

1 Great Falls School District

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3 **NON-INSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS**

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5 Guidelines for Indoor Air Quality

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7 **Animals in the Classroom**

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

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

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22 **Food in the Classroom Policy**

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

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28 **Painting Policy**

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

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36 **Hazardous Materials Policy**

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

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Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Management Plan

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

Integrated Pest Management Program

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

Lead Policy

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

Radon Gas Policy

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

Non-Smoking Policy

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

Cultural Considerations

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

Curricular Considerations

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

Anti-Idling Policy

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

Procedures:**Cleaning and Chemicals**

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Procedures:

Cleaning and Chemicals

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

- Custodial staff shall only use cleaning agents approved by the district for school use. All products must be clearly labeled and stored in a secure area. Bottles of cleaning agents must be tightly closed when stored.
- All safety data sheets should be stored in an area available to all staff, and the location of this information is discussed in the district's "Employee Right to Know" annual training.
- Rooms must be kept clean. Slightly damp microfiber cloths are used to remove dust from surfaces — however, wiped surfaces should not be left damp or wet for extended periods of time, since this can cause mold growth.
- Ammonia-based cleaning agents and chlorine-containing cleaners (such as bleach) must never be mixed because this generates toxic gases.

- 1 • During routine operations, pollutant-releasing activities are restricted by time of day,
2 week, or year. For example, the waxing of floors will be performed [on Friday afternoons
3 or vacations, to ensure that gases are removed by the time classes resume].
- 4 • Areas of frequent use should be cleaned more often than areas of infrequent use.
- 5 • Large walk-off mats must be used to trap dirt and moisture at building entrances. These
6 mats are cleaned according to manufacturers' guidelines to ensure optimal performance.
7 Trapping dirt and moisture at building entrances helps to maintain the cleanliness of
8 floors and carpets throughout the building.
- 9 • Staff are not permitted to bring any cleaning products, pesticides, air fresheners, or other
10 chemicals into the school that are not on the list provided by the IAQ Coordinator.

11 **Flooring**

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

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

22 **Preventive Maintenance, Operations and Monitoring**

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

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

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

3 4 **Construction and Renovation**

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

10
11 To the extent possible, major renovations should be performed when school is not in session. If
12 renovation projects must be performed while school is in session, the return air from any area
13 being renovated should be isolated from the main ventilation system. Engineering controls
14 should be used to contain and minimize the distribution of dust and other contaminants produced
15 by construction activities. Cleaning operations should be more frequent during and after
16 renovation.

17 18 **Microbial Management**

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

23
24 Signs of water intrusion and microbial growth should be investigated during the walkthrough
25 inspections, building system evaluations, and other efforts. The maintenance staff should be
26 informed about damaged buildings systems and components that cause water leaks and water
27 condensation. School staff must make the necessary repairs and adjustments in a prompt manner.
28 Materials damaged by water should be replaced when possible. Damp or wet materials must be
29 dried within 48 hours (preferably within 24 hours).

30
31 Materials contaminated with microbial organisms should be promptly cleaned or replaced. Mold
32 growth should be removed from non-porous surfaces with a strong brush and non-ammonia
33 containing detergent and thorough drying. Remediation projects that cannot be handled by
34 district staff should be contracted to a professional. Large-scale remediation projects may require
35 specific control and protection measures. For additional information on mold remediation, refer
36 to EPA's guide, "Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings". See
37 also www.epa.gov/mold

38 39 **Staff Education**

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41 All district employees play an important role in maintaining and improving air quality since their
42 behavior can affect the quality of the air present in school buildings. For example, placing
43 objects on unit ventilators, adjusting room thermostats, or turning off unit ventilators can worsen
44 the quality of air in a room. An educated employee is more likely to take steps to maintain good
45 air quality. In addition, an employee with an understanding of IAQ is more likely to report IAQ
46 concerns quickly and accurately. For these reasons, the district staff must be educated about

1 IAQ. The Great Falls Public Schools IAQ coordinator will provide annual updates to the IAQ
2 guidelines for all staff.

3 4 **Communication**

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

13
14 In the unlikely event of an IAQ emergency, the district will accommodate the needs of students,
15 parents, and staff. One or more contacts shall be selected to handle the media and update the
16 community during a crisis. No one other than the district representative(s) should discuss IAQ-
17 related issues with the press. The media will be alerted by the superintendent or designee when it
18 is necessary to provide information to a broader audience. Every effort will be made to share
19 appropriate information as soon as it becomes available to the school district.

20 21 **Responsibilities**

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

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25 • Teachers are encouraged to not interfere with airflow from ventilators (e.g., do not stack
26 books or other items on ventilators, cover vents with posters, or turn off the fan due to
27 noise), remove clutter in their classrooms, properly dispose of hazardous waste, and
28 enforce the school's IAQ policies in their classrooms. Due to the sensitivity of some staff
29 and students to airborne particulates, odor emitting devices (scented candles, etc.) are
30 strongly discouraged in offices and classroom areas.
 - 31 • Administrators will ensure that the school is implementing IAQ policies appropriately.
 - 32 • Students and Visitors will follow guidelines established within this policy.
 - 33 • Facility operators must identify HVAC systems that are not operating properly and
34 recommend that they are repaired in a timely manner. In addition, operators will ensure
35 that buildings are maintained adequately and cleaned regularly.
 - 36 • Engineers need to follow all policies regarding cleaning chemicals, ensure that the school
37 is regularly vacuumed and swept, clean drain pans, empty trash cans, and check drain
38 pipes regularly. They should also look for signs of pest problems and inform the
39 appropriate people of any issues.
 - 40 • School Nurses shall track allergies and illnesses, such as asthma, that may provide an
41 early warning of IAQ problems consistent with the Nurses Practices Act.
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Emergency Response

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

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

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

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

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

Policy History:

Adopted on: June 10, 2013

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