means of obtaining pre-tax savings for out-of-pocket health costs. Pre-taxing qualifies for exclusion from income provided in Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. Employees may sign a Salary Reduction Agreement for the premium or FLEX plan.

## **MEDICARE PART D CREDITABLE AND NON-CREDITABLE COVERAGE NOTICES**

The following information only applies to an employee if they or any of their dependents are Medicare eligible.

- To be Medicare eligible you must be at least age 65 or be disabled.
- If this does apply to you or one of your dependents, please read the below information on the Medicare Part D program and how this Medicare component might apply to you.

Date: 6/27/2023

Name of Entity: Griffith Public Schools

Sender: Krista Elkins/ Central Office Payroll and Benefits Specialist

Address: 602 N. Raymond Street, Griffith, IN 46319

Phone Number: 219-924-4250

### **Important Notice from Griffith Public Schools About Your Prescription Drug Coverage and Medicare as it relates to Health Plan 3 (BAHSA Plan 2)**

Please read this notice carefully and keep it where you can find it. This notice has information about your current prescription drug coverage with Griffith Public Schools and about your options under Medicare's prescription drug coverage. This information can help you decide whether you want to join a Medicare drug plan. Information about where you can get help to make decisions about your prescription drug coverage is at the end of this notice.

There are three important things you need to know about your current coverage and Medicare's prescription drug coverage:

1. Medicare prescription drug coverage became available in 2006 to everyone with Medicare. You can get this coverage if you join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan or join a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) that offers prescription drug coverage. All Medicare drug plans provide at least a standard level of coverage set by Medicare. Some plans may also offer more coverage for a higher monthly premium.
2. Griffith Public Schools has determined that the prescription drug coverage offered by the Health Plan 3 (BAHSA Plan 2) is, on average for all plan participants, NOT expected to pay out as much as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage pays. Therefore, your coverage is considered Non-Creditable Coverage. This is important because, most likely, you will get more help with your drug costs if you join a Medicare drug plan, than if you only have prescription drug coverage from the (Insert Name of Plan). This also is important because it may mean that you may pay a higher premium (a penalty) if you do not join a Medicare drug plan when you first become eligible.
3. You can keep your current coverage from Griffith Public Schools. However, because your coverage is non-creditable, you have decisions to make about Medicare prescription drug coverage that may affect how much you pay for that coverage, depending on if and when you join a drug plan. When you make your decision, you should compare your current coverage, including what drugs are covered, with the coverage and cost of the plans offering Medicare prescription drug coverage in your area. Read this notice carefully - it explains your options.

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## When Can You Join A Medicare Drug Plan?

You can join a Medicare drug plan when you first become eligible for Medicare and each year from October 15 to December 7.

## When Will You Pay a Higher Premium (Penalty) To Join a Medicare Drug Plan?

Since the coverage under **Griffith Public Schools** is not creditable, depending on how long you go without creditable prescription drug coverage you may pay a penalty to join a Medicare drug plan. Starting with the end of the last month that you were first eligible to join a Medicare drug plan but didn't join, if you go 63 continuous days or longer without prescription drug coverage that's creditable, your monthly premium may go up by at least 1% of the Medicare base beneficiary premium per month for every month that you did not have that coverage. For example, if you go nineteen months without creditable coverage, your premium may consistently be at least 19% higher than the Medicare base beneficiary premium. You may have to pay this higher premium (penalty) if you have Medicare prescription drug coverage. In addition, you may have to wait until the following October to join.

## What Happens to Your Current Coverage If You Decide to Join a Medicare Drug Plan?

If you decide to join a Medicare drug plan, your current coverage will not be affected. The coverage provided under Griffith Public Schools will not coordinate with your Medicare drug plan. You may have the option to move to a different plan offered by the [Insert Name of Entity] to obtain credible coverage if you choose.

If you do decide to join a Medicare drug plan and drop your current coverage, be aware that you and your dependents will be able to get this coverage back, subject to eligibility and enrollment guidelines.

## For More Information About This Notice or Your Current Prescription Drug Coverage...

Contact the person listed below for further information. **NOTE:** You'll get this notice each year. You will also get it before the next period you can join a Medicare drug plan and if this coverage through **Griffith Public Schools** changes. You also may request a copy of this notice at any time.

## For More Information About Your Options Under Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage...

More detailed information about Medicare plans that offer prescription drug coverage is in the "Medicare & You" handbook. You'll get a copy of the handbook in the mail every year from Medicare. You may also be contacted directly by Medicare drug plans. For more information about Medicare prescription drug coverage:

- Visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).
- Call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (see the inside back cover of your copy of the "Medicare & You" handbook for their telephone number) for personalized help.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

If you have limited income and resources, extra help paying for Medicare prescription drug coverage is available. For information about this extra help, visit Social Security on the web at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), or call them at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

## Premium Assistance Under Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

If you or your children are eligible for Medicaid or CHIP and you’re eligible for health coverage from your employer, your state may have a premium assistance program that can help pay for coverage, using funds from their Medicaid or CHIP programs. If you or your children aren’t eligible for Medicaid or CHIP, you won’t be eligible for these premium assistance programs, but you may be able to buy individual insurance coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace. For more information, visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

If you or your dependents are already enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP and you live in a State listed below, contact your State Medicaid or CHIP office to find out if premium assistance is available.

If you or your dependents are NOT currently enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP, and you think you or any of your dependents might be eligible for either of these programs, contact your State Medicaid or CHIP office or dial **1-877- KIDS NOW** or [www.insurekidsnow.gov](http://www.insurekidsnow.gov) to find out how to apply. If you qualify, ask your state if it has a program that might help you pay the premiums for an employer-sponsored plan.

If you or your dependents are eligible for premium assistance under Medicaid or CHIP, as well as eligible under your employer plan, your employer must allow you to enroll in your employer plan if you aren’t already enrolled. This is called a “special enrollment” opportunity, and **you must request coverage within 60 days of being determined eligible for premium assistance**. If you have questions about enrolling in your employer plan, contact the Department of Labor at [www.askebsa.dol.gov](http://www.askebsa.dol.gov) or call **1-866-444-EBSA (3272)**.

**If you live in one of the following states, you may be eligible for assistance paying your employer health plan premiums. The following list of states is current as of July 31, 2018. Contact your State for more information on eligibility –**

To see if any other states have added a premium assistance program since July 31, 2018, or for more information on special enrollment rights, contact either:

INDIANA – Medicaid
Healthy Indiana Plan for low-income adults 19-64 Website: <a href="http://www.in.gov/fssa/hip/">http://www.in.gov/fssa/hip/</a> Phone: 1-877-438-4479 All other Medicaid  Website: <a href="http://www.indianamedicaid.com">http://www.indianamedicaid.com</a> Phone 1-800-403-0864

U.S. Department of Labor  
 Employee Benefits Security Administration [www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa) 1-866-444-EBSA (3272)

### Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
[www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov)  
 1-877-267-2323, Menu Option 4, Ext. 61565

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) (PRA), no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The Department notes that a Federal agency cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it is approved by OMB under the PRA, and displays a currently valid OMB control number, and the public is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3507. Also, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if the collection of information does not display a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3512.

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average approximately seven minutes per respondent. Interested parties are encouraged to send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Office of Policy and Research, Attention: PRA Clearance Officer, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room N-5718, Washington, DC 20210 or email [ebbsa.opr@dol.gov](mailto:ebbsa.opr@dol.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1210-0137.



## New Health Insurance Marketplace Coverage Options and Your Health Coverage

Form Approved  
OMB No. 1210-0149  
(expires 6-30-2023)

### PART A: General Information

When key parts of the health care law take effect in 2014, there will be a new way to buy health insurance: the Health Insurance Marketplace. To assist you as you evaluate options for you and your family, this notice provides some basic information about the new Marketplace.

#### What is the Health Insurance Marketplace?

The Marketplace is designed to help you find health insurance that meets your needs and fits your budget. The Marketplace offers "one-stop shopping" to find and compare private health insurance options. You may also be eligible for a new kind of tax credit that lowers your monthly premium right away. Open enrollment for health insurance coverage through the Marketplace begins in October 2013 for coverage starting as early as January 1, 2014.

#### Can I Save Money on my Health Insurance Premiums in the Marketplace?

You may qualify to save money and lower your monthly premium, but only if your employer does not offer coverage, or offers coverage that doesn't meet certain standards. The savings on your premium that you're eligible for depends on your household income.

#### Does Employer Health Coverage Affect Eligibility for Premium Savings through the Marketplace?

Yes. If you have an offer of health coverage from your employer that meets certain standards, you will not be eligible for a tax credit through the Marketplace and may wish to enroll in your employer's health plan. However, you may be eligible for a tax credit that lowers your monthly premium, or a reduction in certain cost-sharing if your employer does not offer coverage to you at all or does not offer coverage that meets certain standards. If the cost of a plan from your employer that would cover you (and not any other members of your family) is more than 9.5% of your household income for the year, or if the coverage your employer provides does not meet the "minimum value" standard set by the

### PART B: Information About Health Coverage Offered by Your Employer

This section contains information about any health coverage offered by your employer. If you decide to complete an application for coverage in the Marketplace, you will be asked to provide this information. This information is numbered to correspond to the Marketplace application.

3. Employer name		4. Employer Identification Number (EIN)	
5. Employer address		6. Employer phone number	
7. City	8. State	9. ZIP code	
10. Who can we contact at this job?			
11. Phone number (if different from above)		12. Email address	

You are not eligible for health insurance coverage through this employer. You and your family may be able to obtain health coverage through the Marketplace, with a new kind of tax credit that lowers your monthly premiums and with assistance for out-of-pocket costs.