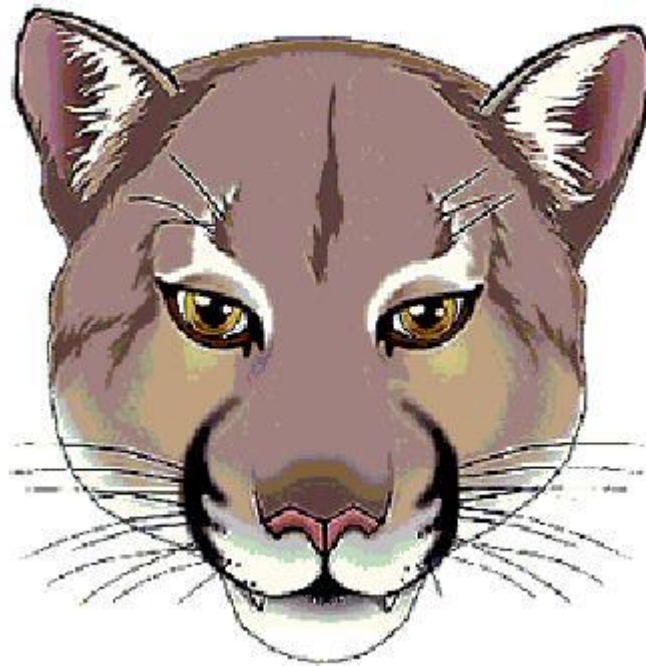


G R E A T F A L L S P U B L I C S C H O O L S

Meadow Lark Elementary School



and
Great Falls Public Schools
STUDENT HANDBOOKS
2025-2026

ATTENDANCE: Attendance matters to our school and community. In order for your child to receive the maximum benefit of our education system, they are expected to attend school every day except for illness, medical appointments, or a family emergency. If your child will be late to school or absent, please **NOTIFY THE OFFICE**. You may leave a message before 9:00 a.m. or after school hours by calling 268-7300. If parents or guardians do not call the school when a child is absent, a call will be made through our automated attendance system. You will be instructed to contact the school to verify the reason for your child's absence. If no contact is made, your child's absence will be marked as unexcused.

We encourage students to arrive in time for the **8:25** morning bell. Students arriving after 8:30 will be counted tardy. Absences and tardiness will be recorded quarterly on report cards. You will be notified if your child is accumulating excessive absences or tardiness.

Please notify the school office regarding changes in phone numbers or addresses. It is **very important that we have current emergency contact information at all times!**

Please check with your child's teacher regarding make-up work if there is an extended absence. If you are requesting make-up work for your student, please call in your request in the morning to allow the teacher time to ready the materials. Please pick up the homework you have requested before 4:15 P.M.

If you need to check your child in or out of school during the school day, please do so in the office. **A photo ID/Driver's License is required for parents to pick up your child** for our Security Door and Raptor Program. Students will not be released to an unauthorized person (parent or guardian listed in Powerschool) without prior clearance through the office. If the parent/guardian is giving permission to someone for pick up, they should call the office that morning so that the pickup process can be timely with minimal interruptions to the office and classroom.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES: Birthday treats are always welcome, and it might be wise to check with your child's teacher regarding treats as we do have students with food allergies. Healthy treats are also encouraged.

Students may not bring birthday invitations to school to pass out because of the hurt feelings which result when someone is excluded. Parents may, however, work with the teacher to discretely distribute them in Wednesday envelopes or backpacks if they are provided in a timely manner.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES/CONDITIONS: Please notify the office if your child has a contagious or communicable disease so others who may have been exposed can be alerted. Pink eye, scabies, head lice, impetigo, strep throat, chicken pox, and measles are some of the diseases considered contagious.

STATE LAW: All immunizations must be current for students entering kindergarten.

CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE: Please see attached sheet regarding **Guidelines for Success**. Please refer to the Great Falls Public Schools Policies (online) for further information concerning conduct and discipline.

COUNSELING: A school counselor is available daily to work with students and provide classroom lessons. They are not able to offer psychological tests, treatment, or individual/family therapy.

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS: Wednesday envelopes are sent home weekly and contain student work and other important information from PTA and Meadow Lark School. Those Wednesday envelopes should be returned to school weekly. All community event information can be found under "Community Flyers" on our GFPS website.

DRESS: Students will be expected to dress in an appropriate manner that does not distract from the learning in

a classroom. Clothing that advertises or promotes illegal substances, liquor, alcohol, or weapons is not permitted at school. Please see School Board Policy 3224.

GRADING/REPORT CARDS: Report cards are issued quarterly for grades K-6. Students in grades 3-6 receive letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) as well as G, S, and N. Students in grades K, 1, and 2 will receive G, S, and N grades. Learning Habit grades are given for all behavior grades with C, S, or NY. Parents are encouraged to access their student's grades using the parent portal for PowerSchool. The Website location is: <http://ps.gfps.k12.mt.us> You will also need your child's username and password, which are available through our office.

HOMEWORK: Homework is given at all levels. Your child's teacher will discuss the homework plan during Back to School Night. Copies of the homework policy are available on our District website under Board Policy 2430.

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL: If your child becomes ill or injured at school, you will be contacted as soon as possible. **Please make sure we have current home and emergency phone numbers at all times.** Children may not stay inside at recess due to illness unless the teacher receives a note or phone call from the parent or doctor regarding the situation.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: Students will receive a shortened recess or remain inside during excessively wet or cold weather. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather, as the lack of appropriate clothing will not excuse a child from recess. Our school district policy requires students to go outdoors for recess unless the temperature is below zero (based on wind chill factors.) We do offer shortened recesses at times when the temperature is around zero (wind chill factored in.)

LUNCH: Students at school may bring lunch or eat hot lunch. Student lunches are \$3.10 (subject to change) daily. Milk is \$0.75 (subject to change) per carton. Adult lunches are available, it is best to notify the office early, so they can be pre-ordered. Free or reduced-price meals are available to students who qualify. Forms for free or reduced lunch are available on the Great Falls Public School website and must be filled out **each year.**

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL: A physician's form is needed for both prescription and over-the-counter medications. This physician's form is available in the school office or through your physician. Over-the-counter medications require an "over the counter" medication form which is available in the school office. All medications must be in a properly labeled container and should be administered in the office. Some inhalers may be exceptions to this policy.

Please notify the classroom teacher and/or office regarding other medical concerns or conditions.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES: Parent-teacher conferences are held in the fall and early spring. This is an opportunity to discuss your child's progress. Please make every attempt to schedule and attend the conference for your child.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: Parent Involvement is encouraged and welcome in grades K-6. More information regarding parent involvement in individual classrooms will be available at Back to School Night.

RETENTION/SPECIAL PROMOTION: the study team (parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, and other appropriate staff) makes a retention or special promotion decision. District Policy 2421R and guidelines mandate the development of a plan, which includes interventions, Light's Retention Scale, and a student assistance plan including goals for the following year.

SAFETY: Traffic safety is an issue at Meadow Lark given the amount of traffic, limited parking, and access to

the building. In an attempt to keep our students safe, we ask the following:

- * **DO NOT** drop off or pick up students in the staff parking lot. Students are not to exit the service door (by trash compacter) at any time. Drivers cannot see students walking between parked cars.

- * Please heed the signs in front of the building and on the east and west sides regarding parking and dropping off students. Also, please refrain from parking in the school bus zone and other marked or painted areas. The Great Falls Police Department will issue tickets to vehicles improperly parked.

- * In order to help maintain your child's safety, we will **insist** that crosswalks be used by our students. Please help us teach children to wait for the crossing guards and cross only at crosswalks by modeling the correct procedure.

Emergency evacuations and procedures are practiced throughout the year. Should emergency closures of schools be necessary, information would be announced through radio and television stations.

Safety on the playground will be stressed. Rules and procedures for the entire building will be reviewed with students at the beginning of the year and periodically throughout the year. Scooters, skateboards, rollerblades, and bikes are **NOT** allowed in the playground equipment area.

More information regarding safety issues is available in the attached Great Falls Public Schools handbook.

SCHEDULE: A schedule of lunch times and recesses will be sent home with students in the fall. School begins at 8:25 for all students. All students in K-6 are dismissed at 3:20 M, T, Th, and F. All students are dismissed at 2:45 every Wednesday so teachers may attend in-service meetings.

TELEPHONE USE: Students may use classroom telephones with the permission of their teachers. We ask that students not use telephones to plan arrangements to play with friends after school, etc. as those plans should be made outside of school.

Adults needing to use a telephone are encouraged to use the telephone on the counter in the office in order to keep classroom disruption to a minimum. **Cell phones and smart watches should not be turned on or used in classrooms as this disrupts instructional time.** Student cell phones must be kept in backpacks and turned off at all times during the school day. Students are asked not to use cell phones on school grounds except in the office area before and after school. District Policy 3630

Teachers are requested not to take phone calls during instructional time. Please leave a message with the office or on the teacher's voicemail and the call will be returned as soon as possible.

Please respect the need for our office staff to receive end-of-the-day messages with enough time to deliver those messages to students prior to dismissal.

TEXTBOOKS/LIBRARY BOOKS: Students will be issued textbooks and have opportunities weekly to check out library books. If books are damaged or lost, the student will be charged a replacement fee.

TRANSPORTATION: A bus schedule will be printed in the Great Falls Tribune or information may be obtained by calling the school office or Supportive Services at 268-6017. Bus schedules are available online through the GFPS website under departments/transportation. Students that are riding buses, must follow all rules and regulations regarding safety and general conduct.

Students who do not normally ride the bus may not ride the bus home with another student without prior approval from Big Sky Bus at 454-1283. Students must get on and off the bus at their assigned bus stops.

Students who ride bicycles to and from school are asked to walk the bikes across the crosswalks and on the school grounds. Bike locks are also important to avoid theft of bikes.

Parents are asked to observe bus zones, crosswalks, no parking signs and painted curb areas, when transporting students to and from school. Please **DO NOT** drop off or pick up students in the staff parking lot.

VISITORS: Parents and others are welcome to visit school; however, we request that all visitors report to the office to sign in when they arrive at school. The front door (east side of building, facing Fox Farm Road) will be locked during school hours and **only available through a secure “buzz in system”**; other doors will be inaccessible and locked throughout the day.

VOLUNTEERS: All volunteers are asked to **check in at the office** before visiting the classrooms. Please sign up in the classroom as well.

WEB SITE: You may access the Meadow Lark School website through the GFPS web site. You may also access the Meadow Lark School web site through the address posted below:

http:// www.gfps.k12.mt.us/ML

Meadow Lark “PAWS” Guidelines for Success



Promptly follow directions.

- Give eye contact and show a listening body
- Say okay and do it right away



Act kindly.

- Show **respect** by seeing value in all people and things and treat them with care.
- Show **empathy** by understanding and connecting to people's feelings.
- Show **cooperation** by working together towards a shared goal.



Work hard.

- Show **responsibility** by acting and understanding the impact of our choices.
- Show **perseverance** by pushing yourself to work through challenges and obstacles.
- Show **creativity** by using your imagination to create something new or solve a problem.



Select safe choices and wellness.

- Show **gratitude** by choosing to appreciate the people and things in our lives.
- Show **honesty** by being truthful in what you say and do.
- Show **courage** by choosing to be helpful, right, and kind even when it's hard or scary.



SCHOOL-WIDE EXPECTATIONS

These school-wide expectations have been explained to your child. They also correspond to the “**Guidelines for Success**” which have been included in this packet as well. We feel it is important to share these expectations with you. You will have an opportunity to address school-wide expectations, as well as classroom expectations at our Back to School Night.

Before School:

1. Arrive after 8:10 A.M. when the playground has adult supervision
2. **NO WEAPONS** (toy or real) are allowed at school. The following are also not allowed: baseball bats, skateboards, scooters, tennis shoes with wheels, roller blades, hockey sticks, portable electronics, video games, trading cards, or toys.
3. Bikes must be locked in the bike racks. Bikes must be walked on school grounds.
4. Musical instruments (5th and 6th graders) may be placed inside the building during extremely cold weather.
5. Students needing to enter the building early will need permission or need to be accompanied by an adult.
6. Students needing to cross Fox Farm Road must cross with the crossing guard.

Recess:

1. Students must have a daily note or phone call from parents to stay in at recess.
2. Students enter the building during recess with permission from an aide.
3. Students leave and enter the building in an orderly manner.
4. Students always make safe choices for themselves and others.

Lunchroom:

1. Students are expected to use manners in the lunchroom.
2. Students eat their own lunch. Trading will not be allowed.
3. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves.
4. Students sit where directed (unless free seating) and wait to be dismissed.

Halls:

1. Students move quietly through the halls, being respectful of others.
2. Students walk to the right of the hallway.

After School:

1. Bus students ride the bus unless a parent notifies the school.
2. Students must leave the school grounds quickly after dismissal, as there is no supervision on the playground.
3. Students needing to cross Fox Farm Road must cross with the crossing guard.

Cell Phones: must be turned off, in backpacks, and out of sight during the school day. They may NOT be used on the playground or during recess. Misuse will result in cell phones being taken to the office and parents being notified.

Please read the 2025-2026 Confirmation of Receipt of Handbook Information page (This page will need to be filled out, signed, and returned to the classroom teacher) and Student Computer Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Agreement.