

GREAT FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2025-2026

TEACHER AIDE

EMPLOYEE

HANDBOOK



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SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

RETIREMENT PROGRAMS

Teacher Aides shall participate in retirement programs under the Federal Social Security Act and the Teacher's Retirement System in accordance with state retirement regulations.

ABSENCES

Notification of Absences

It is extremely important that you notify your supervisor as soon as possible of any unanticipated absences so that, if necessary, alternate arrangements can be made. An absent employee must report his/her absence to a supervisor (or other designated person) before the start of the employee's workday or as soon as practical given the nature of the absence. It is not sufficient for an employee to notify a co-worker or secretary, unless such person has been designated by the supervisor as the appropriate contact for this purpose. Ask your supervisor what the procedure is for reporting absences at your location, as procedures may vary.

For anticipated absences, contact your supervisor in advance to discuss the procedures he or she expects and to complete necessary paperwork.

Bereavement Leave

Employees shall be allowed to use up to three (3) days of bereavement leave for each occurrence of death in the employee's immediate family or for any other member of the employee's immediate household. This leave allowance is in addition to other leaves allowable in this contract. Immediate family shall be defined as employee's father, step-father, father's brother, father's sister, mother, step-mother, mother's brother, mother's sister, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, step-children, foster children, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandparent, great grandparent, grandchild, brother's wife, brother's child, sister's husband, sister's child, spouse's father, spouse's mother, spouse's sister, or spouse's brother, step child's spouse. A Leave Request Form must be completed for this leave.

Bereavement leave as defined above, may be extended by the use of sick leave with prior approval. The Leave Request Form must be completed.

Sick leave may be used for the funeral, memorial service or other related activities of a person outside of the definition above.

Bereavement leave allowance is not cumulative from year to year. This shall be an emergency leave applicable for the particular occasion only.

Verification for bereavement absences may be requested by the District.

Holidays

Teacher Aides are paid for the hours normally worked on these holidays in accordance with MCA 20-1-305: New Year's Day (January 1); Memorial Day (last Monday in May); Independence Day (July 4 and only if working immediately before and after July 4); Labor Day (first Monday in September); Thanksgiving Day (fourth Thursday in November); and Christmas Day (December 25).

Sick Leave

Teacher Aides shall be granted sick leave benefits in accordance with § 2-18-618, MCA. For Teacher Aides, “sick leave” means a leave of absence, with pay, for a sickness suffered by an employee or a member of his or her immediate family. The employees’ immediate family shall be defined as father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, spouse’s father, spouse’s mother, grandchildren, grandparents, brother’s wife, sister’s husband, spouse’s sister, spouse’s brother, child’s spouse, step child’s spouse.

Teacher Aides are not entitled to be paid for sick leave until they have been continuously employed by the District for ninety (90) days.

A Teacher Aide who terminates employment with the District is entitled to a payment equal to one-fourth (1/4) of the accumulated sick leave at the Teacher Aide’s hourly rate. Teacher Aides are only eligible for this payment after being continuously employed by the District for ninety (90) days.

Abuse of sick leave is cause for disciplinary action or dismissal.

Sick Leave Pool

Up to 20 days can be donated and/or received from fellow teacher aides.

Vacation

Teacher Aides shall accrue annual vacation leave benefits in accordance with §§ 2-18-611, 2-18-612, 2-18-614 through 2-18-617 and 2-18-621, MCA. Nothing in this policy guarantees approval of the granting of specific days as vacation leave in any instance. Each request will be judged by the District in accordance with staffing needs. Teacher Aides who have worked for the District less than six (6) calendar months will accrue vacation benefits, but cannot use them until after six (6) calendar months.

Annual leave time accrued as per state law and that not used at the time of termination shall be paid to the Teacher Aide at the Teacher Aide’s hourly rate if the Teacher Aide has been employed by the District for six (6) calendar months.

Use of vacation must be requested in advance in Time Clock Plus.

BREAKS AND LUNCH

Breaks:

Teacher Aides, with approval of their immediate supervisor, may take a paid fifteen (15) minute break during each three and one half (3-1/2) hour period they are scheduled to work. The time of the break(s) will be determined by the immediate supervisor.

Lunch Break:

All Teacher Aides who regularly work at least seven (7) hours per day shall be entitled to a thirty (30) minute unpaid duty-free lunch break. The time of the lunch break, when applicable, shall be determined by the immediate supervisor. In case of emergency, an employee shall take his/her lunch break at another time during the workday if requested to do so by the immediate supervisor.

Examples:

- If an aide works at least seven (7) hours per day, the aide is entitled to a thirty (30) minute unpaid duty-free lunch break and two paid fifteen (15) minute breaks during the day.

- If an aide works less than seven (7) hours a day, the district does not have to allow a lunch period. If the District grants a thirty (30) minute lunch break, the aide won't be able to take a break too.

CLOCKING IN/CLOCKING OUT AND TIME CLOCK PLUS

Teacher Aides are to follow district procedures for clocking in at the start of the shift and clocking out at the conclusion of the shift. Clocking in and out of Time Clock Plus indicates the aide's actual physical presence and therefore must be done exclusively by the employee. The Time Clock Plus records must coincide exactly with physical presence or with leave taken. Falsifying Time Clock Plus records will not be tolerated and will result in discipline or discharge.

COMPENSATION

The Board shall determine the salary and wages for classified personnel. See Appendix C for the 2023-2024 wage schedule. Payday for Teacher Aides shall be the last working day of each month. If payday falls on a holiday or weekend, the last day worked prior to the holiday or weekend will be considered payday.

EVALUATION

Supervision and evaluation of Teacher Aides is intended to be conducted in a positive and helpful manner, with the intent of improving performance. Teacher Aides will be evaluated by the Teacher Aide's building administrator. The evaluation process includes scheduled evaluations, on forms applicable to the job classification and description, and day-to-day appraisals.

The administrator shall provide a copy of the completed evaluation to the Teacher Aide and shall provide an opportunity to discuss the evaluation. The original should be signed by the Teacher Aide and filed in the Personnel File at the Human Resource Office. If the staff member refuses to sign the evaluation, the administrator should note the refusal and submit the evaluation.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED REQUIREMENTS

All Teacher Aides with instructional duties must be highly qualified in the areas of reading, writing and math. In order to be highly qualified, a Teacher Aide must demonstrate one of the following:

- Completion of at least two (2) years of study (minimum of 48 semester credits) at an accredited institution of higher education with evidence of successful coursework in reading, writing and math (proof at time of hire required);
- Obtainment of any Associate's or higher degree (proof at time of hire required); or
- The knowledge of and ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, or mathematics or the instruction of the readiness of these subjects as demonstrated by a rigorous standard of quality through a formal local academic assessment. This will be accomplished by taking a proctored on-line assessment (to be passed within 30 days of hire) after completing a preparation course.

For more information about highly qualified attainment, please contact Keith Davey with the Adult Education Program at 771-5107 or keith_davey@gfps.k12.mt.us.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

A 12-month probationary period is applicable to Teacher Aides. A Teacher Aide may be discharged during the probationary period for any or no reason.

SUBSTITUTING

At times, Teacher Aides may be asked to serve as Substitute Teachers within their building assignment. In order to be paid as a Substitute Teacher, the Teacher Aide must be formally hired as a Substitute Teacher.

Please contact the Human Resource Office, at (406) 268-6014 for more information on how to become a Substitute Teacher.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

All staff members shall assume responsibility for assigned supervision duties in a timely manner and in accordance with established school rules and procedures. Such duties may include, but are not limited to, bus, lunchroom, or playground supervision, as well as any additional responsibilities assigned by the building principal or designee.

Staff members are required to fulfill the full scope of their assigned duties and schedules. This includes the instructional day, supervision assignments, co-curricular activities, study halls, and any additional responsibilities as directed by administration. Staff shall adhere as closely as possible to their assigned daily schedules and responsibilities.

Staff members shall seek clarification from the building principal or appropriate administrator regarding any questions related to assigned duties or responsibilities. Attendance at faculty meetings may be required at the discretion of the principal or supervisor.

Reporting Requirements

All staff members shall promptly report the following to the school office or an administrator:

- Personal injury involving students or staff
- Serious illness of any student
- Damage to school property
- Serious disciplinary issues or violations of school rules
- Suspected abuse and/or neglect of a student (refer to “Child Abuse and Mandatory Reporting” section)

Prohibited Conduct

Staff members shall not:

- Use corporal punishment
- Access or disturb another staff member’s desk, materials, or workspace without authorization
- Publicly criticize or undermine the professional practices of colleagues
- Leave students unsupervised at any time during the school day
- Contact an absent staff member unless specifically directed to do so by administration

CONCLUSION

Teacher Aides are encouraged to consult with their supervisor any time there are questions about information contained in this Handbook or on other District policies and practices. Teacher Aides also may contact their Human Resources Office for such assistance.

Thank you for being an important part of the educational team for Great Falls Public Schools.

Appendix A—25-26 Wage Schedule

* Each year of service is credited on August 1. For example, if a Teacher Aide was hired in January of 2014, they would have been placed at 0 years. On August 1, the Teacher Aide would move to 1 year of service. The next August, the Teacher Aide would move to 2 years of service, etc. Years of service are granted for teacher aide experience only.

2025-2026 TEACHER AIDE SALARY SCHEDULE

YEARS	4%	4% + \$0.30
1	\$12.84	\$13.14
2-3	\$12.96	\$13.26
4-5	\$13.08	\$13.38
6-7	\$13.20	\$13.50
8-6	\$13.33	\$13.63
10-11	\$13.45	\$13.75
12-13	\$13.56	\$13.86
14-15	\$13.70	\$14.00
16-17	\$13.81	\$14.11
18-19	\$13.94	\$14.24
20-21	\$14.06	\$14.36
22-23	\$14.18	\$14.48
24-25	\$14.30	\$14.60
26-27	\$14.41	\$14.71
28-29	\$14.55	\$14.85
30-31	\$14.66	\$14.96
32-33	\$14.78	\$15.08