



**The CORE School at Morningside  
Elementary**

**STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2025-2026**

TO: The CORE School at Morningside Elementary Families

FROM: Principal Jennifer Martyn

RE: Student Code for 2025-2026

Attached you will find the student handbooks for Morningside Elementary and GFPS. **Please note, the first page contains a “sign off” parents must complete.** Make sure you **check the boxes** stating you received a copy and read the release of directory information.

In addition, please, let us know that you have read the Morningside Elementary school-wide building procedures and expectations.

Yes, I have read the Morningside School Guidelines for Success, and commit to having my child “Attend all day, Everyday,” other than when ill or for pre-arranged, excused absences.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Parent Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Child Signature**

During the school year, students at Morningside *may* have the opportunity to take part in various educational field trips.

In order for your child to participate in these activities a signed permission slip is required. Please, fill out the permission slip below and return the slip to school this week. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Additional information and permission slips regarding specific field trips will come home with your child later in the school year as opportunities arise.

As a student enrolled in The CORE School at Morningside Elementary School, my child \_\_\_\_\_, has permission to participate in field trips during the school year 2025-2026. It is understood that all school regulations and policies must be adhered to by students participating in these trips.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

# CORE Morningside Staff

## 2025-2026

### Principal and Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Martyn and Amber Anthon 268-6960  
(all phone numbers start 268)

### Classroom Teachers

<b>Kindergarten:</b>	Annie Poole 6989	Kodey Hansen 6988
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Grade:</b>	Sasha Moore 6974	Amber Rausch 6975
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:</b>	Amanda Tramill 6980	Tara Habel 6979
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:</b>	Shannon Taylor 6978	Joelle Johnson 6981
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b>	Toree Johnson 6987	Hannah Crawford 6986
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b>	Ann Molyneaux 6982	Park Hook 6983
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade:</b>	Kim DeFries 6984	Kimberley Clark 6985

### Specialists

Counselor: Montana Johnson 6965      Librarian: Jessica Douglas 6969  
PE/Health Enhancement: Michelle Peterson/Dan Brady 6966      Art: Ophelia Easton 6976  
Vocal Music: Kara Bell 6976      Orchestra: Katrina Brugman 6976      Band: Sharman Tokerud 6976  
Special Education/Resource: Amanda Blair 6971 and Katie Rawls 6970  
Extended Curriculum Specialist/Gifted Education: Lainie Warneke 6977  
School Psychologist: Jessica Carranza 6972      Speech Pathologist: Erin Sholes 6977  
Occupational Therapist: Katie Afflack 6972      Physical Therapist: Deb Davison 6972

### Classified Staff

First Engineer: Trevor 6968  
School Nurse: Shayla Wilson 7823  
Cafeteria Staff: 6967

### Cohort Two Teaching Assistants

*Some changes may be made to this list of staff. Any changes will be posted on PowerSchool, on our school website, and notifications will be sent home as needed.*

**August 1, 2025**

**Dear CORE School at Morningside School Families,**

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! I look forward to serving the Morningside community as Principal! Communication and participation of families, students, and staff collaborating together is essential to student success. You are encouraged and invited to volunteer in classrooms and at the school, and to join our PTA, attend school-wide events, conferences, and to contact school staff with questions, suggestions, or concerns as it relates to your child's success here at Morningside. Please, check our school website frequently for upcoming events and important information. There will also be opportunities throughout the year to provide feedback, ideas, and suggestions to help us to continue to improve our practices in best serving you and your family.

**Mission**

Our mission is to provide every child with the best opportunity to reach their fullest potential and students are to be a strong leader of the HERD, showing Honor, Empathy, Respect, and Dedication.

**Secured Entrance**

School safety is a primary concern for our students, families, and staff. Our front doors and all exterior doors will remain locked during the school day. All guests entering the building must show a form of identification into the camera in order to enter the front door and then check into the office for a visitor's pass through the Raptor system located in the main office.

**K-6 School Hours**

**Students may arrive on the playground at 8:10 AM. Students will be allowed to enter the building at 8:25 AM.** For the safety of the students, we ask that students not arrive at school until 8:10 AM, unless other arrangements have been made with staff. Your cooperation is appreciated!

School Start Time: 8:25 AM, Tardy after 8:30 AM  
**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday** Dismissal Time: 3:20 PM  
**Wednesday (Early Dismissal)** Dismissal Time: 2:45 PM

**End of Quarter Days:** NO SCHOOL, Teachers in Meetings

**Early Arrival**

Students may arrive on the school grounds at 8:10 AM. The HANDS program is available for students who need to come before 8:10 AM, they must be dropped off by an approved adult through the HANDS program. Make sure and sign your child up for this service as soon as possible. To register: <https://handschildcare.org/> Students may be invited to participate in Extended Learning Opportunities before school to support their academic growth.

**Pick-Up/Drop-Off**

Morningside staff will wear safety vests for easy identification. Here is a list of expectations safe arrival/dismissal from school:

- **Please, do not leave your car unattended in our drop-off/pick-up lane on 7th Ave N.** Please park in the designated parking spaces in the front parking lot if coming into the building.
- Please, be observant of students crossing in the crosswalk at the front of the school.
- Please, be cautious of students crossing the street in areas not designated for crossing. Students are encouraged by staff to cross at designated crosswalks.
- Students riding bikes, skateboards, scooters, rollerblades/skates **MUST** have a helmet. Bikes, skateboards, and scooters are to be walked on and off campus. Please, let us know if your child is in need of a helmet. Students are encouraged to lock their bikes on our bike racks.

**Bus Drop-Off/Pick-Up**

School rules apply while students ride the bus and at bus pick-up, drop-off zones. Parents are **STRONGLY** encouraged to provide supervision of their children at the bus stop location while they wait for the bus to arrive and during dismissal.

## **Tardy**

Students that are not in class by 8:30 AM are considered tardy. If your child will be tardy for school, please, have them check into the office prior to going to the classroom.

## **Dismissal**

Please, pick up your child in a designated spot. Supervision will end at 3:30 p.m. (or 3:00 PM on Wednesdays). There is no after-school supervision unless students are enrolled in the HANDS program.

If there is lightning within 10 miles of the school during dismissal times, students will be held in the building until a parent/guardian is available. Students that typically walk home will call their family for a plan to get them home during/after the storm.

## **Grades/PowerSchool**

Teachers update grades and assignments weekly. Families do not have to wait until report cards to know how their child is performing. Visit <https://ps.gfps.k12.mt.us> to check your child's grades, attendance, and assignments at any time. Please, contact Amber Anthon, our Administrative Assistant for your username and password. Please, check your child's teachers' syllabus for information regarding their late work, homework, and grading policies. Teachers at the CORE school implement a standards-based grading and assessment approach and can tell you more about this during conferences. If you have questions or concerns about your child's academic progress, please, contact your child's teacher and/or our school counselor.

## **Homework Plan:**

According to district policy, homework is practice done outside of the classroom. Ample time is given to students to finish class work during the day. Should a student not finish classwork during the allotted time, the classroom teacher may give homework to students to aid in the students' educational development. Homework should be an application or adaptation of a classroom experience. Our new ELA and Math curriculum, CKLA/Amplify/DESMOS provides parent letters at the beginning of each unit to let you know what your child will be learning and how you can extend their learning at home. Please, talk with your child's teacher about their classroom homework policy and expectations. Students are encouraged to read aloud every night for at least 20 minutes to help build their reading fluency and stamina.

*If homework is challenging for you and your child at home or is taking longer than the recommended guidelines, please, notify your child's teacher to create a plan for success. If you need support with creating an environment at home conducive for completing homework, please, let the classroom teacher or our counselor know.*

## **Teachers Availability to Families**

Certified staff are available to communicate with families before school from 8:00-8:20 AM and after school from 3:20-4:00 PM. Making arrangements beforehand is helpful in case teachers are in a pre-arranged meeting before/after school. On Wednesdays teachers have building and district meetings from 2:45-4:00 PM. Please, do not drop-in on classroom teachers during early Wednesday-Outs or during instructional times and expect a meeting when they are teaching in the classroom. They will return communication with you as needed during their planning times throughout the day. Teachers' contractual day is 8:00 AM-4:00 PM, any communication outside of these hours is at their discretion. Teachers are expected to return messages within 24 hours during school business days.

## **School Office Hours**

We are here to assist you and your child. Please feel free to email, call, or visit us. Our office phone number is 268-6960. We are available to answer the phone from 7:45-4:15 daily. If we are unable to answer the phone, please, leave a message and your call will be returned. Before and after hours, we have email and voicemail available for your convenience. Each staff member has a telephone and email for additional communication.

## **Charter School Attendance and Punctuality, "All Day, Every Day"**

To keep our status as a Montana Public Charter School, students enrolled in the Charter School must attend 95% of the school year. This means our students must miss less than 10 days of school per year. Attendance matters to our school district and community. In order for your child to receive the maximum benefit of our education system they are expected to attend school **all day, every day** except for illness, medical appointments, and in case of a family emergency.

If it is necessary for your child to miss school, please, call the school office at 268-6960. If an absence is necessary, parents or guardians must notify the school by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If parents or guardians do not call the school when a child is absent, an automatic call will be made to the parent/guardian. If no contact is made, your child's absence will be marked as unexcused. Absences may be excused up to 48 hours after the date of absence.

Pre-arranged absences may be excused. Please, allow teachers **at least a week's notice** prior to the absence to allow teachers time to prepare and make adjustments to curriculum delivery. In the event of an unexpected absence for longer than 3 days, effort will be made to provide additional work at home.

**Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason — excused or unexcused absences, including suspensions.** Students with chronic absences and/or tardies will require a meeting with the Principal along with the parent/guardian, teacher, and/or counselor, additional specialists and case workers as needed. An attendance contract with all parties agreeing to specific interventions will be signed and implemented during attendance conferences.

#### Important Attendance Information from *Attendance Works*:

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2-4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.
- **Students miss out on 10% of a school year with just two absences per month.**
- **Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade or need to be considered for retention.**
- **By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.**
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.

#### **Birthdays/Classroom Treats/Student Celebrations**

Birthday treats that are STORE BOUGHT are usually welcome by teachers, but advance notice is appreciated by the teachers. We must follow the federal nutritional guidelines when offering snacks/food to students during the school day. Please, ask the teacher about food allergies before providing treats.. Treats are usually handed out the last 15 minutes of the day. Make sure to have plenty for all. *We DO NOT give out birthday party invitations at school unless all children in the class are invited.*

If your child has food allergies or special dietary needs, please, let your child's teacher know, as well if you want your child to have a limited amount of treats, etc. Teachers may institute additional expectations and procedures for their classrooms in regards to food and treats to address the specific needs of their students and room.

The delivery of floral arrangements, balloons, stuffed animals, [etc](#) to the school is discouraged. Items that are delivered to the school will be kept in the office until dismissal to minimize disruption to the learning environment.

#### **Forgotten Lunch and Food Deliveries from Outside Companies**

If your child forgets their lunch or needs a meal, please contact the school office directly. We are happy to help make sure they have something to eat. You can also bring a lunch from home if needed, but we ask that it be clearly labeled and dropped off **before** lunchtime.

We do not allow outside food agencies to deliver food to our students on campus. Our number one priority is keeping every student safe. When delivery drivers arrive on campus, they often do not go through the standard security procedures required of visitors. We cannot guarantee who is making the delivery, and unexpected visitors can pose a safety risk. Deliveries interrupt the flow of the school day. Office staff must stop their work to receive food, track down the student, and coordinate pickup—often during busy lunchtime or instructional hours. This pulls staff away from their essential duties and can cause delays and confusion. Allowing some students to receive special restaurant meals during lunch while others eat from home or the cafeteria can create a sense of unfairness. We strive to create an inclusive environment where all students feel comfortable and included, especially during shared times like lunch. School meals are planned to meet specific nutrition guidelines, which support students' health and ability to focus. Outside food may not meet the same standards. We encourage students to enjoy either school-provided lunches or meals brought from home.

#### **Playground and Recess**

Students are expected to be dressed for outside activities every day and to be prepared for rain, snow, and/ or cold

temperatures below zero. During the winter, Great Falls Public Schools sends students outside unless the windchill is zero degrees or below. We monitor the weather (winds, rain, lightning/thunder, etc.) and adjust recesses as needed. You can help by seeing that your child is properly dressed and ready to go out. Please send your child with raincoat/winter coat, boots, mittens, and a hat during the winter; as the weather often changes quickly. Children with notes to stay in do not remain in their classroom, but are usually sent to a buddy classroom while the teacher has a break or prep. We understand the necessity of safety on the playground and work hard to enforce all rules and procedures. Children are encouraged to report injuries and any recess issues to the aides, their teacher, and parent/guardian.

### **Communication**

Please, check PowerSchool, ParentSquare our school-wide message system, our school website, and your child's weekly Wednesday envelopes regularly for important information and upcoming events. The PTA also supports a Facebook page, "The Core School at Morningside Community (PTA)" to assist with communication. *If you have a question or concern regarding your child, please, FIRST contact your child's teacher via phone call or email.* Please, keep in mind teachers are working with students during instructional times and may not answer your phone call right away. *If you need urgent assistance or additional support after reaching out to your child's teacher, please, contact our Main Office at (406) 268-6960.*

### **Student Handbook**

Please, read this handbook carefully and remember to sign the front sheet, please, return this slip to your classroom teacher. You may locate the long-version of our handbook by requesting it in our office or by accessing our school website. This handbook is a handy reference for you throughout the school year. Please, contact school staff via phone or email with any questions.

**We are honored to serve you and your family!**

~Jennifer Martyn, Principal

# Morningside Guidelines for Success

Morningside Elementary will utilize a school-wide behavior system that all adult staff members are responsible for upholding. Teaching, modeling, practicing, and re-teaching are vital in successful implementation. Additionally, all adults need to give clear and consistent messages to students regarding their behavior. Students will quickly learn that they will get the same consistent response from staff on campus through the use of Responsibility-Centered Discipline, Second Step, and Zones of Regulation strategies for support. Positive relationships amongst students and staff are highly valued.

The responsibility for basic behavior development rightfully belongs with the student and his/her parents. At the same time effective learning cannot take place without good discipline. Therefore, we will hold students accountable for their behavior while at school. By doing this we can assure that a proper educational environment will be provided.

**The following is a list of the major guidelines which students are expected to respect and follow at Morningside Elementary School. Please, take time to discuss these guidelines with your child.**

All children make mistakes and poor choices at times. This does not mean they are a bully or even displaying bully behavior. Bully behavior is defined as behavior that is aggressive and involves unwanted, negative actions, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength.

\*\*\*School-wide guidelines also apply to students while they are going to and from school as well as at all before and after school functions on district property and including school-sponsored field trips.

As we begin a new year at Morningside we also review our discipline procedures developed as part of our school-wide behavior plan by our classroom teachers, specialists, and staff. This procedure is based upon our belief that discipline needs to be progressive, from the lowest level of adult involvement to maximum adult involvement. It is our belief to begin with natural, logical consequences that fit the action and the individual, and proceed from there. Our practices will keep track of student behavior and keep the school staff and parents informed of their child's conduct.

All disciplinary measures are in accordance with the GFPS Student Code and applicable state statutes. Communication with parents, by teachers and principal, regarding a disciplinary action will either be verbal or in writing. Discipline reports will be issued for serious or chronic infractions.

Progressive discipline means that consequences get more serious when behaviors accelerate. Most first offenses result in a warning or a re-teaching. A second offense may involve a phone call home and loss of privileges.

When an office referral is involved, parents will be contacted by the referring teacher or principal.

Office consequences may include: loss of privileges, conference with parent or counselor, mediation, detention (missed class for less than a half day), in-school suspension, and/or out-of-school suspension. You will be notified of all suspensions.,

In some cases, involving an intervention specialist, psychologist, or counselor is required when the typical strategies used by teachers just are not working. We work as a team to find the best solution. Sometimes an individual behavior plan will be developed to assist the child in being successful. We appreciate your support and follow-up with serious behavior issues that impact the learning of your child and the learning of others.

- All staff will use office referrals consistently in all areas of campus, i.e., playground, hallways, lunchroom, etc. Three incidents for the same behavior within one month of the first offense equals an office referral.
- Discipline data will be shared with staff members periodically throughout the year.
- Expectations and procedures will be posted in common areas.

**Reteaching:** If a student breaks an expectation, the student will be redirected by reteaching the desired behavior (Here at Morningside, we...). Some possible re-teaching tools may include warning, Principal conference, mediation, etc. Students will be reminded to use our Morningside HERD expectations, Character Strong lessons, and Second Step (Kelso's) Choices to solve problems.

**Minor Offense:** A verbal warning . (“This is your warning...”) and documentation of the incident will be made. It may also include redirection, short time out, etc. The person giving the warning will conference with the student and teach/review the appropriate behavior. The purpose in conferencing with the child is to help the child to think and act responsibly and to encourage them to make a change in their behavior. The child is asked to think through what he/she did and what he/she could do differently (develop a plan for success). This may include loss of recess time. The classroom teacher will assign consequences and document behavior using the office referral system. Refocus will be the primary consequence tool used in the classroom.

Office referrals for general misbehavior at recess or lunch will be addressed by our school aides with support from the Principal/Counselor for reteaching along with mediation as needed.

**Major Offense:** Disruptions to the learning environment or school operations and physical altercations of a student towards a staff member or another student are considered major offenses. Staff issues an office referral and the student will receive a consequence. Parent/Guardian will be contacted by the teacher and/or principal/counselor. The principal will conference with the student and follow up with the parent/guardian as needed. All office referrals are logged into our data system and referred to for making data-based decisions.

**Continued Offenses:** Three tune ups for the same behavior within a month will signal an automatic office referral by the staff member and consequences/progressive discipline will be applied. A parent conference will be set up, including the parent, child, classroom teacher, counselor and specialist teachers as needed, and the principal. A behavioral plan will be discussed at this meeting.

**\*Meetings with the school counselor are required for students receiving repetitive office referrals for behaviors to teach appropriate social and emotional skills as needed.**

## RECOGNITION of STUDENTS

Students who demonstrate outstanding citizenship including attendance, behavior, and grades will be honored throughout the year. These students will be recognized in our school as Morningside HERD Leaders in grades 2nd-6th. In addition, students receive Character Strong certificates and merit awards during awards assemblies. Our Student Council is for grades fifth and sixth. More information will be shared as to how your child can participate as a leader within the building.

The staff at Morningside School will work towards helping all of our students achieve success at school by helping students solve problems and by protecting their right to learn. We believe that communication between parents, students, and school staff is critical. If problems arise, we will work with you to find solutions. We look forward to a good year and are happy to have the opportunity to work with you and your child.

## VOLUNTEERS in our SCHOOL

**YOU make a DIFFERENCE! Thank you for your time, support, and effort. As you come to volunteer this year, please consider these guidelines:**

Check into the office and sign-in. Let us know what you plan to be doing while here.

Wear a name badge at all times when volunteering.

Sign-out when leaving the school.

Let the office know if you are volunteering on a field trip.

You will be asked to respect the procedures of the teacher that you are assisting. Your help is appreciated and we hope that you will return again.

Please, consider joining PTA and volunteering to assist with projects.

**\*\*Volunteers that are working with small groups or one-on-one with students must have a background check completed in Human Resources. The cost is \$25 charged to the school.\*\***