

Great Falls Public Schools

Giant Springs Elementary School

2026-2027 Student Handbook



Office: 406-268-7045

TO: Giant Springs Elementary Families

FROM: Karla Miller

RE: Student Code for 2026-2027

Attached you will find the student handbooks for Giant Springs Elementary and GFPS. **Please note, the first page contains a “sign off” parents must complete.** Please sign and return the first page to school. 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 Giant Springs Compact and School-wide Guidelines of Success.

☐

Yes, I have read the Giant Springs Teacher, Family, Student Compact.

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Yes, I have read the Giant Springs School Guidelines for Success.

☐

Yes, I have read the Giant Springs Computer Lab Rules.

_____**Parent Signature**

_____**Child Signature**

- During the school year many of the students at Giant Springs will have the opportunity to take part in various **education field trips**.
- In order for your youngsters to take part in these activities we will need a signed permission slip. Please fill out the permission slip below and return the slip to school this week. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

As a student enrolled in Giant Springs Elementary School, my child _____, has permission to participate in field trips during the school year 2026-2027. It is understood that all school regulations and policies must be adhered to by students participating in these trips.

Signed_____

Date_____

Giant Springs Elementary School
Student, Teacher, Family Compact
Live to Learn, Learn to Live

Our Mission

Our Giant Springs Elementary community is committed to lifelong learning. Academic, social, and emotional success is fostered through collaboration, consistency, and safety. Our community nurtures an atmosphere of respect in which students, families, and staff are accepted and valued. Our school receives funds under Title funds and is required to implement this Student, Teacher, Family Compact.

STUDENT: I will:

- Attend school regularly.
- Bring notes home from school.
- Obey school-wide and classroom rules.
- Show respect for myself, others, and school property.
- Come to school prepared.
- Participate positively by doing my best to succeed everywhere.
- Take pride in being a member of the Giant Springs family.

TEACHER/STAFF: I will:

- Believe that each child can learn.
- Have high expectations for all students.
- Assist each child in achieving the essential academic learning requirement.
- Respect and value the cultural and personal uniqueness of each child and his/her family.
- Maintain open lines of communication with student and his/her parents.
- Supply the child and family with clear evaluations of progress and achievement.
- Use special activities and involve parents in the classroom to make learning enjoyable.
- Reinforce school-wide and classroom rules fairly and consistently.
- Take pride in being a member of the Giant Springs family.

PARENT/GUARDIAN: I will:

- See that my child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- Review homework with my child.
- Talk and read with my child and encourage effort.
- Communicate regularly with my child's teacher.
- Support the school discipline.
- Take pride in being a member of the Giant Springs family.



Giant Springs Elementary

We are the bears,
The Giant Spring Bears
Everywhere we go
People want to know
Who we are
So, we tell them

We are *Brave* and have *Empathy*,
We are *Assertive* and act *Respectfully*
Persistent, Accepting, Wise and *Sincere*
You always know when a bear is near.

B-E-A-R-S

Go Bears!

STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Giant Springs Staff

Principal			Administrative Assistant		
Ms. Miller			Mrs. Megan		
Admin Intern			Counselor		
Mrs. Ross			Mrs. Walker		
Classroom Teachers					
Kindergarten	Mrs. Moultray		Ms. Jolly		
1 st Grade	Mrs. Grover	Ms. Goodrich		Ms. Still	
2 nd Grade	Mrs. Lesko	Ms. Cooper		Mrs. Sanders	
3 rd Grade	Ms. Pompa	Ms. Fauque		Mrs. Dijohn	
4 th Grade	Ms. McDonald	Mrs. Hendrickson		Mr. Harris	
5 th Grade	Mrs. Patina	Mrs. Brunner		Ms. Flamand	
6 th Grade	Mrs. Lynch	Ms. Fehres		Mrs. Bechard	
Specialists					
Librarian		District Therapist		PE	
Mrs. Mackiel		Barb Bottomly		Mrs. Norris	
Resource		Literacy		Art	
Mrs. Paschen, Mrs. Bright Mrs. Hoerner		Mrs. Hegdal, Ms. Hirose		Amanda Carter	
Classified Staff					
Engineer		Kitchen		Nurse	
Troy Blancher Dennis Haslid Matt Pepos		Bridgette Jena Ouy		Mady Skawinski	
Traveling Staff					
School Psychologist		Extended Curriculum Services		Speech	
Maria Martin		Adam Agamenoni		Chrissy Bryan	
Music/Instrumental					
General Music- Samantha Hinton Instrumental-Jenny Painter and Millie Rios Abam					

August 26, 2026



Dear Giant Springs School Families:

Welcome to another amazing school year at Giant Springs. We have high expectations for your children to become good citizens, learners, and independent thinkers.

Vision:

Live to Learn, Learn to Live

Mission:

Our Giant Springs Elementary community is committed to lifelong learning. Academic, social, and emotional success is fostered through collaboration, consistency, and safety. Our community nurtures an atmosphere of respect in which students, families, and staff are accepted and valued.

Beliefs:

If you can be anything, be kind!

At Giant Springs Elementary we believe in:

- rigorous expectations and accountability for all,
- celebrating everyone's growth and success,
- trust-filled, authentic, respectful relationships,
- fostering communication and cooperation,
- creating a safe environment,
- acting with integrity,
- nurturing the whole child through creative, relevant, interactive, and experiential learning.

This year will bring some new faces, ideas and opportunities to Giant Springs. I'm inviting you to stop by Giant Springs, see what we do, watch your child at work and play, and be part of the team we call the Giant Springs Family. Join our PTA and get to meet your child's friends and their families.

Our first big event is Back to School Night where you can get to know your child's teacher, explore the classroom, learn about their day, and what they'll be learning this year. It's also the perfect time to hear about the classroom procedures, rules and expectations for your child.

Please read this handbook carefully and remember to sign the front sheet and return it to the office or your child's teacher. This handbook is a handy reference for you throughout the school year. Call us with your questions at 268-7045.

Karla Miller
Principal

**Giant Springs
School-Wide Information
2026-2027**

Office Hours

We are here to assist you and your student. Please feel free to call or visit us. Our office phone number is [406-268-7045](tel:406-268-7045). We are available to answer the phone from 7:45-4:15 daily. If we are with a student and unable to answer the phone, please leave a message, and your call will be promptly returned. Before and after hours, we have voicemail available for your convenience. Additionally, each staff member has a telephone in their area to enable easy communication.

School Hours

Every day except Wednesdays:

School Start Time: 8:25 AM

Dismissal Time: 3:20 PM

Wednesday (Early Dismissal):

School Start Time: 8:25 AM

Dismissal Time: 2:45 PM

Attendance and Tardies

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 every day except for illness, medical appointments, or a family emergency.

If it is necessary for your child to miss school, please call the school office at 268-7045. If an absence is necessary, parents or guardians must notify the office by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If no contact is made, your child's absence will be marked as unexcused. If your child is absent due to a medical appointment or illness, please bring in a doctor's note so we can mark the absence as exempt.

If your child is tardy for school, please have them check into the office prior to going to the classroom. They will be considered tardy if they are not in their classrooms when school begins.

Student Check-Out

If you come to the school to pick up your child during the day, please check them out in the office.

Breakfast Program

Giant Springs School offers a breakfast program five days a week served in your child's classroom. Please do not send your students with coffee or energy drinks.

Early Arrival

Students can arrive on the school grounds at 8:10 AM. The HANDS program is available for students who need to come before 8:10 AM. Make sure that you sign up with HANDS as soon as possible.

Late Pickup

Unless riding the bus or going to HANDS, students must be promptly picked up at dismissal time, which is everyday at 3:20 PM except for Wednesdays which is 2:45 PM. The HANDS program is available for students who are unable to be picked up at dismissal time. Make sure that you sign up with HANDS as soon as possible.

Before and After School

Supervision begins at 8:10 AM. Students will wait at their assigned grade level door until the bell rings at 8:25. Students are expected to go directly home after school. We do not have staff available to supervise students after school. After school plans must be made at home. Students must be promptly picked up at dismissal time.

Elementary Lunch

Giant Springs has qualified to feed ALL students breakfast and lunch every day free of charge.

Free and Reduced Lunch forms must be completed yearly by ALL families for us to continue qualifying for our free meals grant.

- Do not send sodas, energy drinks or coffee in student lunches and snacks. Milk can be purchased, or you can send juice or water.

HANDS

Giant Springs School will again be offering before and after school childcare through the HANDS (Heroes and Neighbors Down at the School) program. A child must be registered, and a fee needs to be paid before a child can attend. Information can be found at: www.handschildcare.org/.

HANDS Hours: 6:45 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Medication/Prescription and Non-prescription

We ask that all medication, including cough drops, be checked in at the office with directions for administering. If it is a prescription, you must have the doctor complete the medical form and meds must be brought to the office in their original container. These forms are available at the doctor's office or at the school. Please label the time(s) the medication should be taken. You will need to come and give your child their medication unless we have the proper forms on file.

All medications (including cough drops) are to be stored in the office as per School District policy. For a student to carry and self-administer asthma medication on school grounds or for school sponsored activities, a form must be completed by the prescribing physician and guardian. If your child has any health problems that may require special consideration, please inform the teacher and the office.

Homework

Homework is assigned at the teacher's discretion. Your child's teacher will discuss the homework plan during Back to School Night.

Wednesday Folder

Student work and information for you about our district and school goes home on Wednesdays. Please take time to go through the folder, ask questions, sign and return any info requiring your response. Please return it with your child on Thursday. If your child splits his/her time with two parents/guardians and you would like a second Wednesday folder, please request one through your child's teacher.

Money and Personal Items

Please leave money, toys, and other personal items at home. We have no safe location for keeping these items. Lockers are not secure, and classrooms are not monitored during breaks and lunch. Personal items are all vulnerable to theft. Please leave them at home. These toys and other personal items include but are not limited to trading cards, soccer balls, footballs, tails, costumes,

purses, and Heelys. Students are welcome to bring a backpack with school required items and a lunch box if bringing lunch from home.

Cell Phones, Smart Watches and Other Electronic Devices

If you require your child to have a phone, smart watch or other electronic device at school, you must know the following:

- Students may use cellular phones, smart watches, and other electronic signaling devices before school begins and after school ends. This means that students may use these devices outside of the school building but on campus before school and after school.
- Once inside of the school building, these devices must be TURNED OFF and stored in their backpack. Exceptions will be made only with the express permission of the principal.
- Giant Springs Elementary will not be responsible for the loss or damage of personal property.
- Cyber bullying is on the rise nationwide. Be sure to protect your child by only giving out his/her phone number on an as needed basis.

Dress and Grooming

Students are reminded that their appearance significantly affects the way others respond to them. The personal appearance of students will be respected provided it does not interfere with the health and safety of students or others and does not disrupt the educational process.

- Unless it is a hat day, students and staff will remove their hats and hoods from their heads upon entering the building. Exceptions will be made only with the express permission of the principal.
- Clothing advertising tobacco, alcohol and/or other drugs is not allowed. All language on clothing must be appropriate and respectful for an elementary school environment.

School Safety

Walkers: Always use the crosswalks and intersections when walking to school and home. Parents, please use the crosswalks. Obey the directions of the crossing guards.
Do not encourage your child to cross in the middle of the street.

Bikers: Students riding bikes to school must have locks for safety and wear helmets. Bikes can only be ridden off school grounds and must be stored and locked in the bike racks.

Bus Riders: Parents and students must be familiar with the rules and procedures of riding school buses. Riding the bus is a privilege and if abused, it can be denied. Children are not allowed to bring guests on the bus. If you have transportation questions, please call Big Sky Buslines at 406-454-1283.

Car Travelers: Because traffic is such a concern here at Giant Springs, we implore parents to be especially cautious when dropping off and picking up their child. Plan for congestion and confusion both morning and afternoon; we do report all violations of parking and safety to the police department in an attempt to keep our students safe. Allow plenty of time to get here and drop off students only after pulling up to a curb. DO NOT STOP in the middle of the street to load/unload students. DO NOT PARK in the bus zone. AVOID stopping in the parking lot driveway to load/unload students.

Visitors

Anytime you come to school to visit or volunteer, enter through Door 1 and sign in at the office with your state issued ID. If you are volunteering, you must complete Form 5430F and pass the background check before volunteering. This is an essential safety protocol. Please refer to GFPS [Policy 5430](#) and [Policy 4301](#).

Birthdays

As part of our commitment to promoting a healthy and inclusive environment at our school, we have established specific guidelines regarding snack and birthday treat policies. Celebrations are encouraged, but any treats brought to school for birthdays must be store-bought and free from common allergens. This policy ensures the safety of all students, particularly those with food sensitivities and allergies, some of which can be life-threatening. For those seeking snack and birthday treat ideas, here are some healthy and less healthy options that are free from major allergens:

- Fresh fruit (apples, bananas, grapes)
- Cut-up vegetables (carrots, cucumber slices, bell peppers)
- Cheese sticks or cubes
- Yogurt cups or pouches (check for allergens)
- Popcorn (plain or lightly salted)
- Rice cakes or chips
- Beef sticks
- Fruit snacks
- Cupcakes (check for allergens)
- Cookies (check for allergens)

Furthermore, the school welcomes the celebration of student birthdays. However, to accommodate any allergies, homemade baked goods are not permitted for classroom distribution. Usually treats are handed out in the last 15 minutes of the day. Make sure to have plenty for all.

Giant Springs Guidelines for Success

WE ARE RESPECTFUL.

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE.

WE ARE SAFE.

As we strive to provide the best possible education for our students, we recognize the significance of fostering a safe, supportive learning environment. In pursuit of this goal, Giant Springs is excited to introduce our school-wide discipline plan which is based on the principles of Responsibility-Centered Discipline (RCD).

At Giant Springs, we believe that discipline should be approached in a manner that not only addresses misbehavior, but also teaches accountability and builds positive relationships within our school community. The Responsibility-Centered Discipline (RCD) model aligns with these values and serves as a framework for promoting positive behavior and character development.

During a student's most challenging moment(s), we will listen and respond to a student with emotional control and leadership, provide clear and consistent expectations, and coach students through the many benefits for changing their behavior. This is done through the Give Em' 5 structure where a staff member offers support, states the school-wide expectation(s), includes the breakdown of how the behavior did not meet the stated expectation(s), explains the possible benefits for their future success, and closes with a plan for the student to resolve the problem. Since every student is unique, the importance of providing individualized support when addressing behavior concerns is recognized and valued in this model.

All children make mistakes and make poor choices at times. This does not mean they are bullies 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.

Implementing the principles of Responsibility-Centered Discipline will create a safe, supportive learning environment where every student can thrive.

We also value the partnership between families and the school community, and we invite you to engage in open communication with us. Please do not hesitate to reach out and get involved. We believe that a collaborative effort between home and school is essential to provide the best educational experience for our students.

Thank you for your ongoing support, trust, and commitment to your child's education. Together, we can create a nurturing environment that fosters personal growth, character development, and academic success.

Giant Springs School 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 AM and will wait at their assigned grade level door until the bell rings at 8:25. Supervision begins at 8:10 AM
2. **NO WEAPONS**, toys or real, are allowed at school.
3. No personal items are allowed at school. The school is not responsible for any of these lost or stolen items. Phones, smart watches and electronic devices should stay in backpacks. See page GS8 for more details.
4. Bikes and scooters ridden to school must be locked to the bike racks and cannot be ridden on school grounds.
5. If you drop off your child, please use the designated drop off spots by their assigned grade level door. **Do not use the bus zone or parking lot driveways.**

Recess:

1. Students may not enter the building during recess without permission from an aide.
2. Students will leave and enter the building in an orderly manner.
3. Students will follow the safety rules and our school-wide expectations.

Lunchroom Expectations:

1. Students are asked to wait patiently, talk quietly, and eat politely.
2. Trading food is not allowed. No pop, energy drinks or coffee are allowed.
3. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves.
4. Students will sit where directed and wait to be dismissed.
5. All students are required to take a hot lunch or pack a lunch.

Hallway Expectations:

1. Students will walk on the right side of the hallway and stairs.
2. Voice level is at 0 or 1.

After School Expectations:

1. Bus students must ride the bus unless they have a note and/or phone call from their family.
2. Students must leave the building and grounds immediately after dismissal and may not return to the playground until **after** 4:00 PM.
3. Bikes, skateboards, rollerblades, and scooters may not be ridden on school grounds. Students need to walk their bikes and scooters until they are off school property.
4. Students will use their designated exit doors at the end of the day to minimize congestion. Please pick up at your student’s designated grade level door.
5. Do NOT park in the Bus Zone or parking lot driveways.

**Please read and review these expectations with your student.
Your support is essential!**