



STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR



OUR MISSION

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

2025-2026 District Student-Parent Handbook

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Disclaimer: The Rockford Area School district reserves the right to alter or vary the application of these rules and procedures. As new policies or regulations are developed by the school board or State or Federal statutes, additions or deletions will be made to this handbook. Any conflicts between language in this handbook and a school district policy will be resolved in favor of the policy.

INTRODUCTION

This handbook includes an overview of District #883 policies, regulations, and procedures about student rights and responsibilities. Those documents are updated in response to changes in the law and other circumstances. Therefore, there may have been changes to the documents reviewed in this handbook since last printed. District policies can be found on our website at www.rockford883.org. If you have questions or would like more information about a specific issue, please contact the building principal.

MISSION

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

VISION

Rockford Area Schools provides a supportive, rigorous, and relevant learning culture producing courageous learners prepared to enter a global society.

CORE VALUES

Excellence: To be our best, expect our best; to be inspired daily to become the very best we can be

Students First: A safe, healthy environment to challenge, engage and inspire all students

Community: It's about all of us, all the time

Integrity: Align actions and words with values and beliefs while respecting differences

Stewardship: Care and responsibility with our resources including natural and social environments

Student Experience: All students have access to engage in a rich arts and academics environment, and an abundance of extracurricular opportunities

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. Student achievement and growth.
2. Healthy and supportive environment.
3. Community, school and family partnerships.
4. Culture of collective purpose.
5. Stewardship of resources.

CALENDAR FOR 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

August 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2025						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

June 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				


July 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	


 School Closed

 Start of the quarter

 Staff Development (no school for students)

 End of the quarter

 Half Day Staff Development (no school for students)

 New teacher days

1st Qtr.	September 2 to October 31 =	41
2nd Qtr.	November 4 to January 16 =	41
3rd. Qtr.	January 20 to March 26 =	46
4th Qtr.	April 7 to June 4 =	42
		170 days

May 29 - Commencement

REAMS EVENTS	DATES	HOURS
Assessment Days	9/02, 9/03	
Fall Conferences	11/3, 11/6	8.0hrs
Spring Conferences	3/12, 3/16	8.0hrs
Kindergarten Round Up	02/05	

RMS-CES EVENTS	DATES	HOURS
Open House	8/27	2.0hrs
Fall Conferences-Open	10/14	4.0hrs
Fall Conferences-Scheduled	10/21	2hrs
Winter Conferences	2/12	4.0hrs
STEM, Art and Academic Showcase	4/30	4.0hrs

New Staff Days	8/12, 8/13	
Workshop Week	8/25, 8/26, 8/27, 8/28	4
SD Days/Work Days	10/15, 11/03, 1/19, 2/17	7
	3/27(.5), 4/6, 6/06 (.5)	
	1 Floating SD/Work Day 8/01 - 8/22	
		170
		181 +
2 PM days = 16 hrs		183

RHS EVENTS	DATES	HOURS
Open House	8/27	4.0hrs
Fall Conferences	10/23	4.0hrs
Curriculum Night	12/9	4.0hrs
Spring Conferences	3/12	4.0hrs
Commencement	5/29	Extra

Per district practice and in consultation with the EMR exclusive representatives, e-learning days may be utilized in the event of inclement weather or unforeseen events.

Approved 2/19/2025

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

PART I – INFORMATION

Arrival and Dismissal Hours

School day hours at each building are:

REAMS 8:05am-3:00pm (doors open at 7:50am)

ECSE AM Section: 8:05am-10:45am

ECSE PM Section: 12:15pm-2:55pm

RMS-CES 7:50am-2:45pm (doors open at 7:30am)

RHS 8:00am-2:50pm (doors open at 7:20am)

School begins for each child as he/she enters the door and appropriate behavior is expected in all areas of the building at all times. For the welfare and safety of all students, it is requested that students do not arrive at school any earlier than necessary. If you choose to pick-up your child at the end of the school day, please be sure to sign-in at the front office and obtain a visitor's sticker. Unless participating in a school-sponsored activity or working with a teacher, students should not be in the building without supervision.

Calendar

Refer to District Policy 602

The school calendar is adopted annually by the school board. A copy of the school calendar can be found in the introduction section and on the school district's website at www.rockford883.org.

Class Assignments

Refer to District Policy 515

Students will receive instruction in required courses/classroom assignments throughout the school year. Parents and guardians will assist their child in selecting elective courses at RMS-CES and RHS. This selection is a term-long commitment. Schedules are subject to change due to academic needs and availability.

Complaints

Refer to District Policy 103

Students, parents/guardians, employees, or other persons may report concerns or complaints to the school district. Complaints may be either written or oral. People are encouraged, but not required, to file a written complaint at the building level where appropriate. The appropriate administrator will respond in writing to the complaining party regarding the school district's response to the complaint.

Eighteen-Year-Old Students

The age of majority for most purposes in Minnesota is 18 years of age. Once a student reaches 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution, he or she becomes an "eligible student," and all rights formerly given to parents

under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), transfer to the student. However, although the rights under FERPA have now transferred to the student, a school may disclose limited information from an "eligible student's" education records to the parents/guardians of the student, without the student's consent, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes. The eligible student has the right to have access to his or her education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, the right to have control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records, and the right to file a complaint with the US Department of Education. The term "education records" is defined as those records that contain information directly related to a student and which are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution.

In an effort to keep parents/guardians included in their student's educational progress, an Authorization form is available at the high school office. Parents/guardians are asked to review this Authorization with their child and obtain their consent on or after their 18th birthday. All signed Authorizations may be returned to the high school counseling office and records will be updated to reflect the 18-year old child's consent to allow his/her parents or guardians to have access to all educationally related matters.

All students, regardless of age, are governed by the rules for students provided in school district policy and this handbook.

Employee Directory

Refer to District Policy 406

Most district employees' email addresses follow the format: firstname.lastname@rockford883.org. More information is located on our website at www.rockford883.org.

Employment Background Checks

Refer to District Policy 404

The school district will seek criminal history background checks for all applicants who receive an offer of employment with the school district. The school district also will seek criminal history background checks for all individuals, except enrolled student volunteers, who are offered the opportunity to provide athletic coaching services or other extracurricular academic coaching services to the school district, regardless of whether compensation is paid. These positions include, but are not limited to, all athletic coaches, extracurricular academic coaches, assistants, and advisors. The school district may

elect to seek criminal history background checks for other volunteers, independent contractors, and student employees.

Equal Access to School Facilities

Refer to District Policy 801

It is the intention of the Rockford School Board to make available, whenever possible, the facilities of the school system by organizations and groups in the community. For more information, please call Community Education at 763-477-4563. Appropriate and sufficient personnel are required to be present when facilities are in use. Charges will be made to groups when services of personnel are required when they normally are not on duty. Rental fees will be charged according to School Board Policy. The school district has created a limited open forum for secondary students to conduct non-curriculum-related meetings during non-instructional time. The school district will not discriminate against or deny equal access or a fair opportunity on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings. These limited open forum meetings will be voluntary and student initiated; will not be school sponsored; employees or agents of the school will be present at religious meetings only in a non-participatory capacity; the meetings will not interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school; and non-school persons will not direct, control, or regularly attend activities of student groups. All meetings under this provision must follow the procedures established by the school district.

Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state, federal, and local funds at no charge to a student. Students *are* expected to provide their own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks. Students may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including (not an inclusive list):

- Cost for materials for a class project that exceeds minimum requirements and is kept by the student.
- Security deposits for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment.
- Field trips considered supplementary to the district's educational program.
- Admission fees or costs to attend or participate in optional extracurricular activities and programs.
- Voluntarily purchased student health and accident insurance.
- Use of musical instruments owned or rented by the school district.
- A school district-sponsored driver or motorcycle education training course.

- Transportation to and from school for students living within two miles of school.
- Transportation of students to and from optional extracurricular activities or post-secondary instruction conducted at locations other than school.

Students will be charged for textbooks, workbooks, and library books that are lost or destroyed. The school district may waive a required fee or deposit if the student and parent/guardian are unable to pay. For more information, contact the school office.

Food in the Classrooms

Refer to District Policy 533

Food and beverages are to be consumed in the designated areas and are not permitted in the other areas without permission. No food or beverage of any kind is allowed in the auditorium, media center, or computer labs. If students bring food into the classrooms, please comply with our district wellness policy. Please be cognizant that many students have severe food allergies that may limit foods permitted in the classroom.

Birthday Treats

Please let the teacher know ahead of time if you would like to send treats to the class to celebrate your child's birthday. All treats must be store bought and commercially prepared.

Fundraising

Refer to District Policy 511

All fundraising activities conducted by student groups and organizations and/or parent groups must be approved in advance by the Activities Director (if extracurricular activity), building Principal, Director of Finance and Operations and Superintendent. Participation in non-approved fundraising activities is a violation of school district policy. Solicitations of students or employees by students for non-school-related activities will not be allowed during the school day. The required paperwork to receive the required approval can be found at the school office.

Gifts to Employees

Refer to District Policy 421

Employees are not allowed to solicit, accept, or receive a gift from a student, parent, or other individual or organization of greater than nominal value. Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to write letters and notes of appreciation or to give small tokens of gratitude.

Gifts and Deliveries to Students

Gifts, balloons, flowers, etc. will not be delivered during the school day with the exception of school-sponsored activities. Any deliveries will be kept in the office and delivered at the end of the day.

Graduation Ceremony

Student participation in the graduation ceremony is a privilege, not a right. Students who have completed the requirements for graduation are allowed to participate in graduation exercises, unless participation is denied for appropriate reasons, which may include discipline. Students must wear the issued cap and gown unaltered and only regalia pre-approved by the district: gold honor cords, red, white and blue military cords, NHS stole, and/or IB Diploma Candidate recognition pin. Graduation exercises are under the control and direction of the building principal(s).

Holiday Celebrations and Parties

Rockford Area Schools observes various holidays throughout the school year. Students who are unable to participate in holiday celebrations are excused from these events. Parents/guardians should contact the building principal in advance to excuse an absence. Please refer to the district calendar in the introduction of this handbook or on the website www.rockford883.org.

Infinite Campus

Parent Portal, located on the school's website, allows parents to connect to school anytime from any place that has Internet access. This program allows you to access your child's school records such as: attendance, academic progress reports, report cards, health records and lunch account. Student fees are assigned on your child's fee tab on your Parent Portal. Fees, including lunch payments, can be paid directly in your Campus account. To sign up, you need a photo ID, such as a driver's license, for assurance of confidentiality of your child's records. You can sign up at any building office.

Interviews of Students by Outside Agencies

Refer to District Policy 519

Students may not be interviewed during the school day by persons other than a student's parents/guardians or school district officials, employees, and/or agents, except as provided by law and/or school policy.

Library/Media Center

The library/media center hours will be available at each building's office and on the district website.

Students are welcome in the Media Center when a supervisor is present and are expected to follow the same rules as classroom behavior.

Lockers

Pursuant to Minnesota statutes, school lockers are the property of the school district. Students are to keep lockers neat and orderly and are to use the locker they are assigned. All hall lockers have combination locks. The district's insurance does not cover the loss of personal items. If using locker room lockers, students are **strongly encouraged to put and use locks on them**. Locks for locker room lockers may be purchased at school for a nominal fee or students may bring their own lock. If supplying their own lock, the combination **MUST** be shared with the school. Information regarding locker searches can be found under the Searches section.

Lost and Found

Please feel free to check the Lost and Found when you are at school and remind your child to check if they are missing anything. Items left at school will be donated to charity periodically throughout the year.

Parents/guardians should give the following point's careful consideration to help eliminate lost items:

1. Clearly label your child's coats, jackets, sweaters, caps, boots, etc., with his/her full name and grade.
2. Use caution in allowing articles of sentimental or monetary value to be brought to school.
3. When an article is lost, don't let time elapse before you or your child tries to locate it.

Lunch

Refer to District Policy 534R

A complete and nutritional breakfast/lunch program is available at our school. Menus are published on the Rockford Area Schools website at www.rockford883.org. Students may select a lunch at school or bring a prepared lunch from home. Milk will be available for purchase to supplement lunches brought from home. Student beverages must comply with our District's Wellness Policy (refer to District Policy 533).

Lunch is to be eaten in designated areas only, unless other arrangements are made. The right of the student to eat in the lunchroom or commons area is coupled with the responsibility of keeping the area presentable for others.

Students are expected to demonstrate respectful behavior and observe school policies and rules during lunch. All schools have a closed campus as well as a closed lunch period. Students are not allowed to leave the lunchroom/commons area during lunch. Prior approval is required for all lunch visitors. All visitors are expected to

follow main office check-in and check out procedures determined by individual buildings. Please contact the main office in each building for more information regarding their process.

Lunch times vary by classroom, grade level or schedule. Lunch schedules may change at quarter and/or semester breaks for some students. Students will be notified of their assigned lunch time on the first day of class at each trimester/quarter.

2025-2026 LUNCH PRICES

Adult/Second Full Student Breakfast \$2.40

Adult/Second Full Student Lunch \$5.00

Milk \$.60

Second Entree Only \$3.00

Other Ala Carte Items \$1.00-\$3.00

Lunch Balances

Students are encouraged to participate in the food service program on a daily basis. Sustained participation ensures a better program at lower costs.

Parents/guardians will be notified by email or letter when their students balance is at a positive \$10.00.

Students will not be permitted to charge meals to their account if they have a negative balance of \$5 or greater as indicated by their account.

Parents/guardians can make deposits to student lunch accounts in the Infinite Campus Portal or mailing a check to the high school kitchen, attention: Harlan Adelman. Students can also bring deposits to their building office. You can view your child's lunch balance by logging on to your Parent Portal on Infinite Campus. Details on negative account balances and unpaid meal charges can be found in **Appendix 7**.

Money

Please emphasize with your child(ren) the danger of leaving money or valuables in their desk or other places at school. The school assumes no responsibility for the loss of money or valuables.

Nondiscrimination

Refer to District Policy 102, 401, 521, 522 and 528

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment.

All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools

More information can be found at

<https://www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-ix>.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The school district recognizes its obligation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and activity in the school system. If there are questions regarding Section 504, contact a building principal or the counselor.

Grievance Procedure for Complaints of Discrimination

The school district has developed a grievance procedure to comply with federal laws by providing due process standards that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act or for complaints of disability discrimination under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. See **Appendix 6** for full procedure.

Vocational Opportunities Annual Notification

Rockford Area Schools offers a variety of vocational opportunities through the Business Education and Career and Technology Education Departments.

The purpose of this notice is to inform students, parents, employees and the general public that these opportunities are offered regardless of race, color, national origin, sex or disability. Admission in the specific courses is determined by grade level, and in some cases, completion of prerequisite courses.

Section 504 and Title IX Coordinators

The district has designated the following individuals to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972.

Title IX Coordinators

Dr. Jeff Ridlehoover, Superintendent
Office Address: 6051 Ash St.
Rockford, MN 55373
Office Number: 763-477-9165 x 4002

Section 504 Coordinator

Samantha Bloom, Guidance Counselor

Office Address: Rockford High School
7600 County Road 50, Rockford, MN 55373
Office Phone Number: 763-477-5846 ext. 3033

Molly Wirth, School Counselor

Office Address: Rockford Middle School—Center for
Environmental Studies
6051 Ash Street, Rockford, MN 55373
Office Phone Number: 763-477-5831 ext. 2600

Allison Leistico, School Counselor

Office Address: Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet
School
7650 County Road 50, Rockford, MN 55373
Office Phone Number: 763-477-5837 ext. 1006

Notice of Violent Behavior by Students

Refer to District Policy 529

The school district will give notice to teachers and other appropriate school district staff before students with a history of violent behavior are placed in their classrooms. Prior to giving this notice, district officials will inform the student's parent or guardian that the notice will be given. The student's parents/guardians have the right to review and challenge their child's records, including the data documenting the history of violent behavior.

Outdoor Recess

All children must go outside on outdoor recess days. The temperature and wind-chill factor are considered when the decision is made for outdoor recess. The elementary school uses the following weather guidelines for preparing students to go outdoors at recess:

1. Warmer than 0°F -- outside recess for all students.
2. Between 0°F and -10°F -- recess time may be shortened.
3. Colder than -10°F -- indoor recess.

Parent/Guardian and Teacher Communications

Automated Information System

Our automated alert system has the capability to provide important messages electronically via computer, telephone and/or text message. This system is used for emergency situations only (e.g. school closings, threats, etc.).

Parent Portal through Infinite Campus

Parent Portal gives parents/guardians and students easy online access to current grades, attendance, test scores,

health information, lunch account balances, etc. Teachers are required to update grades at least once every three weeks. If you have questions or are having difficulty logging in, contact the building office.

Progress Report/Report Cards

Report cards will be available online at the end of each grading period. Printed copies are available upon request.

Teacher Classroom Calendar

Visit our website at www.rockford883.org and find your school's tab, then the academics tab to find the teacher's website to view your child's upcoming assignments and class activities. This link is designed to be one tool to help you stay informed about your child's class.

Monthly Parent Bulletin

The Monthly building bulletin is emailed on the first Friday of each month during the school year. It features highlights from the previous month and previews upcoming events.

Parent/Guardian and Teacher Conferences

Parent/guardian and teacher conferences will be held throughout the school year. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend and visit with teachers regarding student progress. In addition to the scheduled conferences, parents/guardians are invited to confer with teachers at any time. For more information on the conference dates for the school year, please check out the academic calendar in the Introduction part of this handbook, visit our website www.rockford883.org, or contact the building office.

Parent/Guardian Volunteers

Parents/guardians are welcome in the schools and are encouraged to volunteer. To volunteer in the school building or classroom, parents/guardians should contact the building office. Parents/guardians who visit the school must sign in at the building office before entering any other part of the building.

Photographs

Throughout the year, photographs are taken in classrooms and at school activities. Some of these photos may be published in local newspapers or in Rockford Area Schools' publications, emails or websites. Parents may request that their child's photographs and identifying names not be published. The request must be made in writing and sent to the district office attention to Christa Larson. (This does not apply to pictures of school events taken by the news media.)

Pledge of Allegiance

Refer to District Policy 531

Students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America one or more times each week. Any person who does not wish to participate in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance for any personal reason may elect not to do so. Students must respect another person's right to make that choice. Students will also receive instruction in the proper etiquette toward, correct display of, and respect for the flag.

Return Check Notification

If your check is returned, it may be represented electronically. You authorize service charges and processing fees, as permitted by state law, to be debited from the same account by paper draft or electronically, at our option. The use of a check for payment is your acknowledgement and acceptance of this policy and its terms. If you have any questions about this service, please contact the business office at 763-477-9165.

Schedule

Refer to District Policy 602

A schedule is needed to ensure the smooth operation of the school. The daily school schedule is often building specific and within the authority of the building principal to determine. A general building schedule can be found at the beginning of the handbook.

School Activities

Refer to District Policy 510

The school district provides opportunities for students to pursue special interests that contribute to their physical, mental, and emotional health; however, instruction is the school district's priority.

Students who participate in school-sponsored activities are expected to responsibly represent the school and community. All rules pertaining to student conduct and student discipline apply to school activities.

All spectators at school-sponsored activities are expected to behave appropriately. Students and employees may be subject to discipline and parents/guardians and other spectators may be subject to sanctions for inappropriate, illegal, or unsportsmanlike behavior at these activities or events.

Rockford Area School District is a member of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). Students who participate in MSHSL activities must also abide by the MSHSL rules. The district will enforce all MSHSL rules during the school year and in the summer where applicable.

Employees who conduct MSHSL activities will cover applicable rules, penalties, and opportunities with students and parents/guardians prior to the start of an activity. For more information about the MSHSL rules and student eligibility requirements, contact the Activities Director.

School Closing Procedures

Refer to District Policy 806

School may be canceled when the superintendent believes the safety of students and employees is threatened by severe weather or other circumstances. The superintendent will make a decision about closing school or school buildings as early in the day as possible.

School closings due to severe weather or other emergency reasons will be posted on the district website at www.rockford883.org. A media message will be announced over TV stations, KARE 11 TV, WCCO 4, KSTP 5 and KMSP 9, placed on KRWC 1360 radio and our social media channels. Complementing the media messages is our family notification system through Infinite Campus.

The school district may conclude that students can be safely transported to and from school and keep school open, but an individual parent may disagree with our decision. Under such conditions, parents/guardians must exercise their judgment regarding the attendance of their child(ren). We will respect all reasonable decisions in these circumstances and excuse any absence.

NWSISD Closing Procedures

As a reminder for our NWSISD families, please go to NWSISD website for transportation information regarding school closings information, and other guidelines. To view the NWSISD website, please go to www.nws.k12.mn.us, click on the Transportation tab on the left side.

E-Learning Day

Instead of a school closure, we might decide to have an E-Learning Day. E-Learning allows schools to offer access to online instruction provided by the students due to inclement weather. While E-Learning days cannot replace students' face-to-face time with their teachers, they can provide better continuity when inclement weather inhibits a full day of in-person instruction.

Searches

Refer to District Policy 502 and 527R

In the interest of student safety and to ensure that schools are drug free, district authorities may conduct searches. Students violate school policy when they carry contraband on their person or in their personal possessions or store contraband in their desks, lockers, or vehicles, including

snowmobiles, parked on school property. “Contraband” means any unauthorized item, the possession of which is prohibited by school district policy and/or law. If a search yields contraband, school officials will seize the item(s) and, where appropriate, give the item(s) to legal officials for ultimate disposition. Students found to be in violation of this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with the school district’s “Student Discipline” policy, which may include suspension, exclusion, expulsion, and, when appropriate, the student may be referred to legal officials.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices

If the school district has a reasonable suspicion that a student has violated a school rule or law by use of a cell phone or other electronic device, the school district may search the device. The search of the device will be reasonably related in scope to the circumstances justifying the search. A student’s cell phone or electronic device may be confiscated by the school district and, if applicable, provided to law enforcement.

Lockers and Personal Possessions Within a Locker [*]

According to state law, school lockers are the property of the school district. At no time does the school district relinquish its exclusive control of lockers provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of lockers may be conducted by school officials for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

Students’ personal possessions within a school locker may be searched only when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. As soon as practicable after the search of a student’s personal possessions, the school officials will provide notice of the search to students whose lockers were searched, unless disclosure would impede an ongoing investigation by police or school officials.

Desks

School desks are the property of the school district. At no time does the school relinquish its exclusive control of desks provided for the convenience of students. Inspection of the interior of desks may be conducted by school officials for any reason at any time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

Personal Possessions and Student’s Person

The personal possessions of a student and/or a student’s person may be searched when school

officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school rules. The search will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness.

Vehicles on Campus [**]

Patrols and Inspections

School officials may conduct routine patrols of student parking lots and other school district locations and routine inspections of the exteriors of the motor vehicles, including snowmobiles of students. Such patrols and inspections may be conducted without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant.

Search of the Interior of a Student’s Motor Vehicle

The interior of a student’s motor vehicle in a school district location, including the glove and trunk compartments, may be searched when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law and/or school policy or rule. The search will be reasonable in its scope and intrusiveness. Such searches may be conducted without notice, without consent, and without a search warrant. A student will be subject to withdrawal of parking privileges and to discipline if the student refuses to open a locked motor vehicle or its compartments under the student’s control upon the request of a school official.

Student Publications and Materials

Refer to District Policy 505 and 512

The policy of the school district is to protect students’ free speech rights while, at the same time, preserving the district’s obligation to provide a learning environment that is free of disruption. All school publications are under the supervision of the building principal and/or sponsor. Non-school-sponsored publications may not be distributed without prior approval.

Distribution of Non-School-Sponsored Materials on School Premises

The school district recognizes that students and employees have the right to express themselves on school property. This protection includes distributing non-school-sponsored material, subject to school district regulations and procedures, at a reasonable time and place and in a reasonable manner. Any student or employee wishing to distribute (as defined in this policy) non-school sponsored material must first submit for approval a copy of the material to the building principal who will review the request and render a decision. For detailed information, see the complete “Distribution of Non-School-Sponsored

Materials on School Premises by Students and Employees” policy 505 on the district’s website at www.rockford883.org.

School-Sponsored Student Publications

The school district may exercise editorial control over the style and content of student expression in school-sponsored publications and activities. Faculty advisors shall supervise student writers to ensure compliance with the law and school district policies. Students producing official school publications and participating in school activities will be under the supervision of a faculty advisor and the school principal. “Official school publications” means school newspapers, yearbooks, or material produced in communications, journalism, or other writing classes as part of the curriculum. Expression in an official school publication or school-sponsored activity is prohibited when the material:

- Is obscene to minors;
- Is libelous or slanderous;
- Advertises or promotes any product or service not permitted for minors by law;
- Encourages students to commit illegal acts or violate school regulations or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of school or school activities;
- Expresses or advocates sexual, racial, or religious harassment or violence or prejudice;
- Is distributed or displayed in violation of time, place, and manner regulations.

Expression in an official school publication or school-sponsored activity is subject to editorial control by the school district over the style and content when the school district’s actions are reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns. Official school publications may be distributed at reasonable times and locations.

Student Records

Refer to District Policy 515

Student records are classified as public, private, or confidential. State and federal laws protect student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents/guardians and eligible students with certain rights. For the purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is one who is 18 or older or who is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. For more information on the rights of parents/guardians and eligible students regarding student records, please see **Appendix 3** in the back of this handbook.

“Authorized representative” means any entity or individual designated by the school district, state, or an agency headed by an official of the Comptroller of the United States, the Attorney General of the United States, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, or state and local educational authorities to conduct, with respect to federal or state supported education programs, any audit or evaluation or any compliance or enforcement activity in connection with federal legal requirements that relate to these programs. A complete copy of the school district’s “Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records” policy may be obtained at any school office or on the district website at www.rockford883.org.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Refer to District Policy 515

Rockford Area Schools recognize its responsibility in regard to the collection, maintenance and dissemination of pupil records and the protection of the privacy rights of students as provided in federal law and state statutes. Rockford Area Schools recognize that only pertinent and factual information shall be in the permanent records of the district’s students and that a parent or eligible student has a right to inspect and review student’s educational records.

Student Surveys

Refer to District Policy 520

Occasionally, the school district utilizes surveys to obtain student opinions and information about students. For complete information on the rights of parents/guardians and eligible students about conducting surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical examinations, see **Appendix 4** in the back of this handbook. A complete copy of the school district’s “Student Surveys” policy may be obtained at any school office or on the district website at www.rockford883.org.

Telephone Access & Messages to Students

Refer to district Policy 524

Office telephones are available for students’ use. Students will not be called out of class to receive phone messages except in the event of an emergency.

Personal cell phone use during the instructional day is prohibited at the elementary school, but allowed during non-instructional times at the middle and high schools. Students will not accept telephone calls in their classroom. Students are to use the phone only with their teacher’s permission and only for very important messages. Making arrangements for after-school social affairs is not considered an acceptable reason to use the phone. Please

make plans at home to take care of personal business (i.e., Cub Scouts, Brownies, and other after school activities).

A courtesy phone is available for student use in the school office and Community Center when permission from the office staff is given. Students will not be called out of class to receive phone messages except in the event of an emergency. Students are prohibited from using cell phones and other electronic communication devices during classroom instructional time, unless directed to do so by the classroom teacher or staff member. Students also are prohibited from using a cell phone or other electronic communication device to engage in conduct prohibited by school district policies including, but not limited to, cheating, bullying, harassment, and malicious and sadistic conduct. **In the case of an emergency, please contact the school office instead of contacting your child directly.**

Cell phone expectations are designed to ensure that cell phones do not hinder the learning environment or disrupt positive social interactions. By adhering to these guidelines students, parents, and school staff contribute to a school community that values education, engagement, and respectful behavior.

Please see Cell Phones, MP3 Players and Other Electronic Devices section under Section III Rules and Discipline for further information.

Transportation of Public School Students

Refer to District Policy 707, 709R and 710

Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. The school district will provide transportation, at the expense of the school district, for all resident students who live two miles or more from the school. Transportation will be provided on all regularly scheduled school days or make-up days. Transportation will not be provided during the summer school break, except in certain circumstances. The school district will not provide transportation for students whose transportation privileges have been revoked or have been voluntarily surrendered by the student's parent or guardian.

Extracurricular Transportation

Refer to District Policy 710

The school district may provide transportation for students to and from extracurricular activities. To the extent the school district provides extracurricular transportation, the district may charge a fee for transportation of students to and from extracurricular activities and optional field trips at locations other than school.

Video and Audio Recording

School Buses

Refer to District Policy 711

The transportation of students to and from school is an important function of the school district, and transportation by the school district is a privilege and not a right for an eligible student. The behavior of students and employees on the bus is a significant factor in the safety and efficiency of school bus transportation. Student and employee misbehavior increase the potential risks of injury. Therefore, the school district believes that video recording student passengers and employees on the school bus will encourage good behavior and, as a result, promote safety. The purpose of this policy is to establish a school bus video recording system.

All school buses used by the school district may be equipped for the placement and operation of a video camera. The school district will post a notice in a conspicuous location informing students that their conversations or actions may be recorded. The school district may use a video recording of the actions of student passengers as evidence in any disciplinary action arising from the student's misconduct on the bus.

Places Other Than Buses

Refer to District Policy 712

The school district buildings and grounds may be equipped with video cameras. Video surveillance may occur in any school district building or on any school district property. Video surveillance of locker rooms or bathrooms will only be utilized in extreme situations, with extraordinary controls, and only as expressly approved by the superintendent.

PART II — ACADEMICS

The Rockford Area Schools' curriculum fulfills the requirements of the Minnesota Content Area Standards.

Academic Integrity

Refer to District Policy 506

Standard

Rockford High School follows the International Baccalaureate (IB) policies that were approved by the Rockford Area School Board and authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). These policies can be viewed on the Rockford High School website.

All students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity which includes honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

All work submitted for credit in any class is expected to be produced by and be the original work of the student submitting it. Students who allow their work to be copied will receive the same or equal penalties to those who do the copying.

Consequences may include:

- redoing the assignment
- completing a new assignment
- loss of credit for the assignment/s
- loss of credit for the course
- removal from the course
- suspension from school

Cheating and Plagiarism

Refer to District Policy 506

Cheating and plagiarism are prohibited. Students who cheat or commit plagiarism on any test or assignment may be given a failing grade for that test or assignment and will be disciplined in accordance with the school district's "Student Discipline" policy.

Acceleration and Retention

All students are expected to achieve an acceptable level of proficiency. Students who achieve at an acceptable level will be promoted to the next grade level at the completion of the school year. Retention of a student may be considered when professional staff and parents/guardians feel that it is in the best interest of the student. The superintendent's decision will be final. The district has a variety of services to help students succeed in school. For more information, contact the school counselor or building principal.

Acceleration: Students who achieve at levels deemed acceptable by local and state standards shall be

promoted to the next grade level at the completion of the school year.

Retention: Retention of a student may be considered when professional staff and parents feel that it is the best interest of the student. Physical development, maturity, and emotional factors shall be considered as well as scholastic achievement. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

Program Design: The superintendent, with participation of the professional staff and parents, shall develop and implement programs to challenge students that are consistent with the needs of students at every level. A procedure for screening and identifying students for program assignment shall be developed in coordination with such programs. Opportunities for special programs and placement outside of the school district shall also be developed as additional options.

The school district will adopt procedures for the academic acceleration of gifted and talented students. This procedure will include how the district will assess a student's readiness and motivation for acceleration; and match the level, complexity, and pace of the curriculum to a student to achieve the best type of academic acceleration for the student.

Alternative Educational Opportunities

Refer to District Policy 605

Some students may be at risk of not completing their educational programs. The school district provides alternative learning options for students who are at risk of not succeeding in school. Alternative educational opportunities may include special tutoring, modified curriculum and instruction, instruction through electronic media, special education services, homebound instruction, and enrollment in an alternative learning center, among others. Students and parents/guardians with questions about these programs should contact the school counselor or building principal.

Early Entrance to Kindergarten

Refer to District Policy 550

Minnesota Statute 120A.20 requires kindergarten students to be at least five years of age on or before September 1. The School District recognizes that children develop physically, emotionally and intellectually at their unique rates, resulting in varying levels of school readiness. An order determination for early entrance into kindergarten has been established by the Board of Education of

Independent School District #883, Rockford Minnesota. Please contact the building principal for more information regarding processes for Early Admission Kindergarten.

Early Graduation

Refer to District Policy 613R

Students may be considered for early graduation after completing the conditions provided in district policy.

Extended School Year Opportunities

Refer to District Policy 508

The school district provides extended school year opportunities to a student who is the subject of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) if the student's IEP team determines the services are necessary during a break in instruction in order to provide a free and appropriate public education. For more information on extended school year opportunities for students with an IEP, contact the student's Case Manager.

Field Trips

Refer to District Policy 610R

Field trips may be offered to supplement student learning. Field trips may be optional and, if so, students who participate may be charged. Students will not be required to pay for instructional trips that take place during the school day, relate directly to a course of study, and require student participation.

Field Trip Eligibility

Refer to District Policy 610R

Field Trips are an extension of the regular curriculum and is part of the educational experience. While on field trips, all children are expected to demonstrate the same expectations and behavior as in school.

Grades

Parents and guardians may access student records electronically via the Parent Portal through the district website at www.rockford883.org. To ensure the confidentiality of student information, parent/guardian accounts must initially be set up at any of the building offices with a photo ID, such as a driver's license. This account will provide access to information regarding a student's attendance, academic progress, report cards, health records, student fees, and lunch account and serves as an important communication tool between the school and home.

Every student has the right to be informed of his/her academic progress. Progress information will be available for students in grades 7-12 regularly. Report cards will be

available after the conclusion of each marking period.

Report cards will be available electronically for parents/guardians to review. Parents are encouraged to routinely check their child's information in the Parent Portal.

Grades 7-12

Grades shall be in letters A, B, C, D, and F for grades 7-12 and will be recorded on report cards and permanent records accordingly. The letter grade is transposed to number equivalents as follows for computing grade point average:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Grade Pt. Value</u>
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00
D-	0.67
F	0.0 (no credit given)
I (incomplete)	No value

Incompletes

In order for an "incomplete" to be granted for a final semester grade, the student and teacher must meet to discuss the circumstances. All work must be completed within two weeks of the last day of the semester or the grade will be considered an F; unless there are extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the Principal.

Pass/Fail Grading

Pass/Fail grading is **NOT** an option for students in **REQUIRED** classes, unless a student's individualized education plan stipulates otherwise. Elective courses may be taken on a pass/fail basis, with the permission of the instructor, and the approval of the principal. **Any such request must be made to the instructor and approved by the building principal during the marking period.**

Weighted Grading

Refer to District Policy 613R

Additional weight is given for courses where the curriculum is significantly more challenging, such as College in the School (CIS) courses and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. College courses taken by PSEO students, deemed by Rockford High School to be equivalent to its CIS courses, are eligible for weighted grading, per District Policy 620R. If a student takes a weighted class at Rockford High School,

that student cannot receive weighted grading for the equivalent class taken at college.

Grades will be weighted with an additional multiplication factor of .66 and this weighted factor will be calculated into the students weighted grade point average (GPA). On a 4.0 scale, weighted classes will be given a .66 boost. (Example: 3.0 grade in a weighted class on 4.0 scale becomes 3.66.)

Grades K-6

Standards Rubric

- 1 - Does Not Meet
- 2 - Partially Meets
- 3 - Meets
- 4 - Exceeds
- NE - No evidence

___ - A blank entry indicates a standard has not been addressed during a given grading period.

Graduation Requirements

Refer to District Policy 613R

Students must meet all course credit requirements and graduation standards, as established by the state and the school board, in order to graduate from **Rockford High School**.

Course Credits Required

In order to receive a diploma, students must successfully complete the following credits and comply with the following high school level course requirements as listed.

Required Area of Study	Credits Class of 2028 & beyond	Credits Class of 2026 & 2027
English	8	8
Social Studies	7	7
Math (All students must complete Algebra II)	6	6
Science (All students must complete Chemistry or Physics)	6	6
Physical Education	1	1
Health	1	1
Fine Arts	2	2
Career & Technical	1	1
Personal Finance	1	0
Electives	17	18
TOTAL	50	50

Minnesota Academic Standards

All students must satisfactorily complete the following required Minnesota Graduation Standards:

- Minnesota Academic Standards, English Language Arts K-12
- Minnesota Academic Standards, Mathematics K-12
- Minnesota Academic Standards, Science K-12
- Minnesota Academic Standards, Social Studies K-12
- Minnesota Academic Standards, Physical Ed. K-12
- Minnesota Academic Standards, Arts K-12

Students with an individualized education program, Section 504 accommodation plan, or limited English proficiency needs may be eligible for testing accommodations, modifications, and/or exemption. For additional information, see the counselor or building principal.

Homework

Refer to District Policy 506 and 612.1

Homework assignments are determined by the teachers. The amount of homework varies by teacher and subject area. The school district asks for parents/guardians and family members to encourage their child(ren) to complete homework thoroughly and promptly. Students are responsible to request and complete the work that was missed during their absence(s) immediately upon return. A student (or parent) may also request homework prior to a student's return to school. Students and parents may also request homework in advance of an absence, or while absent.

Parent Right to Know

If a parent/guardian requests it, the school district will provide information regarding the professional qualifications of his/her child's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following:

1. whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
2. whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional licensing status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
3. the baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree;
4. whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

In addition, the school district will provide parents with information as to the level of achievement of their child in each of the state academic assessments. The school district also will provide notice to parents if, for four or

more consecutive weeks, their child has been assigned to or taught by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Right to Review Curriculum and Tests

Refer to District Policy 606

Textbooks and instructional materials are a vital component of the school's curriculum and may be reviewed by parents upon request. District #883 has adopted a procedure whereby parents and/or staff may initiate a request for reconsideration of instructional materials. The final decision for the use of controversial material rests with the school board.

Post-Secondary Enrollment Options

Refer to District Policy 613R and 620

Tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students may apply to enroll in Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) and other advanced enrichment programs. General information about the PSEO program will be provided to all eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students by **March 1**. Qualifying credits granted to a student through a PSEO course or program that meets or exceeds a graduation standard or requirement will be counted toward the graduation and credit requirements of the state academic standards. Interested students must fill out an application form and submit it to the Rockford High School counselor by **May 30** for enrollment the following school year. The application form must be signed by the student and his/her parent or guardian. Students wishing to take a PSEO course should contact Rockford High School counselor.

Repeating Courses

With the permission of the instructor and the administration, a student may elect to repeat a course at Rockford High School that he/she has passed, but that will not replace the previous grade that was earned.

Schedule Changes at Rockford High School

Schedule changes will be made the first three days of the semester per the following criteria:

- Did not receive a course required for graduation
- Registered and enrolled in a course for which you have not met the prerequisite
- Do not have a full schedule of seven classes per semester
- Received a course you did not request as an original or alternate during registration
- Students who request a "Guided Study Hall" after the start of the semester will be added at the midterm break. The dropped course and grade will be added to the student's transcript.

Summer Programming

Refer to District Policy 623

For students who qualify, the school district may provide summer school learning opportunities. For more information, contact the Director of Teaching and Learning or the Special Education Coordinator.

Student Testing

In the spring, all students in grades 3-8, 10, and 11 take state tests to measure proficiency in the Minnesota Academic Standards. See the Learning & Innovation Department page on the district website, www.rockford883.org, for more information.

Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.31, subdivision 4a, requires the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to publish a form for parents/guardians to complete if they refuse to have their student participate in state-required standardized assessments. The Parent/Guardian Guide to Statewide Testing document provides some basic information to help parents/guardians make informed decisions that benefit their child and their school and community. See Appendix 5.

Withdrawal Procedure

Please notify the school office and the teacher at least three days prior to withdrawing your child from school. You will be asked to indicate the last date of attendance and the name and address of the new school or school district. This information needs to be received by the school at least two days before the student's last day of attendance. This will enable us to properly close our school records for your child. Also, our regulations require that we have your signature on a Release Form, obtained from the receiving school, giving us permission to forward your child's records to the receiving school.

At the Rockford High School, the student needs to report to the counseling office the morning of his/her day of withdrawal. We are concerned about students who leave high school before completion. Should a student choose to withdraw from school, please:

- Contact a counselor to explore alternatives.
- Complete an Exit Interview.
- Obtain the Withdrawal Form from the counseling office.
- Return all books and pay all fees or fines.

PART III — RULES AND DISCIPLINE

Attendance

Refer to District Policy 503R

Consistent attendance means attending more than 90% of school days, showing a strong link to academic success and overall school engagement. Low attendance may indicate issues that need addressing, like disconnection from school, barriers to attendance, emphasizing the importance of regular attendance for academic progress. You may be notified by your child's principal if your child misses more than 10% at any point in the school year in an effort to partner and support your child.. For detailed information, see the "Student Attendance" policy on the district website at www.rockford883.org.

Absence Notification

Parents/guardians are required to call the attendance line at 763-477-7525 or the building office staff by 2:45 pm each day a child is absent or tardy or it will be marked unexcused. Whenever an absence is pre-arranged (doctor, dentist, etc.) the student should bring a written permission slip from home in advance of the absence.

Excused Absence

Excused absences need to be verified upon the student's return to school. Parents are requested to send a written excuse stating the reason for the absence; it must be dated and signed by the parent. Excused absences from school include, but are not limited to, student illness, medical or dental appointment, family emergency, religious observance or family vacation, and other absences which are pre-approved. While the school recognizes the value of family time and trips, we encourage parents to schedule trips that will coincide with scheduled school vacations.

Illness

Regular attendance at school is of utmost importance. However, we suggest that you do not send your child if he/she has a rash, fever, upset stomach, severe cold, undiagnosed red eyes, or sore throat. The school reserves the right to require medical verification in cases where student absences due to reported illness are excessive. From time to time, we receive notes from parents requesting that their child be excused from recess and/or physical education. Normally,

children who are too ill to go outside for recess or participate in physical education are too ill to be at school. Any child who is to be excused from recess and/or phy ed for an extended period of time must have a doctor's written excuse, which has been approved by our Health Service Office.

Make-up School Work

Make-up schoolwork may be obtained at the end of the school day after the third day of illness. Contact the school office the morning of the third day to make arrangements to have your child's make-up work prepared.

Tardies

Students arriving after the morning bell will be considered TARDY. Students must report to the school office to obtain a Student Pass to class. Tardies in which students have an excused pass from a teacher or administrator will not count against the student's attendance. There may be consequences for excessive tardiness (3 or more per semester).

Unexcused Absences or Tardiness

Absences or tardiness, which could have been avoided or prior approval was not made through the building principal's office, are considered unexcused. This absence includes when the student has been absent from school with the consent of the parents but the excuse presented by the parents is not acceptable to school authorities. Examples include oversleeping, shopping, babysitting, working from home and missing the bus.

Closed Campus

Rockford Area Schools maintain closed campuses.

Students who leave the building without adult supervision or permission are in violation of school policy and are subject to school consequences. This includes student lunch time. Students who leave for any reason must sign out through the front office before they leave. **Notes to excuse an absence when a student leaves without signing out through the office will not be accepted and will be recorded as an unexcused absence.** Entrance to the school during the day is limited; all doors are locked for the protection of students and staff. During school hours, all visitors need to report to the school office.

Leaving During School Hours

All children need to be dismissed through the Main Office. Once the parent/guardian has completed the Student Sign Out Log, school office personnel will call the classroom requesting that the child report to the office for dismissal. Parents are strongly encouraged to send a note to their child's teacher indicating that they will be picking their child up early from school. No child will be allowed to leave his/her classroom early without authorization from the school office. We need your cooperation on this matter to assure the safety of your children.

Note to Parent: As a result of state and federal expectations, it is essential that our students be in attendance on all testing dates. Under Every Child Succeeds Act, school districts are required to test at least 95% of eligible children. As family plans are made, testing dates should be avoided. Should you have any concerns regarding testing times, please seek the advice of your child's teacher.

Vacation and Vacation Lesson Plans

The building principal and staff recognize the educational value of family trips, although we encourage parents to plan their trip to coincide with scheduled school vacations. Absences due to a family vacation should be arranged, in advance, with the building principal and make-up work should be arranged, with the teacher, before the child leaves school.

Behavior

All students are required to cooperate in creating an atmosphere that will make learning possible. Any behavior that interferes with learning, regardless of the degree, is considered disruptive. Students should conduct themselves at all times in a manner that will reflect positively upon themselves and Rockford Area Schools.

Retaliation

Rockford Area Schools strives to protect students from retaliation for good faith actions in reporting behavior that is against the law or the district rules outlined in this handbook. Every reasonable effort will be made to stop retaliation immediately, to conduct a complete and thorough investigation of alleged acts of retaliation in a timely manner, and to provide prompt corrective action if retaliation is found to have

occurred. Students found guilty of retaliation may face consequences up to and including expulsion.

Bullying Prohibition

Refer to District Policy 514

The school district is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Acts of bullying, in any form, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, on school transportation and by misuse of technology. Any incidents need to be reported immediately to the building principal. For detailed information regarding the school district's "Bullying Prohibition" policy.

Buses – Conduct on School Buses and Consequences for Misbehavior

Riding the school bus is a privilege, not a right. The school district's general student behavior rules are in effect for all students on school buses, including nonpublic and charter school students. The school district will not provide transportation for students whose transportation privileges have been revoked.

The school district is committed to transporting students in a safe and orderly manner. To accomplish this, student riders are expected to follow school district rules for waiting at a school bus stop and rules for riding on a school bus.

While waiting for the bus or after being dropped off at a school bus stop, all students must comply with the following rules:

- Get to the bus stop five minutes before your scheduled pickup time. The school bus driver will not wait for late students.
- Respect the property of others while waiting at the bus stop.
- Keep your arms, legs, and belongings to yourself.
- Use appropriate language.
- Stay away from the street, road, or highway when waiting for the bus.
- Wait until the bus stops before approaching the bus.
- After getting off the bus, move away from the bus.
- If you must cross the street, always cross in front of the bus where the driver can see you. Wait for the driver to signal to you before crossing the street.
- No fighting, harassment, intimidation, or horseplay.
- No use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

While riding a school bus, all riders must comply with the following rules:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Remain seated facing forward while the bus is in motion.
- Talk quietly and use appropriate language.
- Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
- Keep arms, legs, and belongings to yourself and out of the aisle.
- No fighting, harassment, intimidation, or horseplay.
- Do not throw any object.
- No eating, drinking, or use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.
- Do not bring any weapons or dangerous objects on the school bus.
- Do not damage the school bus.

Consequences for school bus/bus stop misconduct will be imposed by the school district under adopted administrative discipline procedures. All school bus/bus stop misconduct will be reported to the school district's transportation safety director. Serious misconduct may be reported to local law enforcement.

Bus Passes

Requests for students to ride a bus other than the designated bus, must be approved by an authorized school official. A bus pass must be presented to the bus driver before boarding. Under no circumstances will students be delivered to undesignated bus stops for social situations (i.e., birthday parties, sleepovers, Boy or Girl Scouts meetings, or other non-emergency events).

Transportation for day care changes must be completed using the Transportation Request Form three (3) school days prior to the date the change goes into effect. The forms are available at the Transportation Center or the school office.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices

Refer to District Policy 506 and 524R

Rockford Area Schools is committed to developing digital citizens who possess the skills to appropriately and responsibly use personal electronic devices. Different expectations exist for elementary, middle, and high school level students. For details on each building's expectations please visit each building's Information page under the Students and Families tab.

All students are also prohibited from using a cell phone or other electronic communication device to engage in conduct prohibited by school district policies including, but not limited to, cheating, bullying, harassment, gang activity, etc. If the school district has a reasonable suspicion that a student has violated a school rule or law by use of a cell phone or other electronic device, the school district may search the device, this includes the search and seizure of district-issued Chromebooks and the files contained on the device and within the associated cloud storage accounts. The search of the device will be reasonably related in scope to the circumstances justifying the search. Students who use an electronic device during the school day and/or in violation of school district policies may be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the school district's discipline policy. In addition, a student's cell phone or electronic device may be confiscated by the school district and, if applicable, provided to law enforcement. Cell phones or other electronic devices that are confiscated and retained by the school district will be returned in accordance with school building procedures.

The recording, filming or photography of students, or staff members on your personal electronic device without the written consent of administration is strictly prohibited. Anyone who engages in the practice of sending, receiving, or possessing sexually explicit photos or messages (sexting) or inappropriate material will be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion. The school bears no responsibility if electronic devices are lost, stolen, or damaged anywhere on school property or off-campus at school-related events.

Discipline

Refer to District Policy 506

Misbehavior by one student can disrupt the learning process for many other students. In addition, students must learn to practice good safety habits, value academic honesty, respect the rights of others, and obey the law. For detailed information on the Student Code of Conduct and consequences for violations, see the complete "Student Discipline" policy on the district website at www.rockford883.org.

Rockford Area Schools complies with state requirements mandating nonexclusionary discipline policies and practices. "Nonexclusionary disciplinary policies and practices" means policies and practices that are alternatives to dismissing a pupil from school, including but not limited to evidence-based positive behavior interventions and supports, social and emotional

services, school-linked mental health services, counseling services, social work services, academic screening for Title 1 services or reading interventions, and alternative education services. Nonexclusionary disciplinary policies and practices include but are not limited to the policies and practices under sections 120B.12; 121A.575, clauses (1) and (2); 121A.031, subdivision 4, paragraph (a), clause (1); 121A.61, subdivision 3, paragraph (r); and 122A.627, clause (3).

District 883 Technology Devices

Rockford Area Schools is a 1:1 learning environment where each student is issued a school-owned device to support learning in and out of the classroom. This program enhances access to digital tools, encourages collaboration, and supports creativity and academic success. Devices include Chromebooks and other grade-appropriate technology. For more information on device use, care, and expectations, please refer to the 1:1 Handbook available on the district website under Technology: www.rockford883.org/technology/techplan.

Dress and Appearance

Refer to District Policy 504

Enforcement of appropriate student attire will be approached with careful consideration and sensitivity, with the goals of supporting students as they express themselves. When, in the reasonable judgment of school administration, (1) a student's attire or appearance may materially and substantially disrupt or interfere with the educational mission, school environment, classwork, or school activities; (2) may incite or contribute to substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others; or (3) pose a threat to the health or safety of the student or others, the student will be directed to make modifications. Parents or guardians will be notified. Other consequences may be enforced in line with Policy 506 (Student Discipline).

Drug-Free School and Workplace

Refer to District Policy 418

The possession and use of alcohol, controlled substances, and toxic substances, which includes e-cigarettes and other vaping devices, are prohibited at school or in any other school location before, during, or after school hours. Paraphernalia associated with controlled substances also is prohibited. The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against anyone who violates this policy.

District policy is not violated when a person brings a controlled substance which has a currently accepted medical treatment use onto a school location for personal use if the person has a physician's prescription for the substance. Students who have prescriptions must comply with the school district's "Student Medication" policy. The school district will provide an instructional program in every elementary and secondary school on chemical abuse and the prevention of chemical dependency.

Gambling

Participation in gambling activities for money or other collateral or incentives is prohibited on school grounds without a state-approved gambling license. Students who are found in violation of this expectation may be subject to disciplinary action up to or including suspension or expulsion.

Harassment and Violence Prohibition

Refer to District Policy 413 and 525

The school district strives to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. The school district prohibits any form of harassment or violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability. For detailed information on the school district's "Harassment and Violence Prohibition" policy, see the district website at www.rockford883.org.

Hazing Prohibition

Refer to District Policy 526

Hazing is prohibited. No student will plan, direct, encourage, aid, or engage in hazing. Students who violate this rule will be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the school district's "Student Discipline" policy. For detailed information on the school district's "Hazing Prohibition" policy, see the district website at www.rockford883.org.

Internet Acceptable Use

Refer to District Policy 524R

All school district students have conditional access to the school district's computer system, including Internet access, for limited educational purposes, including use of the system for classroom activities, educational research, and professional and career development. Use of the school district's system is a privilege, not a right.

Unacceptable use of the school district's computer system or the Internet may result in one or more of the following consequences: suspension or cancellation of use or access privileges; payments for damages and repairs; discipline under other appropriate school district policies, including, but not limited to, suspension, expulsion, or exclusion; or civil or criminal liability under other applicable laws.

A copy of the school district's "Internet Acceptable Use" policy is available at www.rockford883.org. Within 30 days of the start of each school year, the school district must give parents and students direct and timely notice, by United States mail, e-mail, or other direct form of communication, of any curriculum, testing, or assessment technology provider contract affecting a student's educational data. The notice must:

1. Identify each curriculum, testing, or assessment technology provider with access to educational data;
2. Identify the educational data affected by the curriculum, testing, or assessment technology provider contract; and
3. Include information about the contract inspection and provide contact information for a school department to which a parent or student may direct questions or concerns regarding any program or activity that allows a curriculum, testing, or assessment technology provider to access a student's educational data.

The school district must provide parents and students an opportunity to inspect a complete copy of any contract with a technology provider.

Students will receive a copy of the school district's "Internet Acceptable Use" policy and are expected to understand and agree to abide by the policy as a condition of use of the school district's computer system. All students who wish to use the school district's computer system must sign the Internet Use Agreement form upon first attending classes at each school building or upon getting internet privileges reinstated.

Parking on School District Property

Refer to District Policy 527R

Students

The school district allows limited use and parking of motor vehicles by students in school district locations subject to the following rules:

- Parking a motor vehicle on school property during the school day is a privilege;

- Parking is permitted in designated areas only, by permit. For information, contact the building office;
- Students are not permitted to use motor vehicles during the school day in any school district locations unless an emergency occurs and permission has been granted to the student by building office personnel;
- Students are permitted to use motor vehicles on the high school campus(es) only before and after the school day;
- Unauthorized vehicles parked on school district property may be towed at the expense of the owner or operator.

The school district may conduct routine patrols of school district properties and inspections of the exteriors of the motor vehicles of students. Interiors of students' vehicles in school district locations may be searched when school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law and/or school policy or rule. If a search yields contraband, school officials may seize the item and may turn it over to legal authorities when appropriate. A student who violates this policy may be subject to withdrawal of parking privileges and/or discipline according to the school district's "Student Discipline" policy.

Snowmobiles

As a convenience to students and families, students, age 14 years old or older who have completed a snowmobile safety course, are allowed to drive and park snowmobiles to Rockford Middle School or Rockford High School as a means of getting to and from school. A list of rules and designated parking places will be shared with drivers at the start of the winter season.

Visitors

Refer to District Policy 903

Visitors are permitted to park in designated school district visitor parking areas. Unattended vehicles left in other locations on school district property may be towed at the owner's expense.

Public Displays of Affection

Students are expected to maintain appropriate personal boundaries while at school. Excessive public displays of affection, such as kissing or prolonged hugging, are not allowed, as they can be disruptive to the learning environment.

Tobacco-Free Environment; Possession and Use of Tobacco, Tobacco-Related Devices, and Electronic Delivery Devices

Refer to District Policy 419

School district students and staff have the right to learn and work in an environment that is tobacco free. School policy is violated by any individual's use of tobacco, tobacco-related devices, or carries or uses an activated electronic delivery device (including vaping devices) in a public school, on school grounds, in any school-owned vehicles, or at any school events or activities. Students may not possess any type of tobacco, tobacco-related device, or carry or use an activated electronic delivery device in a public school, on school grounds, in any school-owned vehicles, or at any school events or activities. Any student who violates this policy is subject to school district discipline. For detailed information on the school district's "Tobacco-Free Environment; Possession and Use of Tobacco, Tobacco-Related Devices and Electronic Delivery Devices" policy, see the district website at www.rockford883.org. Contact any administrator if you have questions or wish to report violations.

Note: A limited exception to the tobacco prohibition exists for adult members of an Indian tribe, as defined under Minnesota law, who may light tobacco on school district property as a part of a traditional Indian spiritual or cultural ceremony.

Vandalism

Refer to District Policy 506

Vandalism of any district property is prohibited. Violators will be disciplined and may be reported to law enforcement officials.

Weapons Prohibition

Refer to District Policy 501

No person will possess, use, or distribute a weapon when in a school location except as provided in school district

policy. A "weapon" means any object, device, or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; air guns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; nunchucks; throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon. A weapon also includes look-alike weapons. Appropriate discipline and action will be taken against any person who violates this policy. The school district does not allow the possession, use, or distribution of weapons by students. Discipline of students will include, at a minimum: immediate out-of-school suspension; confiscation of the weapon; immediate notification of police; parent or guardian notification; and recommendation to the superintendent of dismissal for a period of time not to exceed one year. The building principal shall, as soon as practicable, refer to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system, as appropriate, a student who brings a firearm to school unlawfully. A student who brings a firearm to school will be expelled for at least one year, subject to school district discretion on a case-by-case basis. For a copy of the "School Weapons" policy, go to the school district website at www.rockford883.org.

There are situations where students may be asked to spend a period of time off campus due to behaviors inconsistent with district policy. In this case students are provided an alternate learning model wherein they can access curriculum and instruction via Google Classroom. This curriculum will be provided asynchronously (students learn at their own pace) or synchronously (live and online) depending upon the scheduled learning activities from individual classroom teachers.

PART IV — HEALTH AND SAFETY

Accidents

Refer to District Policy 806

All student injuries that occur at school or school-sponsored activities should be reported to the school nurse. Parents/guardians of an injured student will be notified as soon as possible. If the student requires immediate medical attention, the principal or other district leader will call 911 or seek emergency medical treatment and then contact the parent(s).

Asbestos Management Update

The school district has developed an Asbestos Management plan. A copy of this plan can be found at the Rockford Area Schools District Office and is also available on the district's website.

The school district has on file a complete and updated Management Plan for dealing with asbestos-containing building materials within the school district's buildings. The Management Plan is available for viewing by interested parties during regular business hours at the District Office. Copies will be made available for reproduction at a nominal cost.

Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School was designed without specifying or requiring the use of asbestos containing building materials. Rockford Middle School Center for Environmental Studies has asbestos inside fire doors. The asbestos containing materials at Rockford High School have been abated.

As required by federal law, the condition of asbestos in our schools is surveyed every six months and inspected every three years as part of an ongoing operations and maintenance program.

Plans for abatement projects as well as a listing of the previous year's projects, can be found on our website at www.rockford883.org.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Director of Business Operations at 763-477-9165, x4006.

Clean Indoor Act

The district's Clean Indoor Act contact person is Director of Business Operations, who can be reached by calling 763-477-9165 x4006.

Crisis Management

Refer to District Policy 806

The school district has developed a "Crisis Management" policy. The district has developed a district crisis management plan with school-specific areas. Students and parents will be provided with information as to district- and school-specific plans.

The "Crisis Management" policy addresses a range of potential crisis situations in the school district and includes general crisis procedures for securing buildings, classroom evacuation, campus evacuation, sheltering, and communication procedures. The school district will conduct lockdown drills, fire drills, and a tornado drill.

All school buildings have a facility diagram and site plan that includes the location of primary and secondary evacuation routes, exits, designated safe areas inside and outside of the building, and the location of fire alarm control panel, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, hoses, water spigots, and utility shut offs. All facility diagrams and site plans will be regularly updated and whenever a major change is made to a building. Facility diagrams and site plans will be maintained by the building administrator and on file in the school district office. Facility diagrams and site plans have been provided to first responders, such as fire and law enforcement personnel.

Emergency Contact Information

Communications to parents/guardians will use contact information available. Please update your contact information through the Parent Portal to ensure that messages are sent to the correct locations in a timely manner.

In the event of an emergency, information will be communicated via one or more of the following methods, depending on the situation:

1. District-wide phone call placed to household phone number in the Parent Portal
2. Email to emergency contacts who have provided email addresses
3. Information posted on the school district website at www.rockford883.org.
4. Announcement on local TV and radio broadcasts.

Health Information

Refer to District Policy 420, 516, 518, 530 and 806

Communicable Diseases

Refer to District Policy 420

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent/guardian suspects that his/her child has a communicable or contagious disease, the parent/guardian should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. Students with certain communicable diseases will not be excluded from attending school in their usual daily attendance settings as long as their health permits and their attendance does not create a significant risk of transmitting the illness to other students or school district employees. The school district will determine on a case-by-case basis whether a contagious student's attendance creates a significant risk of transmitting the illness to others.

DNR-DNI Orders

Refer to District Policy 518

The primary mission of the school district is education. DNR-DNI Orders (Do Not Resuscitate/Do Not Intubate) are medical documents. School district staff will not accept or honor requests to withhold emergency care or DNR-DNI orders. The school district will not convey such orders to emergency medical personnel.

First Aid

The nurse's office in each building is equipped to handle minor injuries requiring first aid. If the nurse's office is not open, assistance can be sought from the building's administrative office. If a student experiences a more serious medical emergency at school, 911 will be called and/or a parent/guardian will be contacted depending on the situation. The district has installed automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School next to the gym, at the Rockford Middle School in the gym and in the hallway by the District Office, at Rockford High School in the lunchroom near the gym, and by the third hallway entrance, in the hallway between the high school and community center, and at the community center near the front desk. Tampering with any AED is prohibited and may result in discipline.

Health Service

The student health office is staffed throughout the day by a licensed practical nurse, registered nurse and/or secretarial staff. The health office staff works under the direction and supervision of a licensed school nurse.

At the beginning of each year and as changes occur; please alert the school nurse, and classroom teacher, if your child has a health problem that may affect his/her functioning. Also, promptly report to the nurse any communicable diseases, such as, strep throat, chickenpox, scabies, or head lice. Information will be kept confidential. If needed, the nurse is available for consultation with parents. If you need information about your child's health records contact the School Nurse at your child's school of attendance.

Students who become sick at school should report to the health office. In the event of an emergency, your student's safety is our first priority. We will immediately contact parent/guardian and 911, if necessary. Parent/Guardian contact information provided in the Parent Portal will be used. **Please keep emergency contact information/phone numbers updated in your Portal.**

Students who become sick at school should visit the Health Room located in the school office. If a child has a fever of 100° or higher, or other symptoms of illness, the parent will be notified. Health Office personnel only will contact the parent/guardian regarding health-related issues. The child should then be picked up from school. School health personnel are not permitted to administer treatment to your child unless previously arranged and then according to our medication policy. The health office personnel will arrange for students who get sick at school to go home early.

A parent/guardian should notify the school if his/her child is unable to attend school because of illness. A 24-hour fever-free period (below 100 degrees F) without the use of medication, is required prior to returning your child to school.

If you need information about your child's health records, contact the School Nurse at 763-477-5837 or via the school's website at www.rockford883.org, to access contact information.

Immunizations

Refer to District Policy 530

All students must be properly immunized or submit appropriate documentation exempting them from such immunizations in order to enroll or remain enrolled. Students may be exempted from the immunization requirement when the immunization of the student is contraindicated for medical reasons; laboratory confirmation of adequate immunity exists; or due to the conscientiously held beliefs of the parents/guardians or student. The school district will maintain a file containing the immunization records for each student in attendance at the school district for at least five years after the student reaches the age of 18. For a copy of the immunization schedule or to obtain an exemption form or information, contact the school nurse or go to the district website at www.rockford883.org for the district policy.

Medications at School During the School Day

Refer to District Policy 516

The school district acknowledges that some students may require prescribed drugs or medication during the school day. The school district's licensed school nurse, trained health clerk, principal, or teacher will administer prescribed medications, except any form of medical cannabis, in accordance with law and school district procedures.

Medication Administration

The administration of prescription and over-the-counter medication or drugs at school requires a completed signed request from the student's parent. An "Administering Prescription Medications" form must be completed annually by a medical professional and/or when a change in the prescription or requirements for administration occurs. Prescription medication as used in this policy does not include any form of medical cannabis as defined in Minn. Stat. § 152.22, Subd. 6. Prescription medications must come to school in the original container labeled for the student by a pharmacist, and must be administered in a manner consistent with the instructions on the label.

Prescription medications are not to be carried by the student, but will be left with the appropriate school personnel. Exceptions that may be allowed include: prescription asthma medications self-administered with an inhaler pursuant to school district policy and procedures, medications administered as noted in a written agreement between the school district and parent or as specified in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a plan developed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (504 Plan), or individual health plan (IHP). The school district is to be notified immediately by the parent or student 18 years old or older in writing of any change in a student's prescription medication administration. The school Health Office does not stock or supply over-the-counter medication.

Medications must be picked up by a parent / guardian at the end of the school year. If medications are unclaimed or cannot be returned to the parent / guardian, school health staff are to keep the medications in their original container with label intact and store them in a secure, locked location. Periodically (for example once per year), health office staff are to contact the Wright County Sheriff's Office or Hennepin County Sheriff's office for pickup and disposal. If they are unable to pick up for disposal of medications, medications would be disposed of through Sharps Compliance, Inc. using their Take Away Medication Recovery System.

Epinephrine Auto-Injectors/Inhalers

Refer to District Policy 516

Minnesota law allows students to carry and use their inhalers/ EPIPENS if the licensed medication prescriber, parents and licensed school nurse agree the student has demonstrated appropriate knowledge and administration of the inhaler/ EPIPEN. A licensed medication prescriber's signed order for the Health Regulations and Procedures medication and parent signature must be on file in the school health office; this must include a statement to self-carry. Most elementary students need an adult to supervise their inhaler/ EPIPEN use to ensure adequate administration, frequency, technique, prescribed usage and safety. Parents are asked to provide an extra inhaler/EPIPEN to store in the health office in case the student's is left at home or lost. Students carrying these medications have the responsibility to use correctly and only for themselves. Students are asked to report to the health office if they use inhalers more than once during the school day. Students MUST report to the health office immediately if they use EPIPENS. Minnesota law allows, but does not require, school districts to maintain and administer EPI to a student or other individual who is

determined to be having a severe allergic reaction, regardless of whether the student or other individual has a prescription for an auto-injector.

Districts and schools may obtain and possess epinephrine auto-injectors to be maintained and administered by school personnel to a student or other individual if, in good faith, it is determined that person is experiencing anaphylaxis regardless of whether the student or other individual has a prescription for an epinephrine auto-injector. The administration of an epinephrine auto-injector in accordance with this section is not the practice of medicine.

Over-the-Counter Medication

With over-the counter medications (OTC), elementary and middle school students should follow the same policy as prescription medications. Please submit via fax or in person, the administering prescription medications form, which can be accessed at www.rockford883.org, then click the respective school tab, then the health services tab" to access contact information and forms. OTC medication must be in its original bottle. No OTC medication will be administered to students unless the above provisions are followed.

The school health office does not stock or supply over-the-counter medications.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pick up prescription medication from the health office prior to the end of the school year. For the safety of all students these medications will not be sent home with the student. Please contact the health office staff if you need to make different arrangements otherwise the medication will be destroyed at the end of the year.

High school students will be allowed to carry non-prescription medications on their person, but the following rules apply:

1. The medication must be in the original container with label and dosage information intact, and must be administered in a manner consistent with the instructions on the label.
2. A "Medication Administration" form must be signed by a parent and submitted to the Health Services Office each year for the student to self-administer the non-prescription medication.
3. The student's name must be handwritten on the container.

The student is not to share his/her medication with any other students. If any of the above rules are abused, the right will be canceled.

Screenings

Hearing, and vision screenings will be administered according to state guidelines or when requested by a parent or teacher. If a potential concern is discovered, a referral will be sent to the parent/guardian.

Student Accident Report Procedure

If an injury requires more than first aid, the school nurse is called to access the injury. If an injury requires more care than we can provide safely at school, the parents are called and the child is monitored at home or referred to a physician. If the accident requires immediate medical attention that cannot be provided at school, 911 will be called. Reports of these injuries are written and turned into the building principal and filed in the student's health file.

COVID-19 Protocol

Students, staff, and visitors who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must visit the school nurse immediately. District staff will follow protocols outlined from the Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Department of Education to mitigate exposure. These protocols may include contact tracing, quarantining, recommended testing, temperature checks, and more.

Pesticide Application Notice

The school district may apply pesticide(s) on school property. To the extent the school district applies certain pesticides, the school district will provide a notice by **September 15** as to the school district's plan to use these pesticides. In certain emergency-use situations (i.e. wasps), a pesticide may be used without notification. A parent may request to be notified prior to the application of certain pesticides on days different from those specified in the notice. Additional information regarding what pesticides are used, an estimated schedule of pesticide applications (which will be available for review or copying at the school office), and the long-term health effects of the class of pesticide on children can be requested by contacting the Director of Business Operations at the Rockford Area Schools District Office, 763-477-9165.

Safety

The safety of students on campus and at school-related activities is a high priority of the district. While district-wide safety procedures are in place, student and parent cooperation is required to ensuring school safety.

Custody

In cases where parents are separated or divorced, and one parent has legal custody; the school must have proof in the form of a copy of the court order that spells out both custody and visitation rights. Schools must have on file appropriate legal documentation in order to assure compliance with any limiting court order.

Visitors in District Buildings

Refer to District Policy 903

Parents/guardians and community members are welcome to visit the schools. To ensure the safety of those in the school and to avoid disruption to the learning environment, all visitors must report directly to the school office upon entering the building, with the exception of events open to the public.

School building doors are locked during the school day. At the elementary school, visitors may gain access to the building by going to REAMS door 1 and checking in at the main office. At the middle school building, RMS-CES visitors may gain access to the building by going to door 4 (located on the north side of the building) and ringing the buzzer.

District Office visitors may gain access by going to door 1 (located at the middle school's Ash Street entrance) and ringing the buzzer. Visitors at the Rockford High School may gain access to the building by going to RHS door 1 and ringing the buzzer. An office staff member will greet the visitor and determine if the visitor should be permitted to enter the building.

All visitors will be required to sign in at the office and to wear a "visitor's badge" while in the building during the school day. Visitors must have the approval of the principal before visiting a classroom during instructional time. An individual or group may be denied permission to visit a school or school property, or such permission may be revoked. If the visitor does not comply with school district procedures or if the visit is not in the best interests of the students, employee, or the school district. Students are not allowed to bring visitors to school without prior permission from the principal.

APPENDIXES

1. Policy Cross Reference Table

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In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

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2. Rockford High School Academic Honors

Honors

Students in grade 12 that have maintained a 3.33 to 3.66 cumulative grade point average on a 4-point scale will receive Honors recognition.

High Honors

Students in grade 12 that received Honors recognition and also have earned an academic letter by maintaining a 3.67 or higher cumulative grade point average will receive High Honors recognition.

National Honor Society

Selection Process:

Students' academic records will be reviewed to determine scholastic eligibility. Students will be eligible beginning in 11th grade. Final GPA's from the previous school year will be used to establish the 3.5 requirement.

Students who are eligible scholastically will be notified by letter and invited to an informational meeting to review the remainder of the selection process.

Membership is not automatically conveyed simply because a student has achieved a specified level of academic performance. The selection process will focus on the remaining three criteria; leadership, character, and service.

Students will complete a Student Activity Information form.

Each candidate is responsible to ensure that all necessary forms are returned by the given deadline. Late forms will not be considered in the selection process.

Faculty and staff will be given a list of all scholastically eligible students to rate accordingly regarding character and leadership qualities.

A committee consisting of five faculty members, chosen by the chapter advisor, will review the completed Student Activity Information Forms individually and complete a rating sheet on each candidate.

The chapter advisor will tally the rating scores for each candidate.

The chapter advisor will meet with the selection committee to review the scores of each candidate. Students who

receive a score of at least 50 (60 possible) will be invited to become a member of the National Honor Society. The committee will individually review the candidate files of those students who received a score of less than 50. A majority vote of the selection committee will determine the selection of these students. The chapter advisor has no vote.

Students will be notified by mail of the decision of the selection committee.

All documents used by the selection committee, including the Student Activity Information Form, faculty ratings, and other recommendation forms, are to assist the committee in making sound decisions regarding membership. Such documents are used only by the selection committee, the adviser, and the principal and are considered confidential.

Honor Roll

The Rockford High School Honor Roll will be published at the conclusion of each trimester approximately two weeks after the grading period ends. The Grade Point Average (GPA) will be calculated on current term grades. A grade of "D" or "I" will eliminate a student from eligibility for either the "A" or "B" honor roll.

"A" Honor Roll: Students in grades 9 through 12 who achieve a GPA of 3.67 or higher will be recognized on the "A" honor roll.

"B" Honor Roll: Students in grades 9 through 12 who achieve a GPA of 3.00 or higher, but less than 3.67 with no D's will be recognized on the "B" honor roll. Honor roll status is based on a 4-point scale.

3. Student Records

Refer to District Policy 515

Independent School District No. 883 gives notice to parents of students currently in attendance in the District, and eligible students currently in attendance in the District, of their rights regarding pupil records.

1. Parents and eligible students are hereby informed that they have the following rights:
 - a. That a parent or eligible student has a right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the request for access is received by the school district. A parent or eligible student should submit to the school district a written request to inspect education records which identify as precisely as possible the record or records he or she wishes to inspect. The parent or eligible student will be notified of the time and place where the records may be inspected;
 - b. That the parent or eligible student has a right to seek amendment of the student's education records to ensure that those records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A parent or eligible student may ask the school district to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. The request shall be in writing, identify the item the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the privacy rights of the student, shall state the reason for this belief, and shall specify the correction the parent or eligible student wishes the school district to make. The request shall be signed by the parent or eligible student. If the school district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise him or her of the right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing;
 - c. That the parent or eligible student has a right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that federal and state law and the regulations promulgated thereunder authorize disclosures without consent;
 - d. That the school district may disclose education records to other school officials within the school district if the school district has determined they have legitimate educational interests. For purposes of such disclosure, a "school official" is a person employed by the school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or other employee; a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school district has consulted to perform a specific task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, public information officer, or data practices compliance official); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or any individual assisting a school official in the performance of his or her tasks. A school official has a "legitimate educational interest" if the individual needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility and includes, but is not limited to, an interest directly related to classroom instruction, teaching, student achievement and progress, discipline of a student, and student health and welfare and the ability to respond to a request for educational data;
 - e. That the school district forwards education records on request to a school or post-secondary educational institution in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled, as long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment, including information about disciplinary action taken as a result of any incident in which the student possessed or used a dangerous weapon, suspension and expulsion information pursuant to **20 U.S.C. § 7917, part** of the federal Every Child Succeeds Act and data regarding a student's history of violent behavior, and any disposition order which adjudicates the student as delinquent for committing an illegal act on school district property and certain other illegal acts;
 - f. That the parent or eligible student has a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding an alleged failure by the school district to comply with the requirements of 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the rules promulgated thereunder. The name and address of the office that administers the FERPA is:

U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-8520

- g. That the parent or eligible student has a right to obtain a copy of the school district's policy regarding the protection and privacy of pupil records; and
 - h. That copies of the school district's policy regarding the protection and privacy of school records are located at each building office.
2. Independent School District No. 883 has adopted a school board policy in order to comply with state and federal laws regarding education records. The policy does the following:
 - a. It classifies records as public, private, or confidential.
 - b. It establishes procedures and regulations to permit parents or students to inspect and review a student's education records. These procedures include the method of determining fees for copies, a listing of the locations of these education records, and the identity of the individuals in charge of the records.
 - c. It establishes procedures and regulations to allow parents or students to request the amendment of a student's education records to ensure that the records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.
 - d. It establishes procedures and regulations for access to and disclosure of education records.
 - e. It establishes procedures and regulations for safeguarding the privacy of education records and for obtaining prior written consent of the parent or student when required prior to disclosure.
 3. Copies of the school board policy and accompanying procedures and regulations are available to parents and students upon written request to the Superintendent.
 4. Pursuant to applicable law, Independent School District No. 883 gives notice to parents of students currently in attendance in the school district, and eligible students currently in attendance in the school district, of their rights regarding "directory information."

"Directory information" includes the following information relating to a student: the student's name; address; telephone number; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; dates of attendance; grade level; enrollment status; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; weight and height of members of athletic teams; degrees, honors and awards received; the most recent educational agency or institution attended by the student; and other similar information. "Directory information" also includes the name, address, and telephone number of the student's parent(s). "Directory information" does not include a student's social security number or a student's identification number (ID) if the ID may be used to access education records without use of one or more factors that authenticate the student's identity such as a personal identification number, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user. It also does not include identifying information on a student's religion, race, color, social position, or nationality.

- A. The information listed above shall be public information which the school district may disclose from the education records of a student or information regarding a parent.
- B. Should the parent of a student or the student so desire, any or all of the listed information will not be disclosed without the parent's or eligible student's prior written consent except to school officials as provided under federal law.
- C. In order to make any or all of the directory information listed above "private" (i.e., subject to consent prior to disclosure), the parent or eligible student must make a written request to the building principal within thirty (30) days after the date of the last publication of this notice. This written request must include the following information:
 - (1) name of student and parent, as appropriate;
 - (2) home address;
 - (3) school presently attended by student;

(4) parent's legal relationship to student, if applicable;

(5) specific category or categories of directory information which is not to be made public without the parent's or eligible student's prior written consent.

5. Pursuant to applicable law, Independent School District No. 883 hereby gives notice to parents of students and eligible students in grades 11 and 12 of their rights regarding release of information to military recruiting officers and post-secondary educational institutions. The school district must release the names, addresses, and home telephone numbers of students in grades 11 and 12 to military recruiting officers and post-secondary educational institutions within sixty (60) days after the date of the request. Data released to military recruiting officers under this provision may be used only for the purpose of providing information to students about military service, state and federal veterans' education benefits, and other career and educational opportunities provided by the military and cannot be further disseminated to any other person except personnel of the recruiting services of the armed forces.

Should the parent of a student or the eligible student so desire, any or all of the listed information will not be disclosed to military recruiting officers and post-secondary educational institutions without prior consent.

In order to refuse the release of this information without prior consent, the parent or eligible student must make a written request to the responsible authority, *building principal*, by *September 15* each year. This written request must include the following information:

(1) name of student and parent, as appropriate;

(2) home address;

(3) student's grade level;

(4) school presently attended by student;

(5) parent's legal relationship to student, if applicable;

(6) specific category or categories of information which are not to be released to military recruiting officers and post-secondary educational institutions without prior consent;

(7) specific category or categories of directory information which are not to be released to the public, including military recruiting officers and post-secondary educational institutions.

Note: *Refusal to release the above information to military recruiting officers and post-secondary educational institutions alone does not affect the school district's release of directory information to the public, including military recruiting officers and post-secondary educational institutions. In order to make any directory information about a student private, the procedures contained in the Directory Information section of this notice also must be followed. If you do not want your child's or eligible student's directory information released to military recruiting officers or post-secondary educational institutions, you also must notify the school district that you do not want this directory information released to any member of the public, including military recruiting officers and post-secondary educational institutions.*

4. Student Surveys

Refer to District Policy 520

CONSENT/OPT-OUT FOR SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232h, requires **Independent School District 883** to notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt your child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas (“protected information surveys”):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent;
2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information for marketing purposes (“marketing surveys”) and certain physical examinations and screenings.

If you wish to review any survey instrument or instructional material used in connection with any protected information or marketing survey, please submit a request to the building principal. The building principal will notify you of the time and place where you may review these materials. You have the right to review a survey and/or instructional materials before the survey is administered to a student.

5. Parent/Guardian Refusal for Student Participation in State Wide Assessments



Statewide Assessments:

Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information

Your student's participation in statewide assessments is important as it allows your school and district to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education. In the past, students with disabilities and English learners were often excluded from statewide assessments. By requiring that all students take statewide assessments, schools and teachers have more information to see how all students are doing. This helps schools to continuously improve the education they provide and to identify groups, grades, or subjects that may need additional support.

Assessments Connect to Standards

Statewide assessments are based on the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) or the [WIDA English Language Development Standards](#). These standards define the knowledge and skills students should be learning in K–12 districts and charter schools. Minnesota prioritizes high-quality education and statewide assessments give educators and leaders an opportunity to evaluate student and school success.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)

MCA and the alternate assessments (Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)/Alternate MCA) are the annual assessments in reading, mathematics and science that measure a snapshot of student learning of the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards.

WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

The WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS are the annual assessments for English learners that provide information about their progress in learning academic English, based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

Statewide Assessments Help Families and Students

Participating in statewide assessments gives families a snapshot of their student's learning so they can advocate for their success in school. High school students can use MCA results for:

- Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) in grade 10.
- Course placement at a Minnesota State college or university. If students receive a college-ready score, they may not need to take a remedial, noncredit course for that subject.

English learners who take the WIDA ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS and meet certain requirements have the opportunity to exit from English learner programs.

Taking Statewide Assessments Helps Your Student's School

Statewide assessments provide information to your school and district about how all students are engaging with the content they learn in school. This information helps:

- Educators evaluate their instructional materials.
- Schools and districts identify inequities between groups, explore root causes and implement supports.
- School and district leaders make decisions on how to use money and resources to support all students.

Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

Student participation in state and locally required assessments is a parent/guardian choice. If you choose to have your student not participate in a statewide assessment, please provide a reason for your decision on the form on the following page. Contact your student's school to learn more about locally required assessments.

Updated March 2025

Consequences of Not Participating in Statewide Assessments

- The student will not receive an individual score. For WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the student will not have the opportunity to exit their English learner program.
- School and district assessment results will be incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.
- Since all eligible students are included in some calculations even when they do not participate, school and district accountability results are impacted. This may affect the school's ability to be identified for support or recognized for success.

Check with your local school or district to see if there are any additional consequences for not participating.

Explore the [Statewide Testing page](#) for more information.

(education.mn.gov > Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing)

Additional Information

- On average, students spend less than 1% of instructional time taking statewide assessments each year.
- Minnesota statutes limit the total amount of time students can spend taking other district- or school-wide assessments to 11 hours or less each school year, depending on the grade.
- School districts and charter schools are required to publish an assessment calendar on their website by the October 1 each school year. Refer to your district or charter school's website for more information on assessments.

Statewide Assessments: Parent/Guardian Decision Not to Participate

By completing this form, you are acknowledging that your student will not participate in statewide assessments and will not receive individual assessment results. This form must be submitted to your student's school or district office prior to testing.

First Name: Middle Initial: Last Name:

Date of Birth: Current Grade in School: Student ID Number (if known):

School: District:

Parent/Guardian Name (print):

Parent/Guardian Signature: Date:

Reason for Refusal:

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) you are opting your student out of this school year:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading MCA/Alternate MCA | <input type="checkbox"/> Science MCA/Alternate MCA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics MCA/MTAS | <input type="checkbox"/> WIDA ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS |

Contact your school or district for more information on how to opt out of local assessments.

(Note: This form is only applicable for the 20 to 20 school year.)

Updated March 2025

6. Grievance Procedure for Complaints of Discrimination

The following grievance procedure applies to claims of sex and disability discrimination:

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of unlawful discrimination or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute unlawful discrimination shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy (*See district policies 102, 401, 402, 521, 522, 528*). The complaint must be filed within 30 calendar days of the alleged violation.
- B. The Human Rights Officer (*Building Principal*) is responsible for receiving oral or written complaints of unlawful discrimination toward an employee or student. However, nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting unlawful discrimination toward an employee or student directly with the Human Rights Officer, the school board or other school district official.
- C. While the school board has designated the Human Rights Officer to receive complaints of unlawful discrimination, if the complaint involves the Human Rights Officer, the complaint shall be made to the superintendent.
- D. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Human Rights Officer shall immediately notify the superintendent. If the superintendent is the subject of the complaint, the Human Rights Officer shall immediately notify the school board.
- E. The Human Rights Officer may request but not insist upon a written complaint. Alternative means of filing a complaint, such as through a personal interview or by tape recording, shall be made available upon request for qualified persons with a disability. If the complaint is oral, it shall be reduced to writing within 24 hours and forwarded to the superintendent. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. The school district encourages the reporting party to complete the complaint form for written complaints. It is available from the principal of each building or the school district office.
- F. The school district shall respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses, consistent with the school district's legal obligations to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

INVESTIGATION

- A. The Human Rights Officer, upon receipt of a complaint alleging unlawful discrimination shall promptly undertake an investigation if deemed appropriate. The investigation may be conducted by the Title IX coordinator for complaints of sex discrimination or the Section 504 Coordinator for complaints of disability discrimination, or a school district official or neutral third party designated by the Title IX coordinator, Section 504 coordinator or Human Rights Officer. The investigation shall be completed within 30 days of the complaint, unless impracticable.
- B. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of other methods deemed pertinent by the investigator.
- C. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the school district shall consider the facts and the surrounding circumstances such as the nature of the behavior, past incidents or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incident occurred.
- D. The school district may take immediate steps to protect the parties involved in the complaint process, pending completion of an investigation of alleged unlawful discrimination. E. Upon completion of the investigation, the school district investigator shall make a written report to the Human Rights Officer. If the complaint involves the Human Rights Officer, the report may be filed directly with the superintendent or school board. The report shall include the facts, a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated, whether a violation of this policy has occurred as well as a description of any proposed resolution which may include alternative dispute resolution.

E. The district shall comply with federal and state law pertaining to retention of records.

APPEAL

If the grievance has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, s/he may appeal to the Human Rights Officer within ten (10) school days of receipt of the findings of the school district investigation. The school district investigator shall conduct a review of the appeal and within ten (10) school days of receipt of the appeal, shall affirm, reverse, or modify the findings of the report. The decision of the school district investigator is final but does not preclude pursuit of alternative complaint procedures noted in the section entitled "Right to Alternative Complaint Procedures."

SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

- A. Upon conclusion of the investigation and receipt of the findings, the school district shall take appropriate action. If it is determined that a violation has occurred, such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, expulsion, transfer, remediation or termination. School district action taken for violation of this policy shall be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, Minnesota and federal law and school district policies.
- B. The result of the school district's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures shall be reported in writing to the complainant by the school district in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

RETALIATION

The school district shall take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged unlawful discrimination toward an employee or student or any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation or hearing relating to such unlawful discrimination. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation or harassment.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If there is a conflict of interest with respect to any party affected by this policy, appropriate action shall be taken such as, but not limited to, appointing or contracting with a neutral third party investigator to conduct the investigation or recusal from the process by the person for whom a conflict or potential conflict of interest exists.

DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

The school district shall adopt and publish these procedures.

RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse, which may include filing charges with the agencies listed below or initiating action in state or federal court.

Claims of discrimination may also be pursued through the following agencies where appropriate:

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights, Region V
500 W. Madison Street- Suite 1475
Chicago, IL 60661
Tel: 312-730-1560 TDD: 312-730-1609

MN Department of Human Rights
190 E 5th Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
Tel: 800.657.3704, 651.296.5663
TDD 651.296.128

For complaints of employment discrimination:

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
330 S. 2nd Avenue, Suite 430
Minneapolis, MN 55401
800.669.4000, 612.335.4040
TDD 612.335.4045

7. Unpaid Meal Charges

Refer to District Policy 534R

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and that school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy of the school district is to provide meals to students in a respectful manner and to maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting meal shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

- A. Students are issued a meal account when they enroll in the district. It is the parent(s)' or guardian's responsibility to make sure adequate funds are available in the meal account. Meal payments may be made online through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal for each individual student. Payments can be made in any school building office via cash or check.
- B. If the school district receives school breakfast aid under Minnesota Statutes section 124D.1158 or lunch aid under Minnesota Statutes section 124D.111, it must make breakfast and lunch available without charge to all participating students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals regardless of account balance. All kindergarten students receive a breakfast without charge.
- C. A student with an outstanding meal account balance will be allowed to receive a meal without providing payment. The cost of the meal will be added to the student's meal account balance.
- D. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meal account balance with the exception of a la carte items.
- E. When a student has a negative five (-\$5) account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a la carte items or a second additional entree.
- F. Each student will have their own meal account number. A single common number for families with more than one student in the school system will not be used. Each student's account is managed separately. Rockford Area School District #883 -- Policy 534R In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.
- G. Families may apply for free or reduced price meal benefits at any time during the school year. Families need to apply annually for benefits. If the household size or income changes during the year, families can reapply. Applications are available online on the district website.

III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low starting at a positive ten (\$10.00) or less.
- B. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program, including, but not limited to, dumping meals, withdrawing a meal that has been served, announcing or listing students' names publicly, or affixing stickers, stamps, or pins.

IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their children.
- B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.
- C. Negative balances of more than \$-10.00, not paid prior to end of the fiscal year, will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. In some instances, the school district does use a collection agency to collect unpaid school meal debts after reasonable efforts first have been made by the school district to collect the debt. Collection options may include, but are not limited to, use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law.
- D. The school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.
- E. The school district will not impose any other restriction prohibited under Minnesota Statutes section 123B.37 due to unpaid student meal balances. The school district will not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities or access to material, technology, or other items provided to students due to an unpaid student meal balance.

V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:
 - 1. all households at or before the start of each school year; Rockford Area School District #883 -- Policy 534R In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.
 - 2. students and families who transfer into the school district, at the time of enrollment; and
 - 3. all school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. The school district will post this policy on the school district's website or the website of the organization where the meal is served, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.
- C. If the school district contracts with a third party for its meal services, it will provide the vendor with its school meals policy. The school district will ensure that any third-party provider with whom the school district enters into either an original or modified contract after July 1, 2021, adheres to the school district's school meals policy.

8. Activities: Attendance & Academic/School Regulation

Academic Eligibility

Students involved in activities are expected to maintain passing grades in **ALL** of their classes. There are participation penalties if students receive a failing grade. Students failing a class/classes from the end of a marking period will have the opportunity to restore eligibility. Further information can be obtained from the Activities handbook or the Activities Office.

Daily Class Attendance

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

Grade 7-12 students involved in athletics or activities must be in school or at a school-sponsored event all day to be eligible for competition. The exceptions to this rule are as follows:

- **7-12 students may have an excused absence from all or part of first and second period (approximately 10:30 a.m.). Parent or guardian must call the student in as ill/excused by 8:00 a.m. that morning.**
- 7-12 students may be excused for a medical appointment or other excused absence, in which case the absence will be allowed for any part, or all, of the school day. Upon returning to school, the student will furnish written notification from the medical office, verifying the visit.

The Activities Director will make the ultimate decision on a student's eligibility when there are extenuating circumstances to be considered.

Tardiness and Behavioral Considerations

Excessive tardiness, unserved detention time, or significant or multiple behavioral referrals on the part of activities participants may lead to disciplinary action taken by the school principal which may impact activity participation.

9. Fan Behavior Policy

Purpose

The schools of the Wright County Conference seek to provide a safe environment for athletes and fans at events and to that end expect fans to demonstrate good sportsmanship during athletic events. It is expected that all spectators will treat all athletic participants, coaches, and representatives of competing teams with respect at home and away interscholastic events.

Definitions

A. Good sportsmanship is viewed as a concrete measure of the understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity.

B. Examples of good sportsmanship and respect for competing teams includes, but is not limited to:

1. Appreciating good play no matter the player.
2. Working cooperatively with contest officials and supervisors in keeping order.
3. Refraining from booing or making negative comments about officials or participants.
4. Showing respect for public property and staying off the contest floor or field.
5. Representing yourself and your school with proper conduct.

C. Examples of negative, inappropriate, or potentially unsafe fan behavior includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Participating in disrespectful or derogatory yells, chants, songs, or gestures.
2. Booing, heckling, disrespectful criticism of officials.
3. Antagonizing or inciting fighting among fans or players.
4. Having on one's possession or using artificial noisemakers.
5. Acting in ways clearly contradictory to expectations for good sportsmanship.

General Statement of Policy

A. Administrators will be responsible for ensuring that an appropriate level of supervision is scheduled at all school contests. This might include coaches, supervisors, administrators and law enforcement officials.

B. Inappropriate or potentially unsafe fan behavior will not be tolerated.

C. Should fan(s) continue to act inappropriately or act egregiously, the following disciplinary action will be taken:

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1. On the first offense, the supervisor or an administrator will informally sit with the fan, explain the impropriety of the behavior and warn of the consequences for future inappropriate behavior. This informal meeting can happen during or subsequent to the contest. Fans can be ejected on first offense for blatant or egregiously inappropriate behavior. Failure to leave school grounds when ejected will constitute trespass.
2. On second offense, the individual will be ejected from the contest, or suspended from the next contest, and warned that any future inappropriate behavior will result in a suspension for a set number of contests or for the remainder of the school year. Failure to leave school grounds when ejected will constitute trespass.
3. On third and subsequent offenses, the individual will be ejected from the contest. The individual will be either suspended from attending contests for a set number of contests or for the remainder of the school year at the discretion of the Activities Director. Failure to leave school grounds when ejected will constitute trespass.
4. For the purposes of this policy, behavior at home and away contests can count towards the first, second or third offenses in establishing the pattern and/or severity of negative or unsafe behavior.
5. For students, suspensions apply to all home or away events. For adults, suspensions apply to all home events, and fans will be informed that they are unwelcome at away contests.
6. Should an adult violate suspension, police will be notified and said individual will be charged with trespass. Should a student violate suspension, the police will be notified and the student charged with trespass as well as be subject to school sanctions determined by school officials.
7. Host school will inform the school officials of a visiting school of any behavior of a fan(s) that constituted a first, second or third offense.

D. The Activities Director or another school administrator may take reasonable and prudent actions not specified in this policy to deal with negative, inappropriate or potentially unsafe fan behavior.

10. Bullying Prohibition

Refer to District Policy 514

I. PURPOSE

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with a student's ability to learn and/or a teacher's ability to educate students in a safe environment. The school district cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under the direct supervision of school personnel. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of the school district and the rights and welfare of its students and is within the control of the school district in its normal operations, the school district intends to prevent bullying and to take action to investigate, respond to, and to remediate and discipline for those acts of bullying which have not been successfully prevented. The purpose of this policy is to assist the school district in its goal of preventing and responding to acts of bullying, intimidation, violence, reprisal, retaliation, and other similar disruptive and detrimental behavior.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation. This policy applies not only to students who directly engage in an act of bullying but also to students who, by their indirect behavior, condone or support another student's act of bullying. This policy also applies to any student whose conduct at any time or in any place constitutes bullying or other prohibited conduct that interferes with or obstructs the mission or

operations of the school district or the safety or welfare of the student; or other students, or materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges. This policy also applies to an act of cyberbullying regardless of whether such act is committed on or off school district property and/or with or without the use of school district resources.

- B. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district shall permit, condone, or tolerate bullying.
- C. Apparent permission or consent by a student being bullied does not lessen or negate the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- D. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of bullying is prohibited.
- E. False accusations or reports of bullying against another student are prohibited.
- F. A person who engages in an act of bullying, reprisal, retaliation, or false reporting of bullying or permits, condones, or tolerates bullying shall be subject to discipline or other remedial responses for that act in accordance with the school district's policies and procedures, including the school district's discipline policy (See MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506). The school district may take into account the following factors:
 - 1. The developmental ages and maturity levels of the parties involved;
 - 2. The levels of harm, surrounding circumstances, and nature of the behavior;
 - 3. Past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior;
 - 4. The relationship between the parties involved; and
 - 5. The context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Consequences for students who commit prohibited acts of bullying may range from remedial responses or positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion. The school district shall employ research-based developmentally appropriate best practices that include preventative and remedial measures and effective discipline for deterring violations of this policy, apply throughout the school district, and foster student, parent, and community participation.

Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate bullying or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of bullying may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge.

Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of bullying may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school district property and events.

- G. The school district will act to investigate all complaints of bullying reported to the school district and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the definitions included in this section apply.

- A. "Bullying" means intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive and:
1. an actual or perceived imbalance of power exists between the student engaging in the prohibited conduct and the target of the prohibited conduct, and the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern; or
 2. materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges.

The term, "bullying," specifically includes cyberbullying as defined in this policy.

- B. "Cyberbullying" means bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, including a post on a social network Internet website or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device. The term applies to prohibited conduct which occurs on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, on school transportation, or on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists, or off school premises to the extent that it substantially and materially disrupts student learning or the school environment.
- C. "Immediately" means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.
- D. "Intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct" means, but is not limited to, conduct that does the following:
1. Causes physical harm to a student or a student's property or causes a student to be in reasonable fear of harm to person or property;
 2. Under Minnesota common law, violates a student's reasonable expectation of privacy, defames a student, or constitutes intentional infliction of emotional distress against a student; or
 3. Is directed at any student or students, including those based on a person's actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, creed, religion, national origin, immigration status, sex, marital status, familial status, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, sexual orientation including gender identity and expression, academic status related to student performance, disability, or status with regard to public assistance, age, or any additional characteristic defined in the Minnesota Human Rights Act (MHRA). However, prohibited conduct need not be based on any particular characteristic defined in this paragraph or the MHRA.
- E. "On school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation" means all school district buildings, school grounds, and school property or property

immediately adjacent to school grounds, school bus stops, school buses, school vehicles, school contracted vehicles, or any other vehicles approved for school district purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school grounds, premises, or events, and all school-related functions, school-sponsored activities, events, or trips. School district property also may mean a student's walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school-related functions, activities, or events. While prohibiting bullying at these locations and events, the school district does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations and events.

- F. "Prohibited conduct" means bullying or cyberbullying as defined in this policy or retaliation or reprisal for asserting, alleging, reporting, or providing information about such conduct or knowingly making a false report about bullying.
- G. "Remedial response" means a measure to stop and correct prohibited conduct, prevent prohibited conduct from recurring, and protect, support, and intervene on behalf of a student who is the target or victim of prohibited conduct.
- H. "Student" means a student enrolled in a public school or a charter school.

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURE

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the target or victim of bullying or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying or prohibited conduct under this policy shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy. A person may report bullying anonymously. However, the school district may not rely solely on an anonymous report to determine discipline or other remedial responses.
- B. The school district encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the principal or building supervisor of each building or available in the school district office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well.
- C. The building principal, the principal's designee, or the building supervisor (hereinafter the "building report taker") is the person responsible for receiving reports of bullying or other prohibited conduct at the building level. Any person may report bullying or other prohibited conduct directly to a school district human rights officer or the superintendent. If the complaint involves the building report taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the reporting party or complainant.

The building report taker shall ensure that this policy and its procedures, practices, consequences, and sanctions are fairly and fully implemented and shall serve as the primary contact on policy and procedural matters. The building report taker or a third party designated by the school district shall be responsible for the investigation. The building report taker shall provide information about available community resources to the target or victim of the bullying or other prohibited conduct, the perpetrator, and other affected individuals as appropriate.

- D. A teacher, school administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other school employee shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include bullying. Any such person who witnesses, observes, receives a report of, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct that may

constitute bullying or other prohibited conduct shall make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the bullying or prohibited conduct and shall inform the building report taker immediately. School district personnel who fail to inform the building report taker of conduct that may constitute bullying or other prohibited conduct or who fail to make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the bullying or prohibited conduct in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action.

- E. Reports of bullying or other prohibited conduct are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law. The building report taker, in conjunction with the responsible authority, shall be responsible for keeping and regulating access to any report of bullying and the record of any resulting investigation.
- F. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of bullying or other prohibited conduct will not affect the complainant's or reporter's future employment, grades, work assignments, or educational or work environment.
- G. The school district will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school district's obligation to investigate, take appropriate action, and comply with any legal disclosure obligations.

V. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

- A. Within three days of the receipt of a complaint or report of bullying or other prohibited conduct, the school district shall undertake or authorize an investigation by the building report taker or a third party designated by the school district.
- B. The building report taker or other appropriate school district officials may take immediate steps, at their discretion, to protect the target or victim of the bullying or other prohibited conduct, the complainant, the reporter, and students or others, pending completion of an investigation of the bullying or other prohibited conduct, consistent with applicable law.
- C. The alleged perpetrator of the bullying or other prohibited conduct shall be allowed the opportunity to present a defense during the investigation or prior to the imposition of discipline or other remedial responses.
- D. Upon completion of an investigation that determines that bullying or other prohibited conduct has occurred, the school district will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited conduct. Remedial responses to the bullying or other prohibited conduct shall be tailored to the particular incident and nature of the conduct and shall take into account the factors specified in Section II.F. of this policy. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements; applicable statutory authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act; the student discipline policy (See Policy 506) and other applicable school district policies; and applicable regulations.

- E. The school district is not authorized to disclose to a victim private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the school district. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students who are targets of bullying or other prohibited conduct and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of alleged perpetrators of bullying or other prohibited conduct who have been involved in a reported and confirmed bullying incident of the remedial or disciplinary action taken, to the extent permitted by law.
- F. In order to prevent or respond to bullying or other prohibited conduct committed by or directed against a child with a disability, the school district shall, when determined appropriate by the child's individualized education program (IEP) team or Section 504 team, allow the child's IEP or Section 504 plan to be drafted to address the skills and proficiencies the child needs as a result of the child's disability to allow the child to respond to or not to engage in bullying or other prohibited conduct.

VI. RETALIATION OR REPRISAL

The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who commits an act of reprisal or who retaliates against any person who asserts, alleges, or makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or prohibited conduct, who provides information about bullying or prohibited conduct, who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation of alleged bullying or prohibited conduct, or who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying or prohibited conduct. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline the individual(s) who engaged in the prohibited conduct. Remedial responses to the prohibited conduct shall be tailored to the particular incident and nature of the conduct and shall take into account the factors specified in Section II.F. of this policy.

VII. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

- A. The school district shall discuss this policy with school personnel and volunteers and provide appropriate training to school district personnel regarding this policy. The school district shall establish a training cycle for school personnel to occur during a period not to exceed every three school years. Newly employed school personnel must receive the training within the first year of their employment with the school district. The school district or a school administrator may accelerate the training cycle or provide additional training based on a particular need or circumstance. This policy shall be included in employee handbooks, training materials, and publications on school rules, procedures, and standards of conduct, which materials shall also be used to publicize this policy.
- B. The school district shall require ongoing professional development, consistent with Minnesota Statutes section 122A.60, to build the skills of all school personnel who regularly interact with students to identify, prevent, and appropriately address bullying and other prohibited conduct. Such professional development includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Developmentally appropriate strategies both to prevent and to immediately and effectively intervene to stop prohibited conduct;

2. The complex dynamics affecting a perpetrator, target, and witnesses to prohibited conduct;
 3. Research on prohibited conduct, including specific categories of students at risk for perpetrating or being the target or victim of bullying or other prohibited conduct in school;
 4. The incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
 5. Internet safety and cyberbullying.
- C. The school district annually will provide education and information to students regarding bullying, including information regarding this school district policy prohibiting bullying, the harmful effects of bullying, and other applicable initiatives to prevent bullying and other prohibited conduct.
- D. The administration of the school district is directed to implement programs and other initiatives to prevent bullying, to respond to bullying in a manner that does not stigmatize the target or victim, and to make resources or referrals to resources available to targets or victims of bullying.
- E. The administration is encouraged to provide developmentally appropriate instruction and is directed to review programmatic instruction to determine if adjustments are necessary to help students identify and prevent or reduce bullying and other prohibited conduct, to value diversity in school and society, to develop and improve students' knowledge and skills for solving problems, managing conflict, engaging in civil discourse, and recognizing, responding to, and reporting bullying or other prohibited conduct, and to make effective prevention and intervention programs available to students.

The administration must establish strategies for creating a positive school climate and use evidence-based social-emotional learning to prevent and reduce discrimination and other improper conduct.

The administration is encouraged, to the extent practicable, to take such actions as it may deem appropriate to accomplish the following:

1. Engage all students in creating a safe and supportive school environment;
2. Partner with parents and other community members to develop and implement prevention and intervention programs;
3. Engage all students and adults in integrating education, intervention, and other remedial responses into the school environment;
4. Train student bystanders to intervene in and report incidents of bullying and other prohibited conduct to the schools' primary contact person;
5. Teach students to advocate for themselves and others;
6. Prevent inappropriate referrals to special education of students who may engage in bullying or other prohibited conduct; and

7. Foster student collaborations that, in turn, foster a safe and supportive school climate.
- F. The school district may implement violence prevention and character development education programs to prevent or reduce policy violations. Such programs may offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, and resourcefulness.
- G. The school district shall inform affected students and their parents of rights they may have under state and federal data practices laws to obtain access to data related to an incident and their right to contest the accuracy or completeness of the data. The school district may accomplish this requirement by inclusion of all or applicable parts of its protection and privacy of pupil records policy (See Policy 515) in the student handbook.

VIII. NOTICE

- A. The school district will give annual notice of this policy to students, parents or guardians, and staff, and this policy shall appear in the student handbook.
- B. This policy or a summary thereof must be conspicuously posted in the administrative offices of the school district and the office of each school.
- C. This policy must be given to each school employee and independent contractor who regularly interacts with students at the time of initial employment with the school district.
- D. Notice of the rights and responsibilities of students and their parents under this policy must be included in the student discipline policy (See Policy 506) distributed to parents at the beginning of each school year.
- E. This policy shall be available to all parents and other school community members in an electronic format in the language appearing on the school district's or a school's website.
- F. The school district shall provide an electronic copy of its most recently amended policy to the Commissioner of Education.

IX. POLICY REVIEW

To the extent practicable, the school board shall, on a cycle consistent with other school district policies, review and revise this policy. The policy shall be made consistent with Minn. Stat. § 121A.031 and other applicable law. Revisions shall be made in consultation with students, parents, and community organizations.

11. Harassment and Violence

Refer to District Policy 413

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a learning and working environment free from harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability (Protected Class).

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II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The policy of the school district is to maintain a learning and working environment free from harassment and violence on the basis of Protected Class. The school district prohibits any form of harassment or violence on the basis of Protected Class.
- B. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel harasses a student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel or group of students, teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel through conduct or communication based on a person's Protected Class, as defined by this policy. (For purposes of this policy, school district personnel include school board members, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of the district.)
- C. A violation of this policy occurs when any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel inflicts, threatens to inflict, or attempts to inflict violence upon any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel or group of students, teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel based on a person's Protected Class.
- D. The school district will act to investigate all complaints, either formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment or violence based on a person's Protected Class, and to discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel found to have violated this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Assault" is:
 - 1. an act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death;
 - 2. the intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict bodily harm upon another; or
 - 3. the threat to do bodily harm to another with present ability to carry out the threat.
- B. "Harassment" prohibited by this policy consists of physical or verbal conduct, including, but not limited to, electronic communications, relating to an individual's or group of individuals' race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, or disability when the conduct:
 - 1. has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment;
 - 2. has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or

3. otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.
- C. "Immediately" means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.

D. Protected Classifications Definitions

1. "Disability" means, with respect to an individual who:
 - a. a physical, sensory, or mental impairment that materially limits one or more major life activities; of such individual;
 - b. has a record of such an impairment; or
 - c. is regarded as having such an impairment.
2. "Familial status" means the condition of one or more minors being domiciled with:
 - a. their parent or parents or the minor's legal guardian; or
 - b. the designee of the parent or parents or guardian with the written permission of the parent or parents or guardian. The protections afforded against harassment or discrimination on the basis of family status apply to any person who is pregnant or is in the process of securing legal custody of an individual who has not attained the age of majority.
3. "Marital status" means whether a person is single, married, remarried, divorced, separated, or a surviving spouse and, in employment cases, includes protection against harassment or discrimination on the basis of the identity, situation, actions, or beliefs of a spouse or former spouse.
4. "National origin" means the place of birth of an individual or of any of the individual's lineal ancestors.
5. "Sex" includes, but is not limited to, pregnancy, childbirth, and disabilities related to pregnancy or childbirth.
6. "Sexual orientation" means having or being perceived as having an emotional, physical, or sexual attachment to another person without regard to the sex of that person or having or being perceived as having an orientation for such attachment, or having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one's biological maleness or femaleness. "Sexual orientation" does not include a physical or sexual attachment to children by an adult.
7. "Status with regard to public assistance" means the condition of being a recipient of federal, state, or local assistance, including medical assistance, or of being a tenant

receiving federal, state, or local subsidies, including rental assistance or rent supplements.

- E. “Remedial response” means a measure to stop and correct acts of harassment or violence, prevent acts of harassment or violence from recurring, and protect, support, and intervene on behalf of a student who is the target or victim of acts of harassment or violence.

F. Sexual Harassment; Definition

1. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct, or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:
 - a. submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining employment; or an education; or
 - b. submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual’s employment or education; or
 - c. that conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual’s employment or education, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive employment or educational environment.
2. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to:
 - a. unwelcome verbal harassment or abuse;
 - b. unwelcome pressure for sexual activity;
 - c. unwelcome, sexually motivated or inappropriate patting, pinching or physical contact, other than necessary restraint of students(s) by teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel to avoid physical harm to persons or property;
 - d. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual’s employment or educational status;
 - e. unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual’s employment or educational status; or

- f. unwelcome behavior or words directed at an individual because of gender identity or expression.

G. Sexual Violence; Definition

1. Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression or force or the threat thereof that involves the touching of another's intimate parts, or forcing a person to touch any person's intimate parts. Intimate parts, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 609.341, includes the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks or breast, as well as the clothing covering these areas.
2. Sexual violence may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. touching, patting, grabbing, or pinching another person's intimate parts;
 - b. coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force the touching of anyone's intimate parts;
 - c. coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force sexual intercourse or a sexual act on another; or
 - d. threatening to force or coerce sexual acts, including the touching of intimate parts or intercourse, on another.

H. Violence; Definition

Violence prohibited by this policy is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another or group of individuals because of, or in a manner reasonably related to an individual's Protected Class.

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the target or victim of harassment or violence on the basis of Protected Class by a student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute harassment or violence prohibited by this policy toward a student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel or group of students, teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel should report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy. A person may report conduct that may constitute harassment or violence anonymously. However, the school district may not rely solely on an anonymous report to determine discipline or other remedial responses.
- B. The school district encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available

from the principal or building supervisor of each building or available from the school district office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well.

- C. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment or violence directly to a school district human rights officer or to the superintendent. If the complaint involves the building report taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the reporting party or complainant.
- E. In Each School Building. The building principal, the principal's designee, or the building supervisor (hereinafter the "building report taker") is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy at the building level. Any adult school district personnel who receives a report of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy shall inform the building report taker immediately. If the complaint involves the building report taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the reporting party or complainant. The building report taker shall ensure that this policy and its procedures, practices, consequences, and sanctions are fairly and fully implemented and shall serve as a primary contact on policy and procedural matters.
- E. A teacher, school administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other school employee shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events that might include acts of harassment or violence. Any such person who witnesses, observes, receives a report of, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute harassment or violence shall make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the harassment or violence and shall inform the building report taker immediately. School district personnel who fail to inform the building report taker of conduct that may constitute harassment or violence or who fail to make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the harassment or violence in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action.
- F. Upon receipt of a report, the building report taker must notify the school district human rights officer immediately, without screening or investigating the report. The building report taker may request, but may not insist upon, a written complaint. A written statement of the facts alleged will be forwarded as soon as practicable by the building report taker to the human rights officer. If the report was given verbally, the building report taker shall personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the human rights officer. Failure to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint as provided herein may result in disciplinary action against the building report taker.
- G. In the District. The school board hereby designates **each building principal** as school district human rights officers to receive reports or complaints of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy. If the complaint involves a human rights officer, the complaint shall be filed directly with the superintendent.¹
- H. The school district shall conspicuously post the name of the human rights officer(s), including mailing

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addresses and telephone numbers.

- I. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, work assignments, or educational or work environment.
- J. Use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.
- K. Reports of harassment or violence prohibited by this policy are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law.
- L. The school district will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school district's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations.
- M. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of violence or harassment is prohibited.
- N. False accusations or reports of violence or harassment against another person are prohibited.
- O. A person who engages in an act of violence or harassment, reprisal, retaliation, or false reporting of violence or harassment, or permits, condones, or tolerates violence or harassment shall be subject to discipline or other remedial responses for that act in accordance with the school district's policies and procedures.

Consequences for students who commit, or are a party to, prohibited acts of violence or harassment or who engage in reprisal or intentional false reporting may range from remedial responses or positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate violence or harassment or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of violence or harassment may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge.

Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of violence or harassment may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school district property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.

V. INVESTIGATION

- A. By authority of the school district, the human rights officer, within three (3) days of the receipt of a report or complaint alleging harassment or violence prohibited by this policy, shall undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by school district officials or by a third party designated by the school district.
- B. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against

whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.

- C. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the school district should consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.
- D. In addition, the school district may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the target or victim, the complainant, and students, teachers, administrators, or other school district personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged harassment or violence prohibited by this policy.
- E. The alleged perpetrator of the act(s) of harassment or violence shall be allowed the opportunity to present a defense during the investigation or prior to the imposition of discipline or other remedial responses.
- F. The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. The school district human rights officer shall make a written report to the superintendent upon completion of the investigation. If the complaint involves the superintendent, the report may be filed directly with the school board. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy.

VI. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

- A. Upon completion of an investigation that determines a violation of this policy has occurred, the school district will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, Minnesota and federal law, and applicable school district policies and regulations.
- B. The school district is not authorized to disclose to a victim private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the school district. School officials will notify the targets or victims and alleged perpetrators of harassment or violence, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of targets or victims of harassment or violence and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of alleged perpetrators of harassment or violence who have been involved in a reported and confirmed harassment or violence incident of the remedial or disciplinary action taken, to the extent permitted by law.
- C. In order to prevent or respond to acts of harassment or violence committed by or directed against a child with a disability, the school district shall, where determined appropriate by the child's

individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 team, allow the child's IEP or Section 504 plan to be drafted to address the skills and proficiencies the child needs as a result of the child's disability to allow the child to respond to or not to engage in acts of harassment or violence.

VII. RETALIATION OR REPRISAL

The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, or other school district personnel who commits an act of reprisal or who retaliates against any person who asserts, alleges, or makes a good faith report of alleged harassment or violence prohibited by this policy, who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation of retaliation or alleged harassment or violence, or who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline the individual(s) who engaged in the harassment or violence. Remedial responses to the harassment or violence shall be tailored to the particular incident and nature of the conduct.

VIII. RIGHT TO ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

These procedures do not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights or another state or federal agency, initiating civil action or seeking redress under state criminal statutes and/or federal law.

IX. HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE AS ABUSE

- A. Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under Minnesota law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 260E may be applicable.
- B. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the school district from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence or abuse.

X. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING

- A. This policy shall be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to students and staff members.
- B. This policy shall be given to each school district employee and independent contractor who regularly interacts with students at the time of initial employment with the school district.
- C. This policy shall appear in the student handbook.
- D. The school district will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.

- E. The school district may implement violence prevention and character development education programs to prevent and reduce policy violations. Such programs may offer instruction on character education including, but not limited to, character qualities such as attentiveness, truthfulness, respect for authority, diligence, gratefulness, self-discipline, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, peacemaking, resourcefulness, and/or sexual abuse prevention.
- F. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.

12. Hazing Prohibition

Refer to District Policy 526

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe learning environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. Hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational goals of the school district and are prohibited at all times.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. No student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, or engage in hazing.
- B. No teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district shall permit, condone, or tolerate hazing.
- C. Apparent permission or consent by a person being hazed does not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.
- D. Retaliation against a victim, good faith reporter, or a witness of hazing is prohibited.
- E. False accusations or reports of hazing against a student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee are prohibited.
- F. A person who engages in an act of hazing, reprisal, retaliation, or false reporting of hazing or permits, condones, or tolerates hazing shall be subject to discipline or other remedial responses for that act in accordance with the school district's policies and procedures.

Consequences for students who commit, tolerate, or are a party to prohibited acts of hazing may range from remedial responses or positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

Consequences for employees who permit, condone, or tolerate hazing or engage in an act of reprisal or intentional false reporting of hazing may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or discharge.

Consequences for other individuals engaging in prohibited acts of hazing may include, but not be limited to, exclusion from school district property and events and/or termination of services and/or contracts.

- G. This policy applies to hazing that occurs during and after school hours, on or off school premises or property, at school functions or activities, or on school transportation.
- H. A person who engages in an act that violates school policy or law in order to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization shall be subject to discipline for that act.
- I. The school district will act to investigate all complaints of hazing and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who is found to have violated this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Hazing" means committing an act against a student, or coercing a student into committing an act, that creates a substantial risk of harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with a student organization, or for any other school-related purpose. The term hazing includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Any type of physical brutality such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, or placing a harmful substance on the body.
 - 2. Any type of physical activity such as sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, confinement in a restricted area, calisthenics or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
 - 3. Any activity involving the consumption of any alcoholic beverage, drug, tobacco product, or any other food, liquid, or substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
 - 4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects a student to extreme mental stress, embarrassment, shame, or humiliation, that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from remaining in school.
 - 5. Any activity that causes or requires the student to perform a task that involves violation of state or federal law or of school district policies or regulations.
- B. "Immediately" means as soon as possible but in no event longer than 24 hours.

- C. "On school premises or school district property, or at school functions or activities, or on school transportation" means all school district buildings, school grounds, and school property or property immediately adjacent to school grounds, school bus stops, school buses, school vehicles, school contracted vehicles, or any other vehicles approved for school district purposes, the area of entrance or departure from school grounds, premises, or events, and all school-related functions, school-sponsored activities, events, or trips. School district property also may mean a student's walking route to or from school for purposes of attending school or school-related functions, activities, or events. While prohibiting hazing at these locations and events, the school district does not represent that it will provide supervision or assume liability at these locations and events.
- D. "Remedial response" means a measure to stop and correct hazing, prevent hazing from recurring, and protect, support, and intervene on behalf of a student who is the target or victim of hazing.
- E. "Student" means a student enrolled in a public school or a charter school.
- F. "Student organization" means a group, club, or organization having students as its primary members or participants. It includes grade levels, classes, teams, activities, or particular school events. A student organization does not have to be an official school organization to come within the terms of this definition.

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. Any person who believes he or she has been the target or victim of hazing or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official designated by this policy. A person may report hazing anonymously. However, the school district may not rely solely on an anonymous report to determine discipline or other remedial responses.
- B. The school district encourages the reporting party to use the report form available from the principal or building supervisor of each building or available from the school district office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well.

The building principal, the principal's designee, or the building supervisor (hereinafter the "building report taker") is the person responsible for receiving reports of hazing at the building level. Any adult school district personnel who receives a report of hazing prohibited by this policy shall inform the building report taker immediately. Any person may report hazing directly to a school district human rights officer or to the superintendent. If the complaint involves the building report taker, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the superintendent or the school district human rights officer by the reporting party or complainant.

The building report taker shall ensure that this policy and its procedures, practices, consequences, and sanctions are fairly and fully implemented and shall serve as a primary contact on policy and procedural matters.

- C. A teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, and other school employees shall be particularly alert to possible situations, circumstances, or events which might include hazing. Any such person who witnesses, observes, receives a report of, or has other knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute hazing shall make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the hazing and shall inform the building report taker immediately. School district personnel who fail to inform the building report taker of conducts that may constitute hazing or who fail to make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the hazing in a timely manner may be subject to disciplinary action.
- D. Submission of a good faith complaint or report of hazing will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades, work assignments, or educational or work environment.
- E. Reports of hazing are classified as private educational and/or personnel data and/or confidential investigative data and will not be disclosed except as permitted by law. The building report taker, in conjunction with the responsible authority, shall be responsible for keeping and regulating access to any report of hazing and the record of any resulting investigation.
- F. The school district will respect the privacy of the complainant(s), the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school district's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

V. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

- A. Within three (3) days of the receipt of a complaint or report of hazing, the school district shall undertake or authorize an investigation by school district officials or a third party designated by the school district.
- B. The building report taker or other appropriate school district officials may take immediate steps, at their discretion, to protect the target or victim of the hazing, the complainant, the reporter, and students; or others pending completion of an investigation of alleged hazing prohibited by this policy.
- C. The alleged perpetrator of the hazing shall be allowed the opportunity to present a defense during the investigation or prior to the imposition of discipline or other remedial responses.
- D. Upon completion of an investigation that determines hazing has occurred, the school district will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to try to deter violations and to appropriately discipline prohibited behavior. School district action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with the requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements; applicable statutory authority, including the Minnesota Pupil Fair Dismissal Act; and applicable school district policies and regulations.

- E. The school district is not authorized to disclose to a victim private educational or personnel data regarding an alleged perpetrator who is a student or employee of the school district. School officials will notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students who are targets or victims of hazing and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of alleged perpetrators of hazing who have been involved in a reported and confirmed hazing incident of the remedial or disciplinary action taken, to the extent permitted by law.
- F. In order to prevent or to respond to hazing committed by or directed against a child with a disability, the school district shall, where determined appropriate by the child's individualized education program (IEP) team or Section 504 team, allow the child's IEP or Section 504 plan to be drafted to address the skills and proficiencies the child needs as a result of the child's disability to allow the child to respond to or not to engage in hazing.

VI. RETALIATION OR REPRISAL

The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, contractor, or other employee of the school district who commits an act of reprisal or who retaliates against any person who asserts, alleges, or makes a good faith report of alleged hazing, who provides information about hazing, who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation of alleged hazing, or who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such hazing. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment. Disciplinary consequences will be sufficiently severe to deter violations and to appropriately discipline the individual(s) who engaged in the prohibited conduct. Remedial responses to the prohibited conduct shall be tailored to the particular incident and nature of the conduct.

VII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy shall appear in each school's student handbook and in each school's building and staff handbooks.
- B. The school district will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.



Handbook Acknowledgement Form 2025-2026

We have received a copy of the 2025-2026 Student Handbook for Rockford Area Schools - ISD 883.

Student Printed Name

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

2025-2026

Rockford Area Schools Employee Handbook



Updated by: Rockford Handbook Team

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LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to provide you with this handbook and hope that it will become a used and useful reference. It is intended to provide clear guidelines for day-to-day issues that arise in a school setting.

We ask you to take some time to review the contents of this document carefully, and to talk with your principal or supervisor about any areas about which you have concerns or questions.

We also ask you to take the contents of this handbook seriously – and be assured that we take it seriously as well, as we view it as an effort to define shared understandings about professional standards and conduct.

The Rockford Area Schools reserves the right to modify any of the information covered in this handbook at any time. Notification of changes will be made by email and other appropriate means. However, such a notice is not required for changes to be effective.

Thank you for your commitment to the children and families of our school community and we look forward to working with you throughout the coming year.

The Rockford Area Schools District Administrative Team (DAT)

Note: In the event of any conflicts, language in a collective bargaining agreement or state or federal law supersedes language in this handbook.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

Employees Covered:

This Handbook is provided as a reference document for the Rockford Area School District's (hereinafter referred to as "District") employees.

Disclaimer:

The contents of this Handbook are presented for information purposes only. The plans, policies and procedures described are not intended to promise or guarantee specific terms or conditions of employment. The District reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate, or change any or all such plans, policies, or procedures, in whole or in part, at any time with or without notice. The language which appears in this Handbook is not intended to create, nor is it to be construed to constitute, a contract between the District and any one or all of its employees. Nor, should this handbook be interpreted to promise continued employment. Notwithstanding any provisions of this Handbook, employment may be terminated at any time, with or without cause, except as explicitly provided for in any other pertinent section of this Handbook, individual contract, or relevant collective bargaining agreement.

In case of a direct conflict between this Handbook, rules, regulations or policies of the Board and any specific provisions of an individual contract or collective bargaining agreement, the individual contract or collective bargaining agreement shall control.

This Employee Handbook is intended to provide employees with summary information regarding policies, procedures, ethics, expectations and standards of the District. It is not, however, intended to replace a reading of the actual Board Policies or and Administrative Regulations, copies of which are available to all personnel on the district website at [Rockford Policies](#). It is important that each employee is aware of the policies and procedures related to his/her position. The rights and obligations of all employees are governed by all applicable laws and regulations, including, but not limited by the following: Federal laws and regulations, Minnesota State Statutes, Rules, Administrative Code and the policies of the Rockford Area Schools Board.

Nothing contained in this handbook shall be construed to limit, impair or affect the right of any employee to the expression or communication of a view, grievance, complaint or opinion on any matter related to the conditions or compensation of public employment or their betterment, so long as the same is not designed to and does not interfere with the full, faithful and proper performance of the duties of employment or circumvent the rights of the employee.

Management Responsibilities

It is the right and obligation of the District to efficiently manage and conduct the operation of the District within its legal limitations and with its primary obligation to provide educational opportunity for the students of the District. The School district is not required to meet and negotiate on matters of inherent managerial policy.

Effect of Laws, Rules, and Regulations

Employees will perform services prescribed by the District and will be governed by relevant state and federal laws, School Board policies and the rules, regulations, directives, and orders issued by properly designated officials of the District.

DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND INFORMATION

Mission, Vision, Core Values and Strategic Direction

Mission Statement

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

Vision 2025

Rockford Area Schools provides a supportive, rigorous, and relevant learning culture producing courageous learners prepared to enter a global society.

Core Values (Drivers of Our Words and Actions)

- Excellence
- Students First
- Community
- Integrity
- Stewardship
- Student Experience

Strategic Directions (*Areas of Focus for Improvement*)

- Student Achievement and Growth
- Healthy and Supportive Environment
- Community, School and Family Partnerships
- Culture of Collective Purpose
- Stewardship of Resources

Board of Education

The Rockford Area Schools is governed by a six-member [Board of Education](#). The role of the board is to represent the children of the district through the creation of policies and programs that support excellent teaching, a positive and inclusive school environment, and high student achievement.

School Board Members

Eric Gordee – Chair

Jessica Johnson – Vice Chair

Jamie Hillstrom – Clerk

Chris Morgan - Treasurer

Beth Praska –Director

Kevin Sjodin– Director

Policies & Administrative Procedures of the School Board

Policies

[Board policies](#) are available for viewing on the district website. It is the responsibility of all employees to know, support and implement district policies. All policies and procedures are expected to be reviewed on a regular basis by all employees.

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Board of Education are scheduled for 5:30 PM on the third Monday of each month (exceptions & additions determined by the school board). The meeting agenda and background information are posted by the Friday prior to each meeting on the district website. Faculty wishing to have an item placed on an agenda is asked to have it approved by their Principal prior to submission.

All [school board agendas, meeting notes, and recorded audio](#) are available on the district website. This also included archived notes.

Committees

Three board members are assigned to each committee; community members may also be appointed. A copy of the current committee membership is available on the district website. There are four standing committees of the board:

- Finance
- District Operations
- Policy
- Negotiations

The committees meet on an occasional basis. Notice of committee meetings is made a minimum of 3 days prior to the meeting and posted outside the district office. Faculty and staff members are encouraged to attend committee meetings of interest to them.

District Leadership:

Superintendent – Dr. Jeff Ridlehoover
Director of Business Operations – Mike McNulty
Director of Community Education – Melissa Joseph
Director of Technology – Jeff Kienitz
Director of Activities - Dan Pratt
Special Education Supervisor – Emily Seitzer
Early Childhood Programs Coordinator – Tiffany Reinhard
Galaxy Kids Coordinator – Cody Hallahan

Principals:

Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School -- Brenda Nyhus
Rockford Middle School Center for Environmental Studies -- Paul Warzecha
Rockford High School International Baccalaureate World School -- Paul Menard

Calendar & Schedules

The most [current school calendar](#) can be found on our website. Please refer to this calendar often as approved changes will be reflected in the most current adopted version.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Equal Opportunity Employer

The Rockford Area Schools prohibits discrimination in any form on the basis of race, color, creed, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status or status with regard to public assistance. This policy includes, but is not limited to, the following: employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, recall, corrective actions, termination, rate of pay, other compensation, and the application of policies and training.

Please refer to School Board Policy 401 – [Equal Employment Opportunity](#) for more information.

Employees who engage in discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If you feel you have been the victim of discrimination, please contact an Administrator.

Immigration Law Compliance

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of your right to work in the United States. You will be asked to provide original documents, as required by federal law, to sign a Federal Form I-9. The Rockford Area Schools is committed to employing only United States Citizens and Aliens who are authorized to work in the United States. As a condition of employment, you must properly complete, *sign and date the first section of the Immigration and Naturalization Service Form I-9 and provide documentation of information requested within three (3) business days of the date employment begins. Newly re-hired employees must also complete the form (I-9) prior to beginning work if: they have not previously filed an I-9 with the school district; if their previous I-9 is more than three years old; or if their previous I-9 is no longer valid.* Identification is required that meets federal requirements to establish work eligibility. If you at any time cannot verify your right to work in the United States, the Rockford Area Schools may be obligated to terminate your employment.

Employers cannot specify which documents an employee can use for Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification.

Employee Background Check

Rockford specifically reserves any and all rights it may have to conduct background checks, including driving records checks, regarding current employees or applicants with the consent of such individuals. (Refer to Board [Policy 404](#))

Driver's License and Driving Record

Employees whose work requires operation of a motor vehicle must present and maintain a valid driver's license. Any changes in your driving record which would hinder driving privileges must be reported to your supervisor immediately. If you lose your right to drive on business, and your job is travel-intensive, you may lose your job.

Personnel File

Human Resources maintains a personnel file for each employee. Keeping your personnel file up-to-date is important. You may see information in your own personnel file by making a written request in advance to review it with the Director of Business Services/Payroll Coordinator. You may also make a written request to receive copies of all documents in your file. All medical records, if any, will be kept in a separate confidential file. You may review your personnel file by contacting Human Resources for an appointment and making a written request.

Integrity is a core value in the Rockford Area Schools. Intentional inaccuracies on official school district documents, such as time sheets, job applications, etc. are prohibited and are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS

There are certain behaviors in the Rockford Area School District. You can expect:

- Provide an exciting, challenging, and rewarding workplace and experience;
- Provide safe working conditions;
- Provide training related to the specific needs of your job;
- Access to and explanation of policies, rules, and regulations;
- Assure employees an opportunity to discuss any issue or problem with their supervisor or appropriate district staff member
- Take prompt and fair action of any complaint which may arise in the everyday conduct of our business to the extent that is practicable;
- Respect individual rights and treat all employees with courtesy and consideration;
- Maintain mutual respect in our working relationship;
- Keep employees informed of Rockford Area School's strategic priorities; and
- Promote an atmosphere in keeping with Rockford Area School's vision and mission.

EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

There are certain behaviors Rockford Area Schools will expect from you as an employee. Listed below are expectations Rockford Area Schools have for you as an employee:

- Exhibit enthusiasm for learning – strive to learn and grow both intellectually and personally;
- Act with integrity and caring – exhibit honesty, trustworthiness, and compassion in one’s work and relationships;
- Value all people – work to create an inclusive and respectful workplace;
- Work as a team – develop collaborative and team-oriented abilities that will create a community of mutual respect, common vision, and shared accomplishments;
- Accept constructive criticism – listen and learn from the constructive criticism your supervisor shares with you;
- Serve others – nurture a climate of excellence in service that is responsible to others’ needs;
- Celebrate work well done – strive for excellence in all aspects of work and celebrate individual and collective accomplishments; and
- Share your thoughts and ideas.

COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

Communication plays an important role in the engagement of employees within an organization.

Employees are expected to:

- Keep informed of cooperative policies, procedures, and provide regular agency-specific updates
- Maintain confidentiality and adhere to all data privacy laws, FERPA, and HIPAA laws
- If the need arises, submit feedback to your direct supervisor. Often the ideas generated can lead to improvements and promote a good organizational culture
- Bring forward significant concerns or key information to the Director of Business Operations/HR department in an expeditious manner
- Staff are expected to respond to internal and external emails and voicemails within 1-2 business days
- Occasional use of school communication systems for personal reasons is acceptable. However, the key word is “occasional.” Moreover, it is never permissible to use the district’s communication system to send messages which contain profanity or include vulgar, profane or discriminatory content.
- You cannot control what you receive, but you must control what you send. If you receive something inappropriate, delete it or dispose of it, and inform the sender that you do not wish to receive such communications.
- All Rockford accounts are intended to be used only for professional school – related use. Reminder - use Bcc when emailing.
- Regardless of the communication medium, send messages to others on a “need to know” basis as opposed to sending messages meant for a few to all box holders.
- Using school communications to make a profit or to conduct a business is unacceptable. It is acceptable to advertise items for sale or services you may offer in a designated area in the staff lounge/workroom.
- Use of school communications to share beliefs of a personal, religious, or political nature is inappropriate.

- Use of school communications to build staff morale, advertise staff functions, etc. is acceptable. However, be cautious about the type of humorous or entertaining message you access or share. Anything with sexual, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. overtones are unacceptable.
- All electronic communication on district equipment can be requested and is discoverable.
- All Rockford Area Schools employees are established on the district email communication network and are responsible for checking their email.
- Please contact the Technology Department to obtain your initial password if you did not receive it upon hire. Once you have accessed your email account, you are responsible for changing your password for secure access to your email messages.
- All building and district-wide announcements are made via email.
- Remember that any email you send always carries the name of the Rockford Area Schools. Treat it as if you were sending a letter on Rockford Area Schools' letterhead.
- Employees must always be cognizant that electronic mail messages constitute "data" under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This means that they must be retained by the district, pursuant to the district's data retention schedule. It also means that messages that relate to students and/or their parents are considered student data, to which parents must be provided access, upon their request. Messages must always remain professional and objective and be free of disparaging and/or subjective comments about parents or students.
- Include an AutoSignature with email you send to anyone outside the building. (The equivalent of signing your name on letterhead.)
- Do not assume that email is private or confidential. All email done on school computers is potentially subject to "open records" laws and may have to be divulged if requested by a citizen. If you need to communicate sensitive information, do not use email.

Social Media

Social media is a powerful tool and can be a convenient way to communicate with staff, members, families and others. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are sometimes blurred in the digital world. Even when you have a disclaimer or use a different username, you will always be considered a district employee. Whether it is clearly communicated or not, you will be publicly identified as working for and sometimes representing the district in what you do and say online. The following are guidelines to assist you in effectively managing your professional and personal social media accounts:

- Rockford Area Schools staff and employees are personally responsible for all comments/information and hosted content they publish online.
- By posting comments, having online conversations, etc. on social media sites you are broadcasting to the world, be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings, what you 'say' online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a 'private conversation' may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum.
- Do not share confidential information whether it is internal school discussions or specific information about students or other staff.
- Comments related to the Rockford Area Schools, its employees, staff and/events related to the Rockford Area Schools, should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion.
- Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on your professionalism.
- Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality, and an extension of your professional

life and classroom. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on the wall, then it should be considered inappropriate to post online.

- Reputation management is extremely important and you should keep your personal and professional accounts separated.

Telephone and Mail

You are encouraged to use district telephones, computers, fax machines, and other communication devices for school district business purposes only. Employees may use personal cell phones to make personal telephone calls/text messages or other electronic correspondence during their breaks, meal periods or prep periods, but may not use them during scheduled work time, unless required for specific job/work related duties and emergencies. All communication with students should be professional and related to the education process.

District Cellular Phones

For information regarding appropriate usage of district owned telephones, see the "[Communication Expectations](#)" section above.

Staff Meetings

Staff, team and other meetings are an important link for employees. Talk with your supervisor about the frequency and location of meetings and plan to attend. Periodically, staff meetings may be held for the purpose of hearing guest speakers, holding open forums, obtaining new information, the opportunity for employee input and/or education/training or receiving updates on what is happening in the school district.

Good News Communication (Certified Staff)

Effective school-home communication is key to helping our young people be successful. We encourage positive phone calls and notes to parents/guardians--try to "catch the students being good" and let parents know that you noticed. A goal of one positive contact per year per student is within reach.

General Correspondence with Home via Notices or Newsletters (Certified Staff)

It is our obligation as educators to keep parents informed of student progress in all areas. In keeping with this philosophy, the following procedures will be followed:

- Parents must be notified by telephone when a student is performing or behaving poorly in the classroom. This communication should take place early enough to allow for correcting the situation prior to the end of the grading period.
- Teachers are expected to update grades at a minimum of every three weeks (preferable more often).
- All teachers are expected to have a google site with their Name, Contact Information, Course Syllabi/Overview. A teacher may also include any other relevant information such as standards, Standardized testing overview/info, etc.
- Communicating with parents on a regular basis will enhance your classroom management, give you more information about the student and his/her environment, and show your interest in the student as an individual.

Web Page

All departments/grade levels/classrooms are encouraged to develop their google web pages. However, it is essential that everyone who contributes to the development of the website do their part to ensure

that all web pages stay current. Please see your building tech if you have any questions about the website.

Crisis Communication and Steps to Support and Ensure Safe Schools

[Link to our Crisis Handbook.](#)

Emergency School Closing/Late Start/Early Dismissal

Link to the Rockford E-Learning page: [Rockford E-Learning Plan](#)

Inclement Weather Days – refer to Master Agreements

[Contract Site](#)

On days when the District is closed by the Superintendent due to snow or other adverse weather beyond the E-Learning days, employees will be required to make up the work day in accordance with School Board approval of the school calendar.

Notice of closing/late start/early dismissal is done through the local media

Employees need to be entered into the Campus system which has an automated calling system for Emergency school closing situations. Be sure to check with your local radio or TV station whenever you are in doubt about school being open because of inclement weather conditions. Please do not call your Principal or the District Administrator unless there is an emergency. The District Administrator will make closing decisions as early as possible; including the evening before if it is at all feasible.

School closings/delays will be posted on area media outlets.

[School closings info from website](#)

How will the E-Learning day affect activities?

All after school evening activities will be canceled on E-Learning days.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Federal and State Wage and Hour Standards

To the extent that the terms and condition of a district employee's employment is not governed by an existing individual or collective bargaining agreement, he or she is an hourly, non-exempt employee under Federal and State wage and hour standards, based on verification of hours worked.

At-Will Employment Status

All non-contract employees are employed at the will and discretion of the district. As such, there shall be no individual continuing contract status, in fact or implied. Non-contract employees may be employed, promoted, demoted, or terminated at the will of the district so long as the requirements of cause, procedures, and the rights of the individual as mandated under law have not been violated.

Rights to Views

Nothing contained in this handbook shall be construed to limit, impair or affect the right of any employee to the expression or communication of a view, grievance, complaint or opinion on any matter related to the conditions or compensation of public employment or their betterment, so long as the

same is not designed to and does not interfere with the full, faithful and proper performance of the duties of employment or circumvent the rights of the employee.

Employment of Minors

No one under 18 years of age will be employed without providing proper proof of age through an age certificate, birth certificate, or driver's license. Minors will be employed only in accordance with the state child labor laws and school district policies. No one under 16 years of age (15 in special circumstances with approval of HR) will be employed in any capacity.

This policy is in accordance with both state and federal laws that regulate hiring of minors - persons less than 18 years of age. In the Fair Labor Standards Act the minimum age of 16 was set for general employment, but for those occupations that the Secretary of Labor determined to be hazardous, the minimum age is 18.

A high school student under the age of 18 will not be permitted to work after 11 p.m. on an evening before a school day or before 5 a.m. on a school day.

Retaliation

The law forbids retaliation when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment in response to filing a charge of discrimination; making a complaint to an employer or other covered entity about discrimination; or because of participation in a discrimination proceeding.

The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged harassment, violence, or discrimination in accordance with School Board Policy or any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

Comparable Worth/Pay Equity

It is the practice of the Rockford Area Schools to comply with the Minnesota State Law on comparable worth/pay equity.

Discrimination, Harassment, Violence

Purpose

The purpose of the Rockford Area Schools is to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination, and harassment and violence on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

Reasonable accommodations shall be made for qualified individuals with a disability or handicap, unless such accommodations would impose an undue hardship to the district. Application forms, hiring practices and personnel administration shall be periodically evaluated to identify and eliminate existing stereotypes and biases.

Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures.

For the detailed and most current policy information, please refer to the [District Policy 402](#).

Employee Discrimination Complaint Procedures

Any employee or applicant for employment who believes that the Rockford Area Schools or any part of the school organization has in some way violated the district's equal opportunity employment policy may bring forward a complaint as outlined below. Harassment complaints shall be processed in accordance with procedures outlined in board policy.

A. Informal Procedure

Anyone who believes he has a basis for complaint shall discuss the concern with the building principal, who will investigate the complaint and reply to the complainant. If this reply is not acceptable to the complainant, he may initiate formal procedures according to the steps listed below.

B. Formal Complaint Procedure

- **Step 1:** The formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the building principal using the [Discrimination/Harassment Complaint Form](#). The Director of Business Operations (or designated administration) shall immediately undertake an investigation of the suspected infraction. Either the Director of Business Operations or their designee shall review with the building Principal(s) and other appropriate persons the facts concerning the alleged discrimination, decide the merits of the case, determine the action to be taken, if any, and report in writing the findings and the resolution of the case to the complainant.
- **Step 2:** If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Director of Business Operations, he or she may appeal the decision in writing to the Superintendent and the Board of Education. The Superintendent and Board shall hear the appeal at its next regular meeting, or a special meeting may be called for the purpose of hearing the appeal. The Board shall make its decision in writing. Copies of the written decision shall be mailed or delivered to the complainant and filed in the district office.
- **Step 3:** If at this point the complaint has not been satisfactorily settled, further appeal may be made, as appropriate, to the [U.S. Office of Civil Rights](#) or [the Minnesota Department of Human Rights](#).

Nothing in these procedures shall preclude an employee or applicant for employment from pursuing other avenues afforded by law to deal with a workplace or student complaint.

Title IX – Sex Nondiscrimination Policy, Grievance Procedure and Process

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, and it is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and its implementing regulations, not to discriminate in such a manner. The requirement not to discriminate in its education program or activity extends to admission and employment. The school district is committed to maintaining an education and work environment that is free from discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment. [Policy 522](#).

Any employee, student, parent, or guardian having questions regarding the application of Title IX and its regulations and/or this policy and grievance process should discuss them with the Title IX Coordinator. The school district's Title IX Coordinator(s) is:

Superintendent Dr. Ridlehoover

Phone: 763-477-9165 ext 4002

Email: jeff.ridlehoover@rockford883.org

Address: Rockford District Office, 6051 Ash Street, Rockford, MN 55373

Questions relating solely to Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator(s), the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education, or both. Additional information can be view in [School Board Policy #522 – Title IX Sex Nondiscrimination Policy, Grievance Procedure and Process](#).

Bullying Procedures

All staff members in Rockford Area schools must make a reasonable effort to address student vs. student bullying when they see it or know about it. Investigations into reported bullying will commence within three days of the receipt of the report. Parents of the bully and victims will be contacted with information from the investigation.

The procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviors in Rockford Area Schools are in support of the Minnesota legislation that prohibits bullying in all Minnesota schools. The entire policy can be found on the District website, under Board Policies, [Policy #514](#). Additional resources will also be located on the District's website.

Behavior that occurs at school, on buses, or at school events are covered by this policy. Electronic behavior that occurs on or off school premises but substantially and materially disrupts education and learning in the school can also be disciplined according to this policy.

Bullying by definition has 4 key components

- Bullying is intimidating, threatening, abusive or hurtful conduct.
- It is objectively offensive.
- The conduct involves an imbalance of power and is repeated or
- The conduct materially and substantially interferes with a student's education or ability to participate in school activities.

This definition creates 2 distinct categories of bullying

Category 1: Behavior that involves an imbalance of power and pattern or

Category 2: Behavior that significantly affects a student's ability to participate in school, classes, or events.

The problem of bullying can be effectively controlled but it will take the combined efforts of the administration, staff, parents, and students of the school district. With proper education, prompt reporting, and effective interventions, Rockford Area Schools will be a safe and secure place for all students to learn.

For further information regarding bullying and harassment, please feel free to access [this video](#) from the Minnesota Department of Education.

Drug Free Schools

Refer to [School Board Policies](#) for the most current policies and information related to policies including:

- 418 – Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free School

- 416 – Drug and Alcohol Testing
- 417 – Chemical Use and Abuse
- 419 – Tobacco-Free Environment

Mandated Reporting- Child Abuse and Neglect

It is the policy of the state of Minnesota “to protect children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse. While it is recognized that most parents want to keep their children safe, sometimes circumstances or conditions interfere with their ability to do so. When this occurs, families are best served by interventions that engage their protective capacities and address immediate safety concerns and ongoing risks of child maltreatment”.[M.S. 626.556, Subd. 1]

Any school employee who knows or suspects that a child's health or welfare has been or appears to have been harmed, as a result of child abuse or neglect, has a legal responsibility and duty to report the case in accordance with these procedures. If you have any questions regarding your responsibilities or role, you must contact your immediate supervisor for assistance.

Please refer to the [Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines](#) or Minnesota Statute 626.556 – Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors for more information. The Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines includes information on the State Policy, where to report information, definitions and how to handle the processing of reports.

Please also refer to the [Board Policies](#) for more information:

- **414** – Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse
- **415** – Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults

Report suspected child abuse and neglect **IMMEDIATELY!**

The reporter should be the person who took the information directly from the child.

Where Do I Report?

During Business Hours, M-F, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. call:

Hennepin or Wright County Health and Human Services, ask for intake
 Wright County
 Toll Free: 1-800-362-3667
 Crisis HotLine: 1-800-635-8008
 Child Protection Referrals: 1-763-682-7449

Hennepin County
 Maltreatment of vulnerable adult: 1-844-880-1574
 Child abuse or neglect: 1-612-348-3552

Emergency 911

After Business Hours, Weekends, and Holidays call

1. County Sheriff's Office: Wright Cty 763-682-7662, Hennepin Cty 952-258-5321
2. Emergency 911

Reminder to Mandated Reporter: A verbal report is required within 24 hours of receiving knowledge of abuse/neglect, followed by a written report within 72 hours.

What do I do if I think someone is abusing or neglecting a child?

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused or neglected by someone, it is important that you be aware of your reaction to their disclosure and....

Do

- Support the Child
- Validate his/her feelings
- Listen to the Child/Believe the Child

Do Not

- Investigate
- Make promises
- Ask leading questions (i.e. "That Man touched you didn't he?")

Some Questions You Might Ask

What happened?

Who did this to you?

Where were you when this happened? When did this happen?

A resource Guide for Mandated Reporters can be found at:

<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5144-ENG> (or SPA for Spanish)

Attendance for Employees

The interaction between employees and students is the most influential factor affecting student academic success. It is critical that employees be available to provide continuous high-quality instruction. However, it is understood that there are times when it is necessary to be absent because of illness or personal obligations. In those cases, the employee must adhere to time off reporting procedures:

Rockford Area Public Schools has established SMARTeR as the official time management system for all employees. All employees are mandated to report absences to SMARTeR, whether or not substitute coverage is required. Timely reporting is essential. The guidelines for reporting absences are delineated in the SMARTeR reporting procedures. All substitute requests are to be entered in Frontline.

Reporting Requirements

- **Deadline:** The deadline for reporting a same day absence is 6:30am.
- **If unable to Report by the Deadline:** In the unlikely event that circumstances prevent the employee from reporting by the deadline, the employee will then be required to notify the Building Principal, or Building Designee, by calling with the reason for the absence, e.g. personal illness, personal day, etc.
- **Long-term Absence:** Please contact your building administrator, and the Pay & Benefits Coordinator (Cindy Gapinski)/Director of Business Operations (Mike McNulty)HR and we will provide guidance.
- **Professional Development:** An employee may not report a professional development day to SmarteR. The Principal will authorize the professional development day on the basis of the Professional Development guidelines. An employee must have prior approval before entering the time into SMARTeR.
- **Substitute Coverage Arrangements:** All substitute coverage should be arranged through the **Frontline** system, unless this does not apply to your position/role within the district. If an employee secures a substitute by other means, the employee must communicate this with the building secretary in order to have that substitute attached to the employee's absence in the SMARTeR system.

- **Compliance Standards**

- Failure to comply with the absence reporting requirements may lead to disciplinary action.
- Compliance with the reporting procedure is essential in order to facilitate continuity of instruction at the school and maintain a safe, orderly environment.
- The Principal will follow up in cases where an employee does not report an absence to SMARTeR .

The attendance records of each employee will be considered individually with reference made to the following types of attendance problems:

- **Frequency of Absence:** Frequent short-term absences often indicate basic poor attendance habits.
- **Pattern of Absence:** Unscheduled absences that reflect a pattern of Monday or Friday absences, or absences on the day before or after a holiday or long weekend or other suspicious patterns related to operational conditions (e.g. weather, workload, etc.)
- **Cause of Absence:** The nature of frequent absences is unrelated and may reflect a poor attendance record.

The primary responsibility for maintaining a satisfactory attendance record rests with the employee. An employee's attendance record shall be considered when evaluating an employee's job performance, and in determining eligibility for promotions.

Personal and vacation absences beyond the days/hours provided by contract will be considered unexcused. Pre-approval needs to be sought for provision of an excused absence beyond the days/hours provided. Such approval will be limited to rare occasions that are outside of the employee's control (annual requests will not be approved). The expectation is for employees to plan to be in attendance for all scheduled days along with provided sick, personal and vacation days.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits employers from discriminating against "qualified" individuals with disabilities. The Board of Education relies on district Administration to ensure non-discrimination in all terms and conditions of employment. Prior to imposing any discipline, beyond an oral or written reprimand, Principals must consult with the Human Resources Office to ensure compliance with this Act. Employees may contact the Human Resources Office with any questions concerning the ADA.

Employee Records

Documentation of any action taken pursuant to the guideline and procedures established herein shall be returned to the employee's personnel file.

Any questions concerning this guideline shall be directed to the District Office, Director of Business Operations/Payroll Coordinator.

Requesting Procedures

To request a leave of absence, contact Cindy Gapinski at cindy.gapinski@rockford883.org log on to [Frontline Central](#) and complete a Leave of Absence Request Form preferably as soon as you are aware a leave of absence will be needed.

Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993: [Link to federal FMLA page](#)

Employee Rights and Responsibilities Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

Refer to Policy 410 - Family and Medical Leave on our website under [District Policy 410](#).

Basic Leave Entitlement

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

Benefits and Protections

During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

Eligibility Requirements

Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Use of Leave

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions; the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Employer Responsibilities

Covered employers will inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice will specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer will provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers will inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the employer will notify the employee.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Time Off

Time Clocks

Employees required to use the SMARTer Timekeeping system must ensure that their time is accurate. This includes notifying immediate supervisors of correcting any errors to their start/end times as well as lunch break periods.

Nursing Mothers, Lactating Employees, and Pregnancy Accommodations

Minnesota's Nursing Mothers, Lactating Employees, and Pregnancy Accommodations law (Minnesota Statutes § 181.939) gives pregnant and lactating employees certain legal rights. Pregnant employees have the right to request and receive reasonable accommodations, which may include, but are not

limited to, more frequent or longer breaks, seating, limits to heavy lifting, temporary transfer to another position, temporary leave of absence or modification in work schedule or tasks. An employer cannot require an employee to take a leave or accept an accommodation. Lactating employees have the right to reasonable paid break times to express milk at work unless they are expressing milk during a break that is not usually paid, such as a meal break. Employers should provide a clean, private and secure room that is not a bathroom near the work area that includes access to an electrical outlet for employees to express milk. It is against the law for an employer to retaliate, or to take negative action, against a pregnant or lactating employee for exercising their rights under this law. Employees who believe their rights have been violated under this law can contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry's Labor Standards Division at dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us or 651-284-5075 for help. Employees also have the right to file a civil lawsuit for relief. For more information about this law, visit dli.mn.gov/newparents.

See your Master Agreement for all of the following Leaves.

Personal Leave (PL)

Sick Leave

Vacation

Bereavement Leave

Holidays

Jury Duty

Emergency Leave

Leave of Absence without Pay

Substitute Employees

In the interests of consistency for the students and substitutes in an absence, teachers and employees requiring a substitute are expected to keep a folder in his/her desk or area that contains information to support the substitute in an absence. The following items are examples of things that could support a substitute in an absence:

- Lesson plans
- Class lists/seating charts
- Instructional grouping lists
- Class and team schedules
- Teacher schedule, *including any duties (except for bus duties)*
- Fire drill, intruder, bomb threat and tornado information
- Extra activities for substitutes
- Medical information for special needs students
- School rules
- Behavior rules
- Any special instructions for mainstreamed students
- First aid information

The Building Administrative Assistants can reasonably assume that this information will be available for your substitute; please be sure communication for your substitute is in place.

Data Privacy

Most information obtained as the result of employment with the school district is classified as confidential or private under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The same is true of data which relates to current or former students. Respect for the privacy of our students requires that you discuss any student issues only with those staff members and parents who need to know the information. In addition to student information, confidentiality is expected in other areas, including staff information or school district business information. The District will comply with requests for public information as they are received in accordance with state law and school district policy. Requests should be directed to the proper department for processing. Please include the completed [form](#) when appropriate.

Please refer to [Board Policies](#):

- 515 – Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records
- 406 – Public And Private Personnel Data and request form

Data Retention- Student Records

A general rule on all records is to retain all data generated on or about a student in the Student's Cumulative file. Please refer to the following information as you determine what should be kept in regards to student data. If you have questions, please seek out the assistance of an administrator.

What needs to be kept?

Educational Data (any document maintained as a result of a student's attendance)

- Teacher notes
- Test results
- Health records
- Enrollment information
- Disciplinary and attendance records
- Grading books
- emails/voicemails in which the student is the subject
- Parent correspondence

Specifically:

- Student Accident Reports
- Achievement and standardized test results
- Emergency care information
- Membership data
- Health and immunization information
- School nurse notes
- Health room log
- Cumulative File (including record of access, log in/out, record for review or transfer of student records)
- Demographic Info (district census, student directory info, student family info- includes dissolution or custody orders)
- LEP reports (language)
- Extra and Co-curricular participation records
- Homeschool records
- Preschool screening

- Nonresident pupil attendance applications/agreements
- School performance data (yearly report cards and transcripts)
- Auxiliary organization records (Clubs, interest groups, student councils, athletic assoc., graduation programs, activity funds- treasurer's records, bylaws, membership records, meeting minutes)

What does not need to be kept?

Records kept in sole possession of the maker, used as a personal memory aid, and not accessible or revealed to others. (must be thrown away at the end of the school year).

Keep:

- Keep all records with respect to services provided by the district
- Understand the "desk drawer" exception and its limited application
- Keep teacher notes on students that were shared with another person
- Keep all email messages in which a student is the subject of the email. (print it)
- Transcribe all voice mail messages in which a student is the subject. (notate date received & transcribed, & transcriber)
- Keep records central and locked
- Use restraint when writing emails or leaving voicemails
- Allow parents/guardians access to testing materials of their student
- Review and follow the school district's data retention schedule.

Do Not Keep:

- Destroy records outside of the retention schedule
- Disclose educational data outside of the MGDPA regulations
- Use the "desk drawer" for numerous records of students
- Show your "desk drawer" protected records to others
- Create teacher records with the expectation that they won't be included in the students file
- Assume emails or voicemails won't be discoverable
- Delete email or voicemails of which a student is the subject (outside of records retention policy)
- Assume emails forwarded to the attorney are "privileged"
- Destroy test protocols which identify a student (outside of records retention policy)

Budget Requisitions

Each building Administrator is responsible for the portion of the budget that is specific to their building/program. All expenditures must be approved by the building administrator prior to the dollars being committed to a purchase. Staff may not purchase or obtain materials or services without the proper authorization. Staff members purchasing items without an approved purchase order will be personally responsible for the costs of the purchase.

The Requisition Process

All orders must be entered into our District's SMARTer system. Submit a requisition order through SMARTer to your building secretary. The order is then routed to the secretary who then reviews and codes the order and routes to the Administrator for final approval. Once the Administrator has approved the order, the Account Clerk at the District Office places the order.

Once the order is placed, the Account Clerk will email the employee who requested the order, letting them know the order has been placed. It is the employee's responsibility to then sign off on the packing

slip, date it and send it over to the Account Clerk once the order is received so that invoices can be paid. Please know it may take up to several weeks for your order to arrive based on availability and shipping considerations. More specific information regarding ordering can be found on the Rocket Hub.

Complaints

Rockford Area Schools strives to be an employer of choice. Employees who are concerned about a specific employment situation or have questions regarding a policy or procedure should direct their concern to their immediate supervisor. If, after an initial conversation, the concern is not resolved, the employee should request to meet with their building administrator. If the immediate supervisor is also the building administrator, or if the concern remains, the employee may contact the Director of Business Operations, designated to address matters of Human Resources with the concern. The Director will strive to mediate the concern and seek resolution.

If an employee still feels the concern has not been addressed they may request to meet with the Superintendent. The Superintendent will have final say in any matters outside of Master Agreements.

Please refer to Board Policy:

- [103 – Complaints](#) – Students, Employees, Parents, Other Persons

District Wide Committees

Circumstances sometimes call for the creation of district-wide committees. Staff members are encouraged to join and actively participate on these committees. Information about committee purposes and meeting times may be obtained from your building principal.

Some of the District Wide Committees include:

- Insurance Committee
- Safety Committee
- Staff Development
- Wellness Committee (Employee)
- Wellness Committee (Student)

Dress Code

It is important that students, parents and community have confidence in the staff of the school district and that staff members have confidence/pride in themselves while providing students quality educational services. These educational services are provided by: certified staff, secretaries, custodians, paraprofessionals and administrators. It is the district's expectation that district staff present a professional image to parents, students and the community. To help present this image and foster confidence in the district, staff members are expected to dress in a manner which is appropriate for the position they hold in the district. If necessary, supervisors will discuss appropriate dress with individual staff members.

Extra-curriculars & Co-curriculars

Employees are encouraged to apply for extracurricular and co-curricular positions. All positions are posted on the district website under: Department/Human Resources/Employment/Open positions.

Salaried Employees

Salaried employees that coach or are involved in activities associated with Rockford Area Schools must report to their practice or event as soon as possible upon student dismissal. Staff must not miss student

contact time for regular practice. If there is a scheduling issue, the employee/coach should work with the Activities Director and their Building Principal to come to a resolution that is in the best interests of student academic achievement.

Salaried employees must ensure their absences are entered into SMARTeR and that a substitute (if needed) is communicated with or arrangements have been made prior to their absence.

Salaried employees will not be deducted paid time for their roles in extracurricular activities or events for which they are identified as a board approved coach.

Hourly Employees

Hourly employees that coach or are involved in activities associated with Rockford Area Schools must report to their practice or event as soon as possible upon student dismissal. Staff must not miss student contact time for regular practice. If there is a scheduling issue, the employee/coach should work with the Activities Director and their Building Principal to come to a resolution that is in the best interests of student academic achievement.

Hourly employees must ensure their absences are entered into the absence management system and that a substitute (if needed) is communicated with or arrangements have been made prior to their absence.

Hourly employees will not be deducted paid time for their roles in extracurricular activities or events for which they are identified as a Board approved coach.

Note: Rockford Area Schools will work with individuals who wish to coach to determine if a temporary flexible schedule to meet the academic and extracurricular needs of students as well as the department in which their work can be made.

These positions will be paid based upon the rate tables established in the Teacher Master Agreement. Please refer to the most current [Master Agreement](#) for updated information. (Note: Extra-Curricular pay rates are currently within the Teacher's Master Agreement and are therefore subject to bargaining. Adjustments to the compensation and updates to the table will take place in conjunction with the settlement of the associated Teacher contract.)

Field Trips

School funded field trips often require additional chaperone support. This is handled in a few different ways. Parents may volunteer or staff could be asked to chaperone the trip. Parents that are employed by the district may also volunteer to chaperone their child's field trip. In those circumstances, the following requirements and expectations apply:

Expectations of a Volunteer Chaperone:

- Responsible for a group of kids throughout the event.
- Ensuring kids are in appropriate places at the appropriate times.
- Handle basic accountability and discipline needs.

Expectations of a School Funded Chaperone:

- Responsible for a group of kids throughout the event.
- Ensuring kids are in appropriate places at the appropriate times.
- Handle basic accountability and discipline needs.
- Support volunteer chaperones with their responsibilities.
- Support and train volunteer chaperones with basic accountability and discipline needs.

- Handle higher level discipline needs.
- Work with and report to the event leader the needs of other chaperones.

Background Checks & Bullying Training

All volunteers chaperoning a field trip must have an approved background check on file and must have completed the required bullying training. A volunteer/chaperone can complete all of this on the district website under the [Policy 515 Volunteer Agreement](#) webpage.

To ensure the safety of our students, we require criminal background checks on the following:

- Any volunteer who accompanies students off campus (i.e. chaperones for field trips).
- Any volunteer who is responsible for working with students on campus, but outside of the regular classroom structure.
- Any volunteer who volunteers on a regular basis for a long period of time. (If you are unsure whether a volunteer meets these criteria, contact Human Resources for further clarification.)

Volunteer background checks are required every five years. To inquire whether a person has a cleared voluntary background check on file or to determine when it was completed, please contact the Human Resources office.

The online criminal background check requires authorization for a variety of criminal background checks:

- National Sex Offense History: Provides a sexual offender registry check of all 50 states plus the District of Columbia.
- Criminal SuperSearch: A criminal search for 47 states plus the District of Columbia.
- Social Security Number Trace: Provides the name, aliases, 10 year address history, and all social security numbers associated with the individual. Verifies that the social security number is valid, gives year of issuance and state issued.

The background checks will be done at the volunteer's expense and information will be kept confidential. Human Resources staff members will review the results of each background check. If there are any concerns regarding the results of a background check, Human Resources will let the supervisor know of the results and the volunteer will be notified. The online form includes an option for volunteers to request a copy of their own report. The volunteer must also maintain confidentiality. Please have volunteers go to the [Volunteers agreement](#) on the District website for background info completion.

Employees Supporting Students:

Employees that support a student on a regular basis will have the first opportunity to support the student on a field trip, extra-curricular or co-curricular event. If that employee is not able or does not want the opportunity, the opportunity will be opened up to other employees in the same field. If more than one employee wants the opportunity, the decision will be the administrator's decision taking into account the number of times each employee has had the opportunity, specific student need, and the employee's performance.

Example: A sign language interpreter works with a student who is going on a field trip to the Capitol in St. Paul. This interpreter would have the first opportunity to accompany the student on the field trip. If they are not able or willing to go, the field trip opportunity will be offered to the other sign language interpreters.

The Field Trip approval form must be filled out completely and submitted no earlier than four weeks and no later than two weeks in advance of the trip. If it is an overnight trip, please do not submit this form. ALL OVERNIGHT TRIPS REQUIRE SCHOOL BOARD APPROVAL IN ADVANCE. PLEASE FILL OUT THIS [PRELIMINARY FORM](#).

*A complete list of all students, advisors, volunteers, and attendees must be submitted as soon as practicable. The list must be submitted 48 hours prior to departure.

Food & Nutrition Services

Come join us for a school meal! Here is some key information you should know:

Nutrition: The Director of Food & Nutrition Services and staff plan Breakfast and Lunch menus for each site. Input for menus is received from students, parents, Head Cooks and school staff.

Menus are planned to meet the Meal Pattern Requirements for Breakfast and Lunch established by the United States Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Department of Education. Our goal is to serve meals to all students, offer meals to staff, and encourage good health/wellness habits per the District's [Wellness Policy \(Policy 533\)](#).

Meal Prices: Staff meal prices for the 2024-25 school year are as follows:

Breakfast \$2.40

Lunch \$5.00

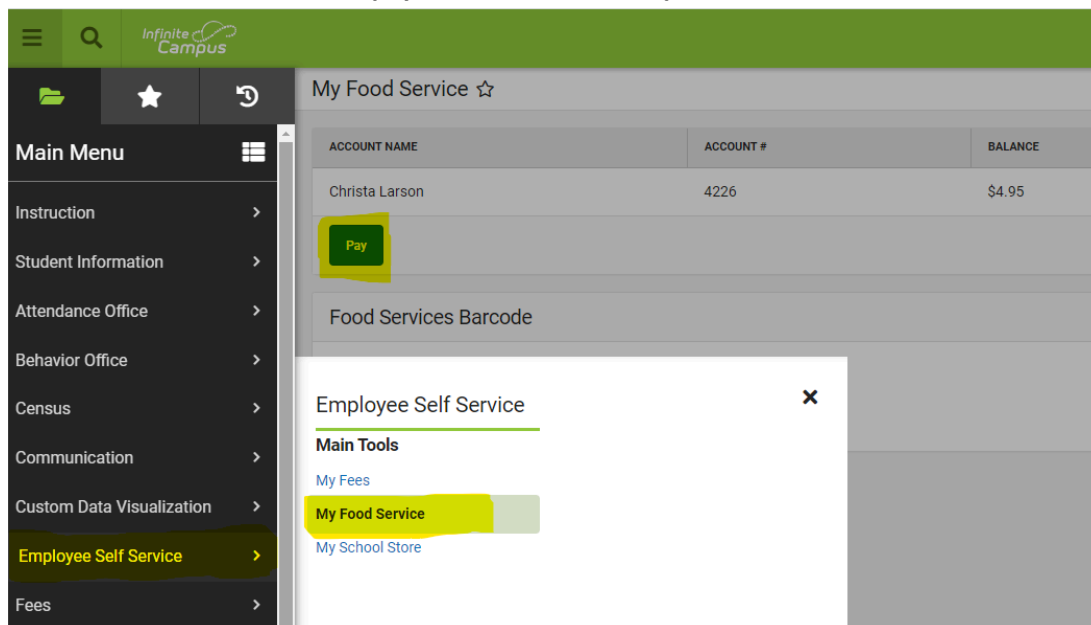
Milk \$0.60

Staff may also purchase a la carte items in the cafeteria for the designated price.

Meal Account Balances: You are expected to keep your meal account in the positive. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have money in your meal account prior to eating a meal on any given day.

Meal Payment Options: Credit card, debit card or e-check payments can be made through your staff Infinite Campus Account. Cash or check payments can also be made in any school office.

Where to make a food service payment in Infinite Campus



PIN Number: Students and staff enter their PIN number into a keypad after they make their meal selections which is matched with picture identification. Your PIN number is confidential – please do not share with others.

For complete Food Services information, to view menus online and more, visit the [Food Services page linked here](#). [The School Meals Policy 534 \(for students\)](#) for your reference.

Fundraisers

Fundraising for any event, project or material must be approved in advance. Employees wishing to fundraise should communicate with their building principal regarding the need, the fundraising activity(s), and the financial implications. Other questions regarding fundraising should be directed to the Business Office located at the District Office.

Please refer to Board Policy #511 for more information: [Student Fundraising](#)

Gifts & Gratuities

As a representative of a public employer, it is essential that your work be perceived as being free from external influences. It is important to avoid any appearance of impropriety or the appearance of a conflict of interest with respect to gifts given to school district employees. In addition, employees must adhere to state statute and school district policy, contained within [Gifts to Employees and School Board Members RAS Policy 421](#)

IEPs, 504 and Re-evaluations

Please refer to your building leadership, the Special Education Supervisor, or the following School Board policies for more information:

- [504 Section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)
- [RAS Policy 515](#)

Identification Badges

Your ID badge is an important part of your work attire. It lets students, parents, co-workers, vendors, and the general public know who you are. It is an important part of providing a secure environment for our students, and to ensure that everyone who enters our schools is identified. Your ID badge must be worn anytime you are at work. It should be worn in a visible spot on the upper portion of your body. New hires will have their picture taken at the District Office upon hire.

Those employees not wearing ID badges in district facilities should be questioned as to their purpose within the facility to encourage safety of our students and employees.

Employee badges allow free entry, plus-one guest, to athletic events with the exception of Sub-Section, Section and State events, and events not taking place on district property. Employees must be in attendance for the plus-one person to be honored.

Layoffs & Seniority – see your Master Agreements

Meet & Confer – see your Master Agreements

Background Checks

Any person offered employment in the district for any kind of position is required to complete a background check. Employment will be contingent on successful completion and review of the background check.

Employees have the right to request and obtain a copy of the background check report from the district, which may be provided to the employee at a cost not exceeding the actual cost of the report. Employees have the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of information contained in a background check report. MN Statute 123B.03 BACKGROUND CHECK.

Please also refer to Board Policy 404 – [Employee Background Checks](#) for more information.

Performance

District Expectations

The District expects its employees to produce quality work, maintain confidentiality, work efficiently, and exhibit a professional and courteous attitude toward other employees, parents, and students.

The District expects employees to comply with all applicable Board policies, work rules, administrative regulations, job descriptions, terms of this Handbook and legal obligations. Violation of any policies, regulations and guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

All employees of Rockford Area Schools are committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment that values diversity and promotes equitable education for all. In our pursuit of excellence, we recognize the importance of maintaining neutrality on matters of political, religious, and social issues within the school setting. This commitment extends to classroom discussions, school events, and all other activities under the purview of Rockford Area Schools. By remaining neutral, we contribute to an environment where diverse opinions are respected, and individuals feel valued regardless of their personal beliefs. As representatives of Rockford Area Schools, we will always prioritize the education and well-being of our students above any personal or political affiliations as we strive to create an atmosphere that encourages critical thinking, open dialogue, and mutual understanding.

Job Responsibilities

Your position has specific responsibilities which you are expected to perform. It is important that the responsibilities of each job are fully understood. Please speak with your supervisor if you have any questions about the functions you are able to perform in your job. In addition, most jobs will require employees to be flexible and willing to take on new assignments as a result of their responsibilities changing over time. Therefore, it is very important that you clearly understand what your supervisor expects of you and that you keep abreast of changes in your job. Check with your supervisor if you have questions regarding your job description duties.

Your Supervisor

We encourage open communication throughout the district. Your supervisor should be the first person you talk to regarding most questions or concerns you may have. He/she can explain operations, protocols and procedures and can refer you to written materials or other resources for additional information.

Staff Development

The district has established a Staff Development program to assist you in remaining current and up-to-date in your job duties. Work time is scheduled on the school calendar each year for staff development. You are encouraged to take advantage of this time to increase your knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform your job, which is a benefit to you, our students, and our coworkers.

Please refer to School Board Policy 425: [Staff Development](#). Offsite staff development is also available by supervisor approval.

The district staff development funds are also utilized in this manner. Please refer to School Board Policy 412: [Expense Reimbursement](#).

Transportation & Travel

Driving for Work Related Purposes

If you use your vehicle for work related purposes you are expected to:

1. drive defensively;
2. wear your seat belt;
3. allow plenty of time;
4. make accommodations for bad weather; and,
5. carry appropriate equipment in your vehicle to ensure your safety (i.e., in the winter: blankets, boots, shovel, etc.).

Transporting Students: [District Policy 707R and 710](#)

Seat Belt Use

All employees are required to use seat belts when operating or riding in a motor vehicle on school district business.

Cell Phone & Electronic Equipment Use

On August 1, 2019 a new law became effective regarding the use of cell phones and electronic use while operating a motor vehicle. All staff are required to comply with this law while conducting company business.

For more information on the law, refer to the MN Department of Public Safety website for the Hands-Free Law: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/hands-free/Pages/default.aspx>

The actual law, MN Statute 169.475 can be found at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/169.475>

Vehicle Insurance

All employees who use a vehicle for work related purposes must carry insurance on their vehicle as required by the State of Minnesota. You may not use your vehicle for work related purposes if your vehicle is not covered by the required insurance. You may be required to show proof of current vehicle insurance.

Driver's License

All employees who use a vehicle for work related purposes are required to have a valid driver's license, and this needs to be in file with the District Office.

Mileage

Mileage will be paid for travel conducted for District purposes and during an employee's regular work hours unless otherwise approved. School vehicles should be utilized, prior to any mileage stipend being turned in to the District Office. Mileage needs to be turned in the month of driving using the Travel Voucher which is located on the [website - Travel Voucher](#).

- **Mileage between district buildings:** Mileage between the RHS/ES campus and the MS/DO campus is 1.2 miles. Travel between District buildings will be calculated based upon mileage and should be turned in via a travel voucher from the Rocket Hub on a monthly basis.

PAYROLL & BENEFITS – HR INFO

Basic Information

Exempt and Non-exempt Employees

Each employee is designated as either exempt or non-exempt from federal and state wage and hour laws. Non-exempt or hourly employees are entitled to overtime pay under specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. Non-exempt employees are entitled to time and one-half their "regular rate" of pay for each hour worked over a 40-hour period in a work week period. Hourly employees are not allowed to accrue comp time, all hours worked will be paid when earned.

Exempt or salaried employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. Exempt employees must meet the criteria of specific tests outlined in wage and hour provisions.

Personal Information Changes

For a variety of reasons (such as tax, pension, or benefit reporting) it is important that your records are current. If there are any changes in your name, address, telephone number, number of dependents, insurance beneficiaries, etc., it is your responsibility to notify Human Resources and/or Payroll. You must make a request for a name or address change by using the Frontline Central system and completing the corresponding request form.

Payday

Employees are paid on the 15th (or the closest work week day to it) and the last working day of the month in which they work. In the event the pay date falls on a weekend or holiday, employees will be paid on the last work day prior to that date.

Non-exempt employees are paid for time worked in the previous pay period. For example, an employee works 36 hours between May 1 and May 15. They will be paid for these 36 hours on May 31st. Time worked between May 16 and May 31 will be paid on June 15.

Teachers (exempt - salaried) receive their first check on the fifteenth (15th) day of September. Teachers are scheduled to receive twenty-four semi-monthly paychecks. For additional information, employees should also refer to their [Master Agreement](#).

When there are more than 260 "payable days" in a fiscal year, the district makes payroll adjustments and pays year-round employees for all days worked in a year.

Overtime

Ideally, all jobs will be structured so that normal work assignments can be completed during a regular workweek. There may be instances, however, when employees will need to work overtime to meet special demands. Overtime is paid at the rate of one and one half times the non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay for hours worked in excess of 40 in a workweek. Only time actively worked will count toward the calculation of overtime. District overtime guidelines are:

1. All overtime must be authorized by your supervisor in advance, and
2. Exempt employees are ineligible for overtime

Rockford Area Schools work week begins on Sunday at 12:00 am and ends on Saturday at 11:59pm. If you have questions regarding your overtime eligibility, please contact the District Office.

Time Clocks

All Non-Certified employees are required to use the time clock system and are responsible to ensure their time is accurate. This includes correcting any errors to their start/end times as well as lunch break periods. Employees should look at their time on a weekly basis to ensure its accuracy. They should contact the appropriate person (as stated in the table below) with questions or changes.

Should a salaried employee not fulfill their contract hours on a daily and/or weekly period, the amount of time missed will be deducted from the employee's assignment. At the same time, should an employee work beyond their assignment, this amount of time worked over the contract will be compensated in accordance with their Master Agreement. Hourly employees will be paid for all hours worked. Overtime will be paid beyond 40 hours in a week – Sunday through Saturday.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Secretaries	All Buildings	Direct Supervisor
Custodians	All Buildings	Director of Business Operations
Special Ed Paras	All Buildings	Special Education Coordinator
Confidential	District Office	Direct Supervisor
Library/General Paras	All Buildings	Building Administrator
Other Miscellaneous	All Buildings	Building Administrator

A non-contract employee will be paid strictly pursuant to the time they turn in to payroll via the time clock system. The pay cycle for non-contracted employees will be paid out one pay cycle behind the actual dates worked.

Benefits – Insurance: See your Master Agreement

Click the **Classificiaton Grid** link below for an easy to understand summary of benefits by employee group. [Benefit Summary](#)

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit of payroll checks is required for all employees. Requests not to use direct deposit will be considered on a case by case basis. Employees using direct deposit can access a pay stub on payday that contains the same information as a paycheck does. This pay stub is located on [Smart eR](#). Direct deposit is a convenient and secure way to quickly access your pay.

Common questions you may have about direct deposit:

How do I enroll? You must complete a Direct Deposit form in [Smart eR](#). Once completed, it will route to payroll for processing. Ensure the data you enter in the form is correct! You may also submit a voided check to payroll for confirmation of your routing and account numbers. The payroll department will need this at least 12 days in advance of your first direct deposit.

Must my financial institution be in Minnesota? No, we can send your net pay to any federal or state chartered bank, savings and loan association or credit union that is a member of the Automated Clearing House (ACH) network. Most financial institutions are members.

How will I know my check has been deposited? You will be able to track your deposit electronically through [Employee Self Service](#) (more information later in handbook). Your monthly statement from your financial institution will also provide a record of deposits.

When will I have access to the funds deposited? It varies by financial institution, but generally funds are available at the start of business on payday.

Who do I contact if the deposit is not posted to my account? Initially, please contact your financial institution to be sure they are not late in posting to your account. If they are not late, contact the Business Official/Bookkeeper or AP/Payroll Representative in the district office.

****Please refer to [Employee Self Service](#) in this handbook for further information.**

Employee Self Service

Rockford Area Schools' payroll is directly deposited into an employee's checking or savings account. All payroll information can be viewed and printed, if necessary, from the district Employee Self Service site. The online viewing of this information can be accessed through the Internet at <https://smarter.regionv.k12.mn.us/Login.aspx?dn=0883>.

Login by using your employee number for the User ID. Your employee number is emailed to you upon hire after you have completed your onboarding process. A temporary password is also given to you in that document. You must create a new password after you log in.

Through this secure website, you will be able to view and print the following information:

- Current and historical payroll information, by paycheck date
- Year-to-date pay summary
- Payroll deduction and benefit information
- Leave history (summary and detail of leave earned and used)
- W-4 tax withholding information showing marital status, exemptions and extra tax, if applicable

Steps to obtain this information:

1. Enter [Smart eR](#) site
2. Click on My Payroll
3. It will open the full menu of options. Select your option.
 - Click Pay Stub to review your paycheck information.
 - Click TimeOff to view your leave balances.
 - Click W2 to print your W2s.
 - You may Print your stub by clicking Print Entire Pay Stub.

Extended time project requests

All extended contracts must go through a pre-approval process. Contact your administrator with questions. [Extended Day PD Form](#)

New Employee Forms, Requirements and Information

As a new employee, the following forms need to be filled out for payroll and employee benefit purposes.

- **W-4 & WT4 withholding form:** This information is needed in order for you to be placed on payroll.
- **I-9 form:** We are required by law to have this on file before employment but absolutely no later than the first day of employment.
- **Direct Deposit:** The district strives to be green and efficient. This information is needed in order to set you up for direct deposit.
- **Application for health and ancillary benefits:** This information has to be filled out whether or not you desire coverage. An electronic packet from the district office explaining coverage will be sent to you upon hire. If a benefit is paid for by the district, such as life insurance, an employee will be automatically enrolled unless they opt out by filling out the proper forms.

Hours of Service

The District reserves the right to determine hours of employment, assignment, location, and annual authorization of all employees. To be considered a full-time employee, the employee shall be employed for a minimum of 35 hours per week, exclusive of lunch. All employees will be assigned starting times and shifts as recommended by the principal or supervisor and approved by the Director of Human Resources. The School District reserves the right to employ such personnel as it deems desirable or necessary on a part-time or casual basis.

Re-employment: See Master Agreements

Resignation/Retirement from Employment

- **Notice of Resignation/Retirement**

The school district requires notice if you are resigning from employment. The district requests as much advance notice as possible in order to have some time to advertise and hire your replacement. This notice should be in writing utilizing a personal letter with your signature and effective date of the resignation.

- **Return of District Property**

At the time of resignation or retirement, and prior to leaving the district, you will need to return all district property to your supervisor. Keys, key fobs, identification badges and all other district property

are to be given to your supervisor, who will ensure that all property is returned to the department where it originated.

- **COBRA Benefits**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) requires that most employers sponsoring group health plans offer employees and their families the opportunity for a temporary extension of health coverage (called “continuation coverage”) at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end (called “qualifying events”).

If you are covered by the district’s group health insurance plan and lose your coverage because of a reduction in your hours of employment or the termination of your employment, whether voluntary or involuntary (except for reasons of gross misconduct on your part), you have the right to choose continuation coverage. If you choose continuation coverage, you will be provided with coverage that is identical to the coverage being provided to similarly situated employees (or their family members). If you do not choose continuation coverage, your group health insurance coverage under the plan will end.

COBRA requires that you be offered the opportunity to maintain continuation coverage for three years unless you lost group health coverage because of a termination of employment or reduction in hours. In that case, the required continuation coverage period is 18 months, unless the Social Security Administration determines that you (either employee or dependent) were disabled at the time termination or reduction of hours, and you inform Rockford Area Schools before the end of the 18-month period, in which case your coverage may be extended up to 29 months.

If you are covered by the district’s group health insurance plan, your spouse will have the right to choose continuation coverage for him/herself if group health coverage is lost for any of the following four reasons:

1. Your death;
2. Termination of your employment with the district (for reasons other than gross misconduct) or reduction in your hours of employment with the district;
3. Divorce or legal separation from you; or
4. You become entitled to Medicare.

Your dependent children have the right to choose continuation coverage if group health coverage is lost for any of the following five reasons:

1. Your death;
2. Your termination from employment with the district (for reasons other than gross misconduct), or reduction in your hours of employment with the district;
3. Your divorce or legal separation;
4. A parent becomes entitled to Medicare; or
5. The dependent ceases to be a “dependent child” under the terms of the group insurance plan.

You or your family member has the responsibility to inform the Plan Administrator of a divorce, legal separation, or a child losing dependent status under the Plan, within sixty days of the date of the event or the date on which coverage would end under the group Plan because of the event, whichever is later. The district will notify the Plan Administrator of your death, termination of employment, reduction in hours of employment or Medicare entitlement.

You have sixty days from the later of (1) the date you ordinarily would have lost coverage because of one of the events described above, or (2) the date of the notice of your right to elect continuation coverage to inform the Plan Administrator that you want continuation coverage.

Additional qualifying events can occur while the continuation coverage is in effect. Such events may extend an 18-month continuation coverage period to 36 months, but in no event will coverage extend beyond 36 months after the initial qualifying event. Under certain circumstances, your continuing coverage may be cut short.

If you or your family member elects to continue coverage, you must pay the district the cost of continued coverage monthly. Once your continuation coverage terminates for any reason, it cannot be reinstated.

For further details concerning continuation of benefits under COBRA, contact the Human Resource Department.

1. The federal COBRA law applies to employers with 20 or more employees. Provisions for continuation of health benefits under Minnesota law have been amended to substantially follow the federal COBRA law, without the 36-month limitation for surviving descendants. The Minnesota Act applies to all group insurance policies.
2. COBRA ensures that employees and beneficiaries do not lose health insurance coverage because of death, termination, reduction of employment hours, divorce or separation, retirement, or other qualifying event. Employees are allowed to continue on the group health plan at their own expense after a qualifying event.
3. The employee has up to 60 days in which to decide whether to take advantage of this continuation coverage. No evidence of insurability is needed for such continued coverage.
4. Upon learning of a qualifying event, the district should provide the employee with a COBRA notice and election form.
5. Generally, former employees may elect to maintain their COBRA coverage for up to 18 months after their termination or reduction in hours, while dependents generally may elect to maintain their coverage for 36 months after the date of an employee's death, divorce, or legal separation, the employee's entitlement to Medicare, or a dependent's loss of dependent status.
6. Former employees or dependents that elect to continue coverage under COBRA must pay the entire premium for the continuation coverage.
7. In order to be certain that the district is complying with its obligation under COBRA it is important that the administrators/supervisors notify the Human Resources Department of any qualifying events to an employee in their department including an employee's termination whether voluntary or involuntary, an employee's reduction in hours, the employee's death, divorce, legal separation, the employee's entitlement to Medicare or a dependent's loss of independent status.
8. Employees who are laid off and who carry district health insurance may have a portion of their health insurance paid for a limited amount of time if they meet eligibility requirements. See Human Resources/Payroll for more information.

Salary Information

Salary Advancement: see your Master Agreement for details.

Rates of Pay: see your Master Agreement for details.

Seasonal/Summer Employees: These are employees who are hired for a specific period of time usually related to the seasonal needs of the District. Examples of these employees would be the summer custodians who help in preparation of the buildings for the following school year. Please note: a person must be 15 years old by June 15th in order to work in a summer work study position.

Accidents & Injuries

An accident report must be completed and given to Human Resources/District Office within 24 hours.

All work-related accidents that involve personal injury or property damage **MUST** be reported to your direct supervisor as soon as possible following the accident. If the accident occurred during work hours, the supervisor will gather details and complete a Supervisor's Report of Accident in the SMARTer System. Prompt reporting of work related injuries is very important for protecting and preserving your access to worker's compensation insurance coverage.

Any employee who has been involved in an accident while working (no matter how slight) should submit a "First Report of Injury" by calling the Work Injury Hotline – 1-855-675-3501. If you are unable to file a report, someone who is knowledgeable of the incident must file the report on your behalf within the required 24-hour timeline. The Human Resources department will use the information provided for safety records and reporting. You will be authorized to see an appropriate doctor of your choosing. The insurer will determine if further medical treatment will be covered based upon the information provided in the accident report and the report submitted by the physician. If you are unable to work as a result of the accident, compensation for lost time may also be available.

If you do not report an accident promptly or you do not have the authorization for an initial visit, the cost of the medical services may be denied and become your personal responsibility. Reporting all injuries is particularly important in circumstances where there may be medical problems that develop some time after the accident. A good example of this would be a fall on the job. If reported, you are assured of some protection, even if it is several days before a problem shows up. Failing to report promptly could jeopardize compensation for both medical service and lost time, should either become necessary.

More information on the Work Injury Hotline (1-855-675-3501) can be found on the District's website.

Injury to Student

A student accident report must be completed and given to the building principal within 24 hours.

When an accident involving injury to a student occurs, maintain classroom control and get the student the assistance s/he needs by calling the main office. An injured student must report to the office, and an adult must accompany him/her.

If the student cannot walk to the office, call the office or, if necessary, send one responsible person to the office to request help. The school nurse will receive the student in the office or report to the location where the injury occurred; if necessary, a Blue Team notification may be called. A student accident report form should be completed within 24 hours of the incident by the classroom teacher or other supervisor on duty and given to the building principal. A copy will be sent to the district office.

All staff members should keep first aid gloves on hand so that they can be accessed quickly in case of an emergency. Each classroom should also have a supply of bandages for minor injuries. At all times, follow blood-borne pathogens guidelines.

The staff member in charge at the time and in the original location of the injury is required to make phone contact with the parents/guardians the day of the injury.

Custodial or Maintenance Services

A custodian is always available during the school day to assist in the case of an emergency. Please call the office to request to have a custodian paged.

Please encourage good housekeeping on the part of the students. Students need to be encouraged to recycle and place waste materials in the appropriate receptacle. Staff monitoring of building and classroom care will promote student pride and care of the school building and property. Bulletin boards play an important part in the school climate. It is a good idea that they are interesting and change periodically. Displays of student work in the classrooms and the public areas are excellent teaching tools, promote student self-esteem, and enhance the school atmosphere. It is imperative that you take care of your room and office. Please keep it professionally presentable.

Each teacher is responsible for the condition of the furniture and equipment in the classroom. Please be sensitive to ventilation, light, heat, and concerns for general tidiness in each classroom. Turn off lights when leaving a room; report heating irregularities to the custodian. At the end of each day, please be sure to have students help restore your classroom and return all equipment used during a class period to its appointed place. **CLOSE** and lock all windows when you leave the room at the end of the day.

Teachers who are involved with special activities such as athletics, clubs, band, etc., are responsible for the inventory of equipment and any equipment issued to students. Return and storage of equipment is also a responsibility of the coach or advisor.

The importance of keeping your room neat, organized, and professionally presented must be emphasized. Your classroom and office space should always be well kept. Note that your primary office and teaching space will be checked throughout the year and at the end of the year for check-out. Teachers are responsible for securing their room and all the contents within.

Hanging of Materials in Building

Tape and other adhesives are **not** to be used unless a custodian has approved its use. Absolutely no duct tape can be used. Approval from the building principal is required for all materials displayed on walls in non-classroom areas.

Safety

A safe, clean, visually appealing, and educationally conducive classroom environment needs to be maintained at all times. To ensure our schools are well maintained, please notify the custodial staff of unsafe conditions or items that need to be repaired. Any spills need to be reported immediately in order to prevent tracking of the material or a permanent stain on carpet. Classroom materials must be placed in a manner that promotes health and safety. Cords must be covered in a safe manner that prevents tripping. Boxes on high shelves must not protrude over the shelf or be stacked on top of other boxes in an unsafe manner. Staff care in monitoring the safety of students, equipment, and materials is vital and appreciated.

Work Orders

Any work requested needs to have a work order. Complete the [FMX](#) form on the district website. Please use the form when making a request for non-emergency custodial or maintenance services. While our

custodians make every effort to respond to oral requests, please do not expect them to do so. Therefore, put all requests in writing.

Crisis Management

We hope that a crisis never occurs in any school district or building. At the same time, a guide must be available to address a wide range of potential crisis situations. Please refer to School Board Policy #806 - [Crisis Management](#) for more information.

Fire Safety

The school district seeks to provide a safe environment for employees and students. Fire Safety is an essential element of this environment.

Employees should know:

1. Location of fire alarms.
2. Fire Extinguishers
3. Evacuation routes.
4. Who to notify in case of fire.

Employees should remain calm in situations involving danger to self and others, and to take precautions to prevent fires from occurring. In the event of a fire, the most important task is to sound the alarm and clear the building. Employees should not risk their safety in fighting fires.

Property & Property Damage/Theft

The Rockford Area Schools does not assume any responsibility for loss, theft or damages to personal property. In order to minimize risk, we advise you to not carry unnecessary amounts of cash or other valuables. If you bring personal items to work, you are expected to exercise reasonable care to safeguard them. Personal appliances such as refrigerators, coffee makers, lamps, etc. must also meet safety codes.

The school district may supply you with equipment or supplies to assist you in performing your job duties. You are expected to show reasonable care for any equipment issued and to take precautions for theft as well. Any equipment, keys and key fobs issued must be returned prior to your last day of employment. Lost equipment, keys, and key fobs will be replaced at the expense of the employee.

SOLICITATIONS

Please refer to Board Policy 904 – [Distribution of Materials on School District Property by non-School Persons](#) for more information.

Sales Representatives/Solicitors

Sales representatives are not allowed to approach employees during the school day unless they have been cleared through the office and they either have an appointment with the employee or the employee wishes to talk with them during a free period.

Visiting Children

Students from other schools may or may not be permitted to visit school while classes are in session. Check with your building principal regarding your school's policy.

It is a school policy that all visitors and volunteers must report to the school office when they enter the building. Due to security reasons, insurance liability, and in case of an emergency, it is important to know who is in the building and why. A volunteer will be given a name tag to wear while they are in the school.

TECHNOLOGY

Any computer-related technology needs should be communicated to the Technology Director: Chromebooks, Laptops, monitors, keyboards, mouse, etc.

Employees are expected to use all technology in a responsible way, ethically, and in compliance with all legislation and other Rockford Area School's policies and contracts.

Introduction: As technology continues to evolve, it plays an increasingly integral role in education. This section of the staff handbook outlines guidelines and best practices for the use of technology within our school community.

Technology Vision:

"Empowering stakeholders with equitable access to high-quality instructional practices through a secure digital environment, while providing exceptional support and customer service, is the overarching vision of the technology services department at Rockford Area Schools."

1. Acceptable Use Policy (AUP):

- All staff members are required to adhere to the school's Acceptable Use Policy for technology.
- The AUP outlines guidelines for the appropriate use of technology resources, including computers, tablets, smartphones, and internet access.
- Staff members must sign the AUP to acknowledge their understanding and agreement to comply with its terms.
- Technology related best practices will be posted to staff via the school website and/or the electronic workspace and staff will periodically review the posts to help the district maintain adherence to data and cybersecurity rules and regulations.

2. Personal Devices:

- While on campus, staff members may use personal devices for school-related purposes, subject to the AUP.
- Personal devices should not interfere with classroom activities or distract from professional responsibilities.
- Staff members are responsible for ensuring the security of their personal devices and protecting sensitive information. Staff members bear full legal liabilities for the use of their personal devices in case of data breach, theft, damage, or other security incidents, and are required to disclose any breaches or cybersecurity issues.
- Assistance with personal devices from the technology staff may be limited due to warranty, privacy, insurance, and liability concerns.

3. Classroom Technology:

- Staff members are encouraged to incorporate technology into their teaching practices to enhance student learning experiences.

- Each classroom is equipped with appropriate technology resources, including computers, interactive electronic boards, and audiovisual equipment.
 - Staff members should familiarize themselves with the operation of classroom technology and report any issues to the IT department promptly.
- 4. Data Security:**
- Staff members are entrusted with safeguarding student and school data in compliance with privacy laws and regulations.
 - Confidential information should never be shared with unauthorized individuals or stored on unsecured devices.
 - Staff members should use strong passwords and encryption methods to protect sensitive data from unauthorized access.
- 5. Professional Development:**
- The school offers professional development opportunities to support staff members in integrating technology effectively into their teaching practices.
 - Staff members are encouraged to participate in training sessions, workshops, and conferences focused on educational technology.
 - Ongoing support and resources are available from the IT department to assist staff members in utilizing technology tools and platforms.
- 6. Digital Citizenship:**
- Staff members play a crucial role in modeling responsible digital citizenship for students.
 - It is essential to teach students about internet safety, online etiquette, and responsible use of digital resources.
 - Staff members should promote critical thinking skills and ethical behavior in all online interactions.
- 7. Reporting Concerns:**
- Staff members should report any technology-related concerns, such as phishing, malware, equipment malfunctions or security breaches, to the IT department immediately.
 - Reporting issues promptly helps ensure a safe and secure technology environment for all members of the school community.

Conclusion: By following these technology guidelines, staff members contribute to creating a positive and productive learning environment for students. Thank you for your commitment to integrating technology responsibly into your teaching practices.

Technology Links:

[1:1 Handbook](#)

[Digital Learning Tools - approved listings](#)

[Technology Onboarding & Training](#)

[Technology Planning](#)

[Technology Support](#)

Quick Link to Rockford Area Schools Website:

[Rockford Area Schools District Website](#)

TITLE IX

Title IX: Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment.

All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools

More information can be found at www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-ix

2025-2026

Staff Handbook



GALAXY KIDS

School Age Care

Galaxy Program

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Introduction

Welcome to Galaxy Kids Program. The purpose of this handbook is to inform all Galaxy Kids Program Staff members of their responsibilities, Galaxy Kids Program procedures and other information pertinent to the Galaxy Kids Program.

At Galaxy Kids Program we believe that our staff should be professional, able to carry out instruction, and are warm and welcoming towards children.

Please familiarize yourself with the contents of the Galaxy Kids Program Staff Handbook. This handbook includes information specific to the Galaxy Kids Program. If you need further information, all Rockford Area School District policies can be found on the school district website,

www.rockford883.org.

Mission Statement

Galaxy Kids Program is committed to providing a safe, enriching learning environment for students in our community during their out of school time. We strive to work cooperatively with students' families, school-day staff, and our community to provide a quality, year-round child care program that is dedicated to continual improvement. We encourage self-expression and creativity, build self-esteem and confidence, and promote positive behavior, social skills, and friendships. Galaxy Kids Program is dedicated to providing an inclusive, diverse environment for students of varying abilities, backgrounds, and needs, allowing all students to feel safe and respected. We encourage students to make choices, gain independence, and experience a variety of social and educational experiences. We encourage student involvement in planning, coordinating, and implementing activities. It is our purpose to help each child develop to the best of their individual ability in an atmosphere in which each child will become a valued member of our school community.

Hours of Operation

Galaxy Kids Program is open Monday-Friday, 6:00am-6:00pm. Galaxy is open most non-school days, excluding staff holidays. Galaxy Kids also has a summer program from mid-June through the end of August. Galaxy Kids is closed over Winter Break and the week of July 4th.

Hiring Procedures

Galaxy Kids Program follows RAS policy 401: Equal Employment Opportunity.

A. The policy of the school district is to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. The school district does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, age, family care leave status or veteran status. The school district also makes reasonable accommodations for disabled employees.

B. The school district prohibits the harassment of any individual for any of the categories listed above. For information about the types of conduct that constitute impermissible harassment and the school district's internal procedures for addressing complaints of harassment, please refer to the school district's policy on harassment and violence.

C. This policy applies to all areas of employment including hiring, discharge, promotion, compensation, facilities or privileges of employment.

D. Every school district employee shall be responsible for following this policy.

E. Any person having any questions regarding this policy should discuss it with Business Manager/Personnel Manager.

The Galaxy Kids Program Coordinator will be responsible for reviewing applications received for open positions. The Program Coordinator will be responsible for screening all applicants, including but not limited to: interviewing applicants and checking references and employment history. The ISD 883 business office is responsible for initiating and completing a background check.

Orientation

Staff members must complete at least 10 hours of orientation prior to working with children. New staff members will not be left alone with children until their orientation is complete. During your orientation, you will receive a written job description along with a copy of the Galaxy Staff Handbook.

Training/In-service

Galaxy Kids Program will pay for the tuition cost for any staff training required by the Galaxy Kids Program Coordinator or Community Education Director. Staff members are allowed to record time and receive wages for time spent in staff meetings scheduled and approved by the Galaxy Kids Program Coordinator.

Assistants that work 20 or more hours per week will be expected to attend at least 15 hours of

workshops/trainings that are offered each year (July 1-June 30). Proof of attendance is required and given to the coordinator. This does NOT include CPR/First Aid training, which is required for ALL Assistants.

Assistants that work under 19 hours per week will be expected to attend at least 12 hours of workshops/trainings that are offered each year (July 1-June 30). Proof of attendance is required and given to the coordinator. This does NOT include CPR/First Aid training, which is required for ALL Assistants.

Student workers are not required to attend workshops/training, but are welcome to go if it works with their homework schedule. However, student workers are required to attend all staff meetings and family night events, along with CPR/First Aid training.

Personnel Procedures

Galaxy Kids Program follows all policies and procedures of ISD 883/Rockford Community Education. Please see the district-wide policies, located at the following link for more information: <https://www.rockford883.org/staff/ras-staff/7-policies-guidelines-and-parent-student-handbook>

Professional Development Plans

All classroom assistants will work with the Program Coordinator to develop a Professional Development Plan (PDP). PDP's will be developed using the Core Competencies for Out of School Time professionals, and will be reviewed with the Program Coordinator annually or as needed. We are committed to developing each staff's knowledge and abilities continuously throughout their employment at Galaxy Kids Program.

Staff Reviews

Staff reviews will be completed one time per year. Reviews are typically completed each June. Staff members will meet with the Program Coordinator to complete their yearly reviews.

Time Sheets/Pay Day

Employees will document their time worked using the SMART system. Pay periods are the 1-15 of the month, and the 16-the end of the month. Employees are paid on the 15th and 30th of each month.

Reporting to Work/Late Staff

All employees are expected to report to work on time and to be ready to work with the children. For example, if you are scheduled to work at 7:00, you

are here, personal belongings are put away and you are ready to work with the children at 7:00. You should put a note in TC+ when clocking in stating you were late and you should notify the Coordinator.

Confidentiality

Because of data privacy and confidentiality issue, Galaxy staff members must abide by the following:

1. When speaking with a parent involving an incident between their child and another child, always refer to the other child as "the other child." DO NOT USE NAMES.
2. Home or work phone numbers of staff, parents, and children **are not** to be given out to anyone other than Galaxy Staff. Staff members may take a message and pass it along to others.

Galaxy Staff may discuss issues of a confidential nature with the program coordinator or the Community Education Director.

Staff Schedules

The Galaxy Coordinator will determine the staff schedules. At any time hours may be increased or decreased due to low student enrollment or other circumstances.

When Galaxy is in operation from 6:00am to 6:00pm, staff schedules may vary in hours and scheduled work times. Staff members may be asked to leave early due to a low number of children in attendance. Staff schedules will be adjusted for the summer program to meet the needs of the program.

Requesting Time Off

Staff members may request time off in writing to their direct supervisor, in addition to submitting time off using the SMART website. Time off will be approved in the order requests were received. If the program cannot maintain a safe staff to student ratio, time off requests may be denied.

Part-time staff members may fill in for other staff members, as long as their total hours for the week do not exceed 40. The Program Coordinator maintains a list of district staff that have received training to substitute for staff members at Galaxy Kids Program. In the event of a long-term absence from the program, the out of ratio staff who completes lesson planning and the Program Coordinator will adjust schedules to cover the open time frame.

Sick Time

If an employee is sick, they must notify their immediate supervisor at least one hour prior to the

start of their shift. It is the employee's responsibility to make sure they receive a response from their supervisor to ensure their message was received. Employees must also note when they are sick on SMART.

Mandated Reporting

Galaxy Kids Program follows RAS policy 414: Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical or Sexual Abuse.

All staff members are mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are professionals or a professional's delegate identified by law who **MUST** make a report if they have reason to believe that the abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult has occurred. If you suspect a child is being neglected or abused, you must make a VERBAL report within 24 hours of becoming aware of the suspected abuse/neglect. A WRITTEN report must be completed within 72 hours. All reports are confidential. You are protected by law from retaliation when filing a report. For more information or resources on child abuse, visit Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota at: <http://www.pcamn.org/>.

Staffing Ratios/Supervision

We follow the ratios of staff to children recommended by the State of Minnesota, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the MN Afterschool Accreditation Program (MAAP). Independence will be encouraged by allowing children to do things for themselves, but a staff member must be present at all times. Student workers may be included in the staff to student ratios; however they should not be alone with children at any time. Additional staff are scheduled during high-risk activities, such as field trips or community outings.

Preschool: 1: 10 (maximum 20)

Kindergarten-Grade 6: 1: 15 (maximum 30)

Mixed Group: For mixed age group we staff in accordance with the youngest age group present.

Volunteers

If someone requests to volunteer at Galaxy Kids Program, the Program Coordinator and RAS district office will work cooperatively to ensure a background check is completed. Volunteers may not be included in the staff to student ratio, and may never be left alone with children.

Communication

1. Galaxy Kids Program uses the following communication tools to communicate updates and information to staff members: Daily Day minder, district email, monthly staff meetings, monthly parent newsletters, and information posted on the staff bulletin board.
2. Staff members are expected to communicate with peers, children, and parents in a professional manner. Parents should be greeted upon entering the classroom and provided with regular verbal updates regarding their children. Staff members will communicate concerns using Incident/Accident Reports and Behavior Reports.
3. Galaxy Kids Program will conduct annual surveys to gather feedback from students, staff, and parents. Results from these surveys will be used to develop ongoing improvements within the program.
4. Staff members will provide feedback regarding the program in the form of written notes, discussions with supervisors, participation in staff meetings, and completing surveys.
4. Staff members will maintain confidentiality while communicating with parents using both written and verbal communication.

Answering the Telephone

When answering the phone, staff should greet the caller by saying, "Good morning/afternoon, Galaxy Kids this is _____ how may I help you?" If the person is asking questions that you do not know the answers to, please transfer them to the Galaxy Coordinator. The phones at Galaxy should not be used for personal calls. If an emergency arises, make your call brief. Use of a personal cell phone to make non-work related calls is prohibited during scheduled work hours.

Staff Responsibilities

Galaxy Kids Program School-Age Care Assistant

1. Planning and implementing daily activities from subject areas as assigned by Coordinator. Plans need to be completed in a timely manner & written out for substitutes to follow as well as for program coordinator to view. This includes filling out Activity Planning Forms in a timely manner.
2. Interacting directly with the children during all activities, i.e. gym games, outside, sitting with children during meals, art projects, etc.
3. Communicating clearly with parents. Parents should be informed of any and all matters pertaining to their child in a positive and timely manner. Parents should be greeted every morning and evening.

4. Communicating in a positive and professional manner with program and district staff.
5. Maintaining on site record keeping, daily attendance, locating children who do not show up when scheduled, keeping children's files up to date.
6. Documenting any and all negative behaviors and reporting these behaviors to the coordinator immediately.
7. Providing a safe environment, foreseeing potentially dangerous situations, and being current in first aid/CPR training and blood-borne pathogens training.
8. Serving breakfast or snacks, and supervising the children during meals.
9. Knowledge of all guidelines and policies. Be familiar with the parent handbook, program forms and Galaxy Program website. All staff should also be familiar with the ISD 883 District-Wide Staff Handbook.
10. Providing guidance and a safe setting while enforcing consistent boundaries for child behavior.

High School Student Worker

1. Communicating in a positive and effective manner to children, parents, building staff, and other Galaxy Staff.
2. Helping serve breakfast and snacks and supervising children during meals.
3. Assisting other staff in planning and carrying out daily activities.
4. Interacting directly with the children during all activities, i.e. gym games, outside, sitting with children during meals, art projects, etc.
5. Have knowledge of Galaxy Program guidelines and policies and be familiar with the parent handbook and Galaxy Program website.
6. Enforcing behavior guidance policies with help from adult staff and coordinator, if necessary. Do not deal with serious issues; tell the coordinator or assistant so they can handle the child.
7. First Aid/CPR certification preferred.

Program Guidelines and Expectations

Arrivals/Departures

1. Staff members are responsible for signing children into the program each session, and signing them out at the end of the session or when they leave for the day. Children will be signed in and out on the Staff Attendance Board. When children are dropped off or picked up by their parent or an authorized person, the authorized person must sign the child in/out on the Parent Sign-In/Out boards. Staff members are responsible for reminding parents to sign their

children in/out.

2. When students arrive on a school van or bus, the staff member will sign the child in on the Staff Attendance Board. The staff member will also sign the child out on the Parent Attendance Board, noting that the child left on the bus.

Pickup Authorization

Children are to be released only to their parents or persons listed on their Authorized Pick Up list. If parents would like their child released to anyone else, the parent must provide authorization in writing in advance. In an emergency, a phone call will be sufficient. Inform the parent that the person will need to show proper identification.

If someone comes to pick up a child that the staff does not know, follow these directions:

1. Ask the person for identification.
2. Check to see if their name is on the child's Authorized Pick-Up List or check the Dayminder to see if there is a note from the parent authorizing their child's release to this person.
3. If the person is not an authorized person tell them you must speak to the parent before releasing the child.
4. Phone the parent. If the parent authorizes the person to pick up their child, you may release the child to the person. If you are not able to reach the parent, notify the person that you cannot release the child without the parents authorization.

Staff must be aware of any persons who are authorized to pick children up. The Coordinator will keep the registration list up to date. If the unauthorized person is a biological or adoptive parent we must have a copy of the restraining order on file.

If a person who is unauthorized to pick up a child, such as a non-custodial parent, arrives to pick up the child, the following steps should be taken:

1. Ask the parent to step out in the hall or into another room with you, away from the children.
2. The other staff person(s) in attendance will stay with the children.
3. The other staff members are to remove the children from the unauthorized parent if the following are factors:

- A. There is a restraining order against this person and Galaxy has a copy of it.
- B. The person becomes abusive, verbally and/or physically with the staff members.

If the above occurs, the staff person who stays with the children will then make a phone call to 911. Never leave the children unattended. The designated removal place will be where there is a telephone.

Do not ever put yourself or the children in a position of physical harm.

Any situation such as the one described above needs to be documented immediately and the Galaxy Kids Program Coordinator and Community Education Director need to be contacted as soon as possible.

Tracking Children

All staff members are responsible for knowing how many children are in their care at all times. A written count of all children present will take place every 30 minutes. The staff member assigned to the Sign In/Out boards is responsible for initiating the child count and confirming that it is correct. Staff members may use checklists at their own discretion; however all staff members are required to use the magnetic white boards with a nametag for each child in their care. When the child leaves for the day their nametag will be removed from the whiteboard and placed on the "Out" board.

Missing Children

If a child does not check-in after school, please take the following steps to locate the child. You must repeat all steps until the child has been safely located.

1. Check on Infinite Campus to see if the child was in school.
2. Call the school teacher or school office to see if they know the whereabouts of the child.
3. If the child has gotten on a bus call the bus garage and ask them to bring the child to Galaxy Kids Program. If they were on the bus but have already been dropped off at home, call the home to see if they answer. Ask to speak to an adult. Contact the parents immediately to notify them of the situation.
4. If the school/bus company does not know the whereabouts of the child, call the parent(s).
5. If the parent(s) cannot be reached by phone, the emergency contacts must be called.
6. Leave messages at all available phone numbers for the parents, guardians, and emergency contacts, inform them of the situation.
7. Fill out a Finder's Fee Form and give it to the coordinator. The coordinator will notify the parent and apply the Finders Fee to their Parent Portal.

If you are not able to reach any adult or cannot find the location of the child, contact the police department and explain the situation to them.

Children Who Run Away

When a child in your care runs away from the supervised area keep an eye on him/her from a distance. If the child moves toward a place where his/her safety is a concern you must go after him/her. If the child leaves the grounds and you cannot find him/her, call the police for assistance and call the coordinator. Any time a child runs or a restraint is utilized the parents must be informed, and the incident documented on a Behavior Report.

Information for the police:

You can give the police a description of the child including their name, address, appearance, etc. *You should not reveal information about the child regarding special needs.* You can tell the police about events leading up to the incident and what type of mood the child may be in when they arrived. The coordinator can also request that the police notify Galaxy Kids when they have caught up with the child and inform Galaxy Kids of their location so assistance with handling/processing the situation can be done. We are permitted to give the police more information regarding special needs if the parents have signed a release allowing us to do so.

Maintaining Staff and Student Professional Boundaries

1. In order to maintain professional boundaries, children may not hang or jump on staff members at any time. Staff members may not hold children or allow children to sit on their laps.
2. Staff members must always be at the head of the group when transitioning. A second staff member, if possible, should be at the end of the group.
3. If you take groups to the large bathrooms, be sure to monitor the time spent in the bathrooms.
4. **Children should never be left in any area unattended.** If the staff member needs to step out, another staff member should be contacted to take over.
5. Children are not allowed to use the walkie-talkies, staff computers, or program keys.

Alone with a Child

Whenever possible staff members should not be alone with a child. There are, however, times when this may not be possible. For staff security, staff members should choose a location that is "public" and open in nature when alone with a child. Student workers and volunteers may not supervise children

and must never be left alone with a child for any period of time.

Classrooms

1. Toys from home are to stay in lockers, unless permission has been given from the group leader (in most cases we allow toys on Fridays only).
2. Children should clean up their play area before switching activities, going to school or going home.
3. Only Galaxy CD's/tapes are to be played unless staff has previewed and permission has been given.
4. TV is only operated by the staff members and only on during designated hours.
5. Computers must be monitored at all times.
6. Children (and staff members) are not allowed to sit on counters and/or tables.

Staff members are responsible for actively supervising and interacting with children at all times. Staff members should not be visiting with each other, talking on the phone (including cell phones), or working on their own projects.

Gym

1. A first aid bag and radio must always go inside with the group.
2. Organized games are to be played, no free play in the gym. Staff members must be aware of what is happening at all times, in all areas of the gym.
3. If the curtain is down a staff member needs to be on both sides of the curtain.
4. No food, drink, or gum is allowed in the gym (children and staff).
5. Staff members should be involved with the activities in the gym, not just observing or standing around.
6. No tackle football or any other physical contact sport, is allowed at any time.
7. Children are not allowed in equipment storage areas.
8. Children should be separated by age and ability groups based on the activity to ensure safety.

Playground

1. A first aid bag and radio must always go outside with the group.
2. Children are not to run upstairs to the playground. They must walk with the leader and hold on to the railing.
3. No throwing stones or snowballs on the playground.
4. Go down slides feet first and one child at a time.
5. Children playing on the grassy areas or basketball areas need to be supervised at all times.
6. Staff are to spread out on the playground so all children are being observed at all times.
7. School building rules are followed at all times.

8. All equipment in games should be used as it was intended for.

Toileting Assistance

In an effort to protect the dignity and privacy of the child who require assistance in toileting, when possible two staff members will be present. When two staff members are not available, the staff person assisting the child will notify another member of the staff that they will be assisting the child with toileting alone and they will use the restroom that is normally used by Galaxy Kids. Care will be taken to be respectful and appropriate in all conversation and actions while assisting the child.

Outside Time

All children should go outside every day, weather permitting, even if just for a few minutes. If the children went outside at recess and the weather has not gotten any colder, staff should take the children outside. Do not take the children outside if it is extremely cold, wet, muddy, too humid, etc. Children and staff members should have proper clothing for being outside. Staff members should place themselves in different areas of the playground so they can actively supervise all children. Staff members should not congregate together.

Children need to follow all playground rules. Staff members are responsible for making sure these rules are being followed and prevent any situations that could become dangerous.

Activity/Lesson Planning

The program planning specialist will complete daily lesson plans (Lesson Planning Forms). Classroom Assistants will meet with the planning specialist one time a week during their weekly planning meeting. During this meeting classroom assistants will receive their Lesson Plans for the following two weeks and will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback to the planning specialist. All staff members will be scheduled a minimum of one hour per week to complete their Activity Planning Forms. The Activity Planning Form will be completed at least one week prior to when the activity is scheduled to take place. Activity Planning Forms will be attached to the Lesson Planning Sheet that is provided by the planning specialist.

Programming

Galaxy Kids Program strives to ensure our lesson plans and curriculum supports youth development

and engagement. Lesson plans and activities focus on all aspects of youth strengths and needs, including physical, social, emotional, and cognitive/academic needs. Lesson plans and Activity Planning Forms will be adjusted to reflect the needs, interests and abilities of all students. Developmental needs will be intentionally supported through daily activities, including daily lesson plans, monthly schedules, transition games, and daily informal interactions with students.

Child Guidance and Behavior Management

Inclusive Environment

Galaxy Kids Program and staff members will create a caring, inclusive environment. The program values and supports the rights of all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in our child care setting. Children will be provided with reasonable accommodations and should be in groups with same-age peers whenever possible.

Pro-Social Behavior

Staff members will model appropriate, pro-social behavior at all times when working with students.

If a child is displaying negative behaviors, staff should do the following:

1. Talk to the child. Explain to the child in a positive manner why the behavior is inappropriate, or ask the child to tell you why this behavior is not appropriate.
2. If the child continues to display negative behaviors, redirect the child. Discuss what they could do instead. Encourage them to suggest ideas. Make sure child is aware of consequences to choices made.
3. If negative behavior continues, follow through with the consequence agreed upon earlier. If it is a "time-out", do not leave the child isolated for unreasonable amount of time. After the consequence has been met, discuss the behavior in a positive manner with the child before letting them go back to be with the other children.
4. Document all negative behaviors with a Behavior Report and make the child aware of what is written for the parents to read. Give the original copy to the parents and make a copy to give to the coordinator.

If a discipline problem becomes severe; i.e. child is physically abusive towards other children or staff, staff is to do the following:

1. Immediately remove the child from the group. If the child chooses not to leave the room, remove all

other children from the room.

2. Give the child a chance to calm down.
3. Document the incident using a Behavior Report. Give the original copy to the parent and make a copy to give to the coordinator.
4. Contact the coordinator. If unable to reach them, contact the Community Education Director. Either of these people will make any further decisions.
5. Inform the parent that the coordinator will be in touch with them.
6. Continue trying to reach the coordinator.

At any time a child may be removed from the program for up to a week following a severe incident. THIS DECISION IS TO BE MADE WITH THE GALAXY KIDS COORDINATOR OR THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION DIRECTOR. AT NO TIME IS A STAFF MEMBER TO MAKE A DECISION BY THEMSELVES REGARDING A CHILD'S EXPULSION FROM GALAXY KIDS PROGRAM.

Galaxy Kids Program follows ISD 883's Policy 507: Corporal Punishment

No employee or agent of the school district shall cause corporal punishment to be inflicted upon a student to reform unacceptable conduct or as a penalty for unacceptable conduct. As used in this policy, the term "corporal punishment" means conduct involving hitting or spanking a person with or without an object, or unreasonable physical force that causes bodily harm or substantial emotional harm.

Bullying Policy

Galaxy Kids Program follows ISD 883's Policy 514: Bullying Prohibition Policy. The policy defines "Bullying" as:

"Bullying" means intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive and:

1. an actual or perceived imbalance of power exists between the student engaging in the prohibited conduct and the target of the prohibited conduct, and the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern; or
2. materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges. The term, "bullying," specifically includes cyberbullying as defined in this policy.

"Cyberbullying" means bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, 514-3 including a post on a social network Internet website or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic

device. The term applies to prohibited conduct which occurs on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, on school transportation, or on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists, or off school premises to the extent that it substantially and materially disrupts student learning or the school environment.”

If you suspect a child may be the target of bullying you should report your concerns to the Program Coordinator right away.

Health and Safety/Emergency Procedures

General Guidelines

1. Staff members must wash hands at the start of their shift, upon entering a new classroom, after eating or drinking, after using the restroom, and after sneezing/coughing/blowing their nose.
2. Galaxy staff members are responsible for serving meals and snacks during program hours, therefore they must follow all safety and reporting guidelines as stated by the State of Minnesota.
 - a. The Program Coordinator must report the following illnesses to the State of Minnesota: salmonella spp., Shigella spp., Escherichia coli 0157:H7, or other enteric bacterial pathogen, or the hepatitis A virus. The report should be made by the next working day (Minnesota Food Code 4626.0060 A).
 - b. Employees must be restricted from serving food if they have the following symptoms: diarrhea, vomiting. They may return to food-related responsibilities when they are free from symptoms. The Program Coordinator is required to keep a log of staff members exhibiting diarrhea and vomiting. Staff members are required to report these symptoms to the program coordinator and refrain from working until symptoms are no longer present.
3. The Program Coordinator will maintain a list of student medical information, including allergies and long-term health and developmental considerations. These lists will be posted in each classroom on the inside of the First Aid cupboard.

4. Emergency safety drills will be conducted throughout the school year and summer. Staff are responsible for being familiar with the district “Emergency Procedures” book located in each classroom (Red Binder).

Emergency Procedures

All Galaxy staff are trained in the district’s Emergency Procedures, which can be located in each classroom in the RED Emergency Procedures book. Staff members will also follow the programs Child Care Emergency Plan, located by the entrance of each classroom on a RED clipboard.

Nutrition Guidelines

Galaxy Kids Program is committed to serving a variety of healthy and nutritious food during program hours. Students will be offered snack options each day that include a balance of fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins, while limiting foods high in fats, sodium and sugars. Students will be offered water, low or non-fat milk, and 100% fruit juice with each snack. Staff members should support children’s abilities to self-regulate eating (i.e. only eating until full) as well as model healthy eating habits.

First Aid Requirements

First aid kits are accessible to staff members at all times. First aid kits are located in each classroom. Portable first aid kits are also available for when students are outside, in the gym, in the computer lab, and on field trips and off-site activities. First aid kits will include the following: Water (if not available in the space), disposable gloves, adhesive bandages, antiseptic wipes, scissors, sterile compresses, thermometer, adhesive tape, ice pack, current first aid manual. A staff member will be assigned to complete weekly checks of all first aid kits to ensure they are adequately stocked.

Student Accidents/Injuries

All adult staff members must be certified in First Aid/CPR. If an accident occurs, please follow the instructions below.

1. The coordinator (teaching assistant if coordinator is not available) does the initial assessment of the injury. DO NOT MOVE THE CHILD. IF YOU ARE UNSURE OF THE SEVERITY

OF THE INJURY, THE COORDINATOR OR ASSISTANT WILL SEND ANOTHER STAFF PERSON TO CALL 911.

2. While the coordinator or assistant is attending to the child, other staff on site should remove the other children from the area. As a staff, you should determine a centralized place for the children to gather when an accident or injury occurs; i.e. on the playground, all children will meet by the door.
3. If you have to call 911, immediately contact the parent/guardian. If you cannot reach the parent/guardian, please contact one of the people listed on the child's emergency contact list. After reaching these people, please contact the program coordinator. If unable to reach the program coordinator, leave a message and then contact the community education director.
4. The assistant will fill out a Galaxy Kids Program Accident Report, and return it to the coordinator as soon as possible. ACCIDENT REPORTS MUST BE FILLED OUT FOR ANY AND ALL INJURIES. A copy of each Accident Report will be given to the parent and a copy will be kept in the child's file on-site.
5. Staff members must wear gloves when attending to a child that is bleeding or secreting bodily fluids and following all first aid/CPR procedures.
6. Inform the parent of any accident that involved their child, in person, on the day it occurred. (If a serious accident, call immediately.)
7. In the event that a serious injury has occurred, Galaxy staff will notify the Program Coordinator as soon as it is safe to do so. The coordinator will inform the RAS district office and Community Education Director.

First Aid Kits

First aid kits must be in all areas where children are, including classrooms, the gym, outside, and during off-site activities. First aid kits will be checked by an assigned staff person each week. All first aid kits should include the following items: water (if not available in the space), disposable gloves, adhesive bandages of assorted sizes, sealed packages of antiseptic wipes, scissors, sterile compresses, thermometer, adhesive tape, ice packs, current first aid manual.

Head Injury/Concussion

If a child bumps their head while at Galaxy Kids Program, staff will immediately implement the following steps.

Step 1: Make sure the child is okay. Provide first aid as needed.

Step 2: Notify Program Coordinator so assistance can be provided.

Step 3: Immediately begin the Concussion Signs and Symptoms Checklist.

Step 4: After completing the checklist the 1st time, notify the parent that their child has bumped their head and we are monitoring them- please remember this notification MUST take place within 15 minutes of the time of injury.

Step 5: Complete the checklist again after 15 minutes from the time of injury, 30 minutes from the time of injury and once before the child leaves for the day.

Notes:

- The staff who is first aware of the incident is the Responding Staff and must remain with the child until they leave for the day.
- At no time should a child who has bumped their head be allowed to lay down or fall asleep.
- If a student displays symptoms of a concussion, the parent will be called and asked to pick up their child.

If at any time a child displays the following symptoms, call 911 immediately: loss of consciousness for any period of time, vomiting, disoriented behavior, confusion, loss of memory, problems with balance or dizziness.

Staff Injuries

If a staff member is injured, they must immediately report the injury to the Program Coordinator or Community Education Director. They will assist you in documenting the injury and filling out a First Report of Injury and advise you on what to do next.

Administering Medications

A form from a doctor must be presented before any prescription medications can be given to any child at Galaxy Kids Program. Medication must be in its original container, properly labeled. These medications will be kept in a locked location, away from children.

All classroom assistants will receive training in medication administration. Only trained, adult staff members can administer medication to children.

When dispensing medication, the Galaxy Staff must double check the child's first and last name on the bottle and confirm the child's name with them, as well as double check the ordered dosage. Medication should be dispensed into the child's hand or into a cup. Staff should not touch the medication directly. After the staff has watched the child take the medication, the log should be completed, including initials and time administered. Unused medications and emptied bottles must be returned to the parent/guardian. Over-the counter medications may be administered if a Medication Form is on file with a parent's signature.

State of Minnesota Rule 3 Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers (Section 9503.0140, Subparagraph 7) states: "non-prescriptive medications and topical ointments must be administered according to the manufacturer's instructions." Galaxy Kids Program requires parent/guardian authorization for administration of non-prescriptive medications such as Children's Tylenol.

Sick Children

A child may not attend Galaxy Program if the child has any of the following; fever above 99.9 degrees, vomiting, diarrhea, undiagnosed rash, inflamed or mattery eyes, severe cold or sore throat. If a child does become ill at Galaxy, or any of the above symptoms appear, do the following:

1. Have the child rest in a quiet comfortable place away from the other children (if possible).
2. Contact the parent. Explain the situation. If the child does have any of these symptoms, he/she must be picked up as soon as possible (within 1 hour). If the parent says that they cannot come to get the child, tell them either they need to make arrangements for someone else to pick up the child or you will call one of the people listed on the child's emergency contact list, found in their Parent Portal.

*A child may not return to the program until they are fever/symptom free for 24 hours or on medication for at least 24 hours.

Pets

On occasion, Galaxy Kids Program may have working service dogs at our locations. We also may have presentations from outside organizations involving

animals. Parents/Guardians are asked to check with the supervisor and/or staff before bringing any animals into the program. You will be notified in writing if any animals will be present in the program for any reason.

Transporting Children

1. Galaxy Kids staff members will be responsible for safely transporting children to and from Rockford Community Education classes and activities. Staff members responsible for providing transportation will have a copy of their driver's license on file, must maintain a safe driving record, and must receive transportation training through 4.0 Transportation (including a written test and supervised test drive with transportation manager). Students must always be transported in an approved district-owned vehicle.
2. Galaxy staff members are responsible for ensuring students are safely transported to/from field trips in district busses. Staff members are responsible for ensuring students maintain safe behavior while on the bus. In the event of an emergency, Galaxy staff members are responsible for safely supervising students and notifying the Program Coordinator of incidents.

Emergency School Closings and Late Starts

Often an emergency closing due to bad weather is announced after Galaxy Kids Program has opened. Staff members are responsible for reporting for the before school session unless contacted by the coordinator.

If school is cancelled after you have arrived during the before school session:

1. The coordinator will be in contact with program staff.
2. Galaxy will remain OPEN depending on the severity of the weather. If the decision is made to close Galaxy, Galaxy staff members will email and call parents. Parents will have 2 hours to pick up their children.
3. At least two staff will stay until the last child is picked up.

If school is cancelled in the middle of the day:

1. The coordinator will be in contact with program staff.
2. Galaxy will remain OPEN depending on the severity of the weather. If the decision is made to close Galaxy, Galaxy staff will email and call parents. Parents will have 2 hours to pick up their children.

3. At least two staff members will stay until the last child is picked up.

If school has a late start after you arrive:

All AM staff are to remain with the children until school is in session. The staff will be paid for this time.

Late Parent Policy

Galaxy Program closes at 6:00PM. Staff members will use the following procedure to handle late pick-ups:

1. Whenever possible, have two staff stay with child.
2. Assure the child that their parent or guardian is probably stuck in traffic and find something for the child to do.
3. Attempt phone contact with the parents or guardians of the child. If parents cannot be reached, phone calls should be made to the emergency contacts for the child.
4. If staff haven't heard from the parents/guardians and are not able to secure a pick-up for the child by contacting the emergency contacts, at 6:30 PM staff will notify the coordinator.

Suspicion of Parents under the Influence of Drugs or Alcohol

If the coordinator or classroom assistants suspect a parent/guardian is under the influence of alcohol or drugs and believes the child would be in danger because of the parents' state, the following procedures should be taken:

1. Tell the parent/guardian confidentially that you are concerned about having him/her driving and offer to call a back-up person from the emergency contact list.
2. If the parent/guardian insists on driving with the child, you will be obligated to call the police.
3. Call 911 and report the incident and if possible provide the police with a description of the car, license plate number, and which direction they were headed. You may be asked to provide the child's home address.
4. If a staff member smells what they believe is alcohol on a parent's/guardian's breath, but otherwise their behavior appears consistent with what is typical for them, that staff member is under no obligation to do or say anything.
5. Staff members should never try to physically

restrain or argue with a parent or guardian. Discuss the situation with the Galaxy Coordinator.

Field Trips

Galaxy Kids Program will be taking a variety of field trips during the school year and the summer program. The following are the guidelines for field trips:

1. The Galaxy Kids Program Coordinator plans field trips.
2. Children and staff are to wear Galaxy Program t-shirts.
3. Staff may not transport children in their own vehicles on field trips.
4. The cell phone, first aid kit, walkie talkies, and each child's emergency information must be taken on all field trips.
5. Staff will remain with all children in their group for the entire field trip. Children should never be allowed to wander alone without supervision, i.e. the bathroom.
6. No children are to be left behind for on-site care on a field trip day for negative behaviors in the morning prior to the field trip. The child will attend the field trip, and if the behaviors continue, a staff person will remove them from the field trip activity and sit with them on the bus. Upon returning from the field trip, the staff person will contact the coordinator and make him or her aware of the situation, and fill out a Behavior Form to notify the parents.
7. If an accident/injury happens to a child on a field trip and 911 is contacted, the parent should be contacted and informed of where the child is being taken. The Emergency Medical Technician's (EMT's) should be given the information from the child's Emergency Form. Staff will not ride in the ambulance with the child. Contact the Program Coordinator and the Community Education Director as soon as possible. Fill out an Accident Report.
8. Attendance should be taken before the bus leaves for the field trip, and before the bus leaves the field trip site to return to school.
9. The coordinator will designate the staff person who will take care of the payment, explanation of rules, and anything else that arises during the field trip.

Parent and Family Involvement:

1. Galaxy Kids has an open door policy for staff members and parents. If a parent expresses a concern to you, please acknowledge their concern

and let the parent know you will get more information and follow up with them. If needed, please contact the Program Coordinator so concerns can be followed up with in a timely manner.

2. Parents will be offered an opportunity to attend an orientation at the beginning of each session (School Year/Summer).

3. Parents and other family members are encouraged to participate in program activities.

4. Conferences can be requested by the program supervisors or the parent regarding children when the need arises.

Community Partnerships

Galaxy Kids strives to provide opportunities for our students to excel within their school and community. Galaxy maintains community partnerships with several business to provide additional learning experiences for our students. We currently maintain a partnership with the Rockford Public Library, and RiverWorks Food Shelf. These businesses provide opportunities for our students to be active within their community and gain an awareness of community needs and programs.

Gifts

Staff members should not receive gifts of monetary value from program participants. If gifts are received, the parent will have the option of taking back the gift or offering it as a donation to the program.

Dress Code

Staff members should dress in an appropriate, professional manner while working with students. Please remember you are representing our program and the Rockford School District while working. Tank-tops are allowed, as long as they don't have large, open armholes or spaghetti straps. All undergarments must be covered (this includes sports bras). Shorts/skirts must be modest. Please dress comfortably while at work. All staff are expected to participate in activities with the children so please wear comfortable shoes you can play games in. Clothing should be clean and in good repair at all times. Please refrain from wearing pants with holes in them or "off the shoulder" shirts.

Title IX

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment. All Title

IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools. More information can be found at

<https://www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-ix>

Other

The Minnesota Department of Education has clarified the following scenario for school districts:

"Due to potential conflicts of interest, school employees must **NOT** direct or influence the activities of the groups listed." (or similar groups)

- Booster Clubs (i.e. Rocket Activities Boosters and/or Music Partners)
- School Foundations (i.e. Rockford Education Foundation)
- Scholarship Funds (i.e. Rockford Dollars for Scholars)
- Or similar groups

We interpret this to mean the following: Employees can join any of these groups as a non-voting, non-paid, ex-officio members / volunteers but they cannot serve on a leadership team, a decision making body or Board of Directors for any of these groups.



2025-2026

Parent Handbook



GALAXY KIDS

School Age Care

Galaxy Program

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Introduction

Welcome to Galaxy Kids Program! We are pleased that you have selected our program for your child. Galaxy Kids Program is a quality school-age care program offered for children in preschool through grade four. The goal of our program is to create a caring, quality, learning environment that will complement your child's needs. Galaxy Kids is certified through the Department of Human Services.

Galaxy Kids Program offers your child choices for experiences in the areas of art and drama, music, sports, language arts/reading, group games, technology, community service, homework assistance, and quiet time. The children are encouraged to pursue their interests, develop confidence and independence, make new friends, and of course, have fun!

Galaxy Kids Program is sponsored by the Rockford Area School District 883 Community Education Department. Like all other district programs, we are governed by the policies and guidelines of the Board of Education.

This Parent Handbook is designed to inform you about our program procedures. Please read through the handbook carefully, paying special attention to the policies and schedules. Since the Galaxy Kids Program is housed in the Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School (REAMS) building, it is important to familiarize yourself with the REAMS handbook. It is available on the Rockford Schools website under REAMS Office.

Please feel comfortable contacting us through phone calls, emails or stop-in visits. Our goal is to work in partnership with our families in order to provide the children with a safe and caring environment.

Mission Statement

Galaxy Kids Program is committed to providing a safe, enriching learning environment for students in our community during their out of school time. We strive to work cooperatively with students' families, school-day staff, and our community to provide a quality, year-round child care program that is dedicated to continually improving our program. We encourage self-expression and creativity, build self-esteem and confidence, and promote positive

behavior, social skills, and friendships. Galaxy Kids Program is dedicated to providing an inclusive environment for students of varying abilities and needs, allowing all students to feel safe and respected. We encourage students to make choices, gain independence, and experience a variety of social and educational experiences. It is our purpose to help each child develop to the best of their individual ability in an atmosphere in which each child will become a valued member of our school community.

Open Door Policy

Parents are welcome visitors to our program. We appreciate input regarding program expectations, suggestions, ideas and comments on ways to improve our service to you and your family. You may direct suggestions, concerns, compliments and complaints to the program coordinator, either verbally or in writing. You are welcome to leave a note in the Parent Box or be sending an email. You are also welcome to direct questions, concerns, and comments to our Community Education Director.

Title IX

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment. All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools. More information can be found at

<https://www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-ix>

Registration and Enrollment Information

Openings are determined on the basis of the number of adult staff-to-child ratio (1 Adult: 15 K-6 children and 1 Adult: 10 preschool children). When openings occur, parents/guardians of registered children are contacted for enrollment on the basis of: 1) the time slot indicated on the registration form, and 2) on a first-come basis for the time slot according to the date of registration.

How to Register

Parents will register using their Eleyo account. You can register for an account by visiting <https://rockford.ce.eleyo.com/>. Parents will pay a non-refundable enrollment fee at the time of

registration. Your child is not registered until the fee is paid. If you are enrolling your child after the registration dates you will need to work with the supervisor to determine a start date for your child within the program. Non-payment of previous Galaxy charges will result in a delay in enrollment until all fees are paid.

Please allow a minimum of three to five business days to process enrollments.

Enrollment Periods

Galaxy Kids has 2 sessions each year, School Year and Summer. Each session requires a separate registration. The school year enrollment period is from the first day of school until the last day of school. The summer enrollment period is for 10 weeks, starting the first Monday after the school year ends and ending the week before Labor Day Weekend.

Hours of Operation

Galaxy is open Monday through Friday, from 6:00am to 6:00pm, including during the summer session and on theme days. The program will be closed the following district holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Thursday and Friday, Winter Break, Presidents Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, the days that fall in the same week as the last day of school, Juneteenth, week of Independence Day, and the week before the start of the new school year. Weather-related school closings are addressed in a separate section of this handbook.

Schedule Options

Consistent Schedule Option: Choose this option if you need care on the same days of the week each month. 2 days per week is required to receive the regular rate. One day or less is billed at the Drop-in rate.

Pick-Your-Day Schedule Option: Choose this option if your care needs vary from week to week and will not always be on the same day each week. 8 days per month are required. 7 or less days will automatically be billed at the Drop-in rate.

Drop-In Option: Families have the option to register as Drop-in only. Choose this option if you do not consistently need care or need less than 8 days per month. Drop-In days should be requested 3 business days in advance using your Eleyo account. There is an additional charge of \$2.00 above the regular fee.

These days can be accommodated based on space and staff availability. Drop-in care may not be available on certain field trip days. No refunds are available for canceling a requested drop-in date.

**Field trips are typically scheduled for every other Friday during the summer program. On-site care isn't available on field trip days. A field trip fee will be applied to your account if you register your child for a day a field trip is scheduled. Field trip fees are listed on the permission form (\$10 or less).*

Fee Schedule

Please see last page for Fee Schedule

Additional Fees

Finder's Fee: \$5.00 if your child does not come to Galaxy after school and Galaxy was not notified directly by a parent, no matter the reason, of the absence. This can delay the buses while searching.

Late Payment Fee: \$25.00 will be applied to your account if your payment is not received by the due date. If a family is unable to make payment by the due date, contact the supervisor to discuss payment arrangements. If no payment or contact is made within 7 business days of the due date, child care may be terminated. Your family will be unable to sign up for any other Community Education offerings until the account is paid in full.

Late Schedule Fee: \$25.00 will be applied to your account if your Pick Your Own schedule is not received by the due date. If you have questions on your schedule, please contact the supervisor before the date the schedule is due. If you no longer need care, please submit a Contract Change Form and request to withdraw your contract using your Eleyo account.

Late Pick-Up Fee: Galaxy Kids Program closes at 6:00pm each evening and it is important that our daily operations can conclude on time. Due to the additional expense of staff members staying late when parents arrive after the program closes you may be charged a Late Pick-Up Fee. Galaxy Kids Program will apply a fee of \$5 for the first 10 minutes a child is picked up late. After the first 10

minutes, \$1 per minute will be applied to your Eleyo account.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance may be available for qualifying families through state or county funds. Contact the County Human Services based on your county of residence. Written authorization from the county must be received by Galaxy before a child can begin care. If financial assistance is cancelled, you will be responsible for all expenses incurred. Families receiving assistance must assume responsibility for fulfilling county requirements such as providing child care schedules, submitting timely reports and making payments not covered by the assistance program in a timely manner. If co-pays and remaining care payments are not made in a timely manner, Galaxy Kids Program reserves the right to end care until your balance is paid in full. Parents participating in financial assistance programs are responsible for checking their balance due on their Eleyo account and paying the remaining balance due after assistance payments are applied.

Invoicing/Payments/Auto-Pay

Since the Summer of 2022, all families must have auto-pay added to their accounts to receive child care from Galaxy.

Summer Program- Care will be billed on a bi-weekly basis. You will receive an invoice every other Monday, with payment due the following Thursday.

School Year- Care is billed based on the days you have contracted for. Invoices will be available for payment on the 15th of the month prior to care. Payments are due by the 25th of the month prior to care being provided (i.e. September payment is due by August 25th). Galaxy Kids Program is a pay ahead program. If your payment is not received by the due date, care cannot be provided.

Drop-in Care will be invoiced during the next billing cycle.

Forms

All Galaxy Kids form that you will need are located on-site in the main Galaxy classroom and on our website. The Drop-In Care Form is NOT located on the website. This form is located on-site in our main classroom to ensure the safety of each child when

additional care is scheduled. Please contact a Galaxy staff member or the Galaxy coordinator for help filling out a Drop-In Form.

Drop-In Care Form

If you need emergency Drop-in care (less than 3 business days' notice) please call Galaxy Kids Program directly. You will be asked to sign a Drop-in Form when you arrive to pick-up your child.

Contract Change/Withdrawal

If you need to withdraw your child from Galaxy or change their contract after invoicing, we require a ten business day written notice. Please give notice via email, in addition to withdrawing or changing your contract using your Eleyo account. Families are financially responsible for any dates that fall within the 10 business days. If you withdraw your child without the required written notice, you will be billed tuition for the rest of the required time. Re-enrollment will be dependent on space availability and cannot be allowed until any outstanding balance is paid in full.

Vacation Credit Request Form

If you have planned time that your child will be away from the program and you are contracted for a Consistent Schedule at least 2 days a week, you may request a Vacation Credit for the days your child will not be attending Galaxy. Forms are due by the 14th of the month for the following month (example: September Vacation Credit Request Forms are due by August 14). Families on consistent schedules may receive a credit for up to one week of care per month, based on the number of days your child attends per week. Example: If your consistent schedule is set for 3 days per week, you may use up to 3 credit days per month.

You are responsible for all costs incurred for your contracted days, whether your child attends or not, unless we have received a Vacation Credit Request, contract change or withdrawal with sufficient notice.

Activity Form

If your child will be attending an activity while scheduled for care at Galaxy Kids, please fill out and return an Activity Form 10 business days prior to the activity. On this form you can indicate if you would

like a Galaxy staff member to bring your child to and from the activity, date, time, and location of activity, and special instructions for the staff member.

Communication

Galaxy Kids strives to maintain open and clear communication. We will regularly send out updates and monthly newsletters, as well as individual communication with each child's family on an as-needed basis. You will also receive monthly reminder emails when forms and payments are due.

Each family is assigned a mail slot to receive periodic communication (cubby). Children can also store completed projects and items; however parents are responsible for making sure your family's cubby is emptied each day.

Reports

If your child has an accident, incident, or serious behavioral issue you will be notified by Galaxy staff using either an Incident/Accident Report or a Behavior Report. You will also receive a form indicating if your child isn't feeling well, along with what actions were taken while your child was at the program.

Orientation

An orientation will be offered at the beginning of each session. An email orientation will also be sent out to all families at the beginning of each session.

Parent Feedback

We welcome feedback, both positive and negative, at all times. If you would like to share feedback you may email the coordinator, leave a note in the locked wooden box, or call and speak directly with a staff member. You may also request a conference with the coordinator regarding your child. The coordinator may also request a conference regarding your child if the need arises. You will also be asked to participate in a survey at least annually.

We encourage parents to be as involved with our program as they prefer. You are invited to participate in the Community Education Advisory Board or Accreditation Stakeholder team if you would like to advise on policies and procedures regarding the program.

Galaxy Kids follows ISD 883's grievance procedures and policy # 103 regarding complaints from

students, employees, parents, or other persons. You may report concerns or complaints directly to the school district or to an individual employee. The employee will advise their immediate supervisor of the complaint. For more information, please see policy #103 on the district website.

Conferences

If you would like to meet to discuss your child's progress while at Galaxy Kids Program you may request a conference with the program supervisor and classroom assistants that work with your child. Please be sure to schedule conferences in advance so staff members can prepare and additional staff members can be scheduled if need. The program coordinator may request a conference with you regarding your child if the need arises.

Arrivals/Departures

Sign-In and Sign-Out

Parents are required to sign their child(ren) in and out of the program each day. Please sign your child in/out using the Galaxy Kids iPad and make sure a Galaxy staff member knows you are taking your child. This is a safety measure. Parents are responsible for keeping their Authorize Pick-Up list current on their Eleyo account. If an emergency arises and some not on your authorized list will be picking up your child, please call Galaxy kids BEFORE the person arrives to pick up your child. You will be asked to follow-up with the information in writing as soon as you can (example: email). All persons not recognized by staff will be asked for photo identification. Be sure we have current phone numbers where you can be reached during your child's time at Galaxy in order for us to verify that you are aware of this change.

If a parent sends a sibling to pick up child from Galaxy, the sibling must be at least 12 years of age and must be listed on your Authorized Pick-Up List as someone who can pick up the child. The sibling must either be known to staff or have a picture ID.

Unauthorized Pickup

If you do not want your child's other parent or grandparent to pick up said child, you must give us a copy of a court order with that information.

Health and Safety

Please keep your child's emergency information

current. Registration and emergency information is kept at our program for each child. You may update your information using your Eleyo account. If you update your information after your initial registration, please notify us so we can update our safety lists.

Nutrition Guidelines

Galaxy Kids Program is committed to serving a variety of healthy and nutritious food during program hours. Students will be offered snack options each day that include a balance of fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins, while limiting foods high in fats, sodium and sugars. Students will be offered water, low or non-fat milk, and 100% fruit juice with each snack. Staff members will support children's abilities to self-regulate eating (i.e. only eating until full) as well as model healthy eating habits. Breakfast is available on school days through the district hot lunch program. Breakfast may be purchased through the REAMS office. You must contact the supervisor to set up an account if you do not have one. We will be taking the children to the lunchroom before the start of the school day. Please check the district menu and if you do not want to participate in the breakfast program for that day, you are welcome to send a breakfast snack with your child. On non-school days a breakfast snack will be provided through the Galaxy Program.

Lunch is provided on school days through the District 883 hot lunch program. Lunch may be purchased through the REAMS office or using your Parent Portal. You must contact the Galaxy supervisor to set up a lunch account if you do not have one. Milk will be available for purchase to supplement lunches brought from home.

2025-2026 LUNCH AND BREAKFAST PRICES

Breakfast Free:

Adult/Second full Student Meal: \$2.25

Lunch Free: Adult/Second full Student Meal: \$4.95

Milk \$0.60

Extras

Second Entrée only: \$3.00

Other Ala Carte Items: \$1.00 - \$3.00

*All second full meals must be charged at the adult meal price per state statute

Lunch and Breakfast Prices subject to change as determined by Taher Food Services.

For more information regarding your child's lunch account, payment methods, and eligibility for free or reduced price meals, contact 763-477-9165. Please see District Policy 730R in the District Student/Parent Handbook.

Cold lunch is necessary to bring on all non-school days and during the summer program unless otherwise stated. When sending a cold lunch with your child/children, families are responsible for ensuring that the contents of your child's/children's lunch are appropriately packed and cooled, especially if sending a milk product or a perishable food item. We ask that you do not send pop to drink.

Afternoon snacks are included in the tuition fees and will be served each day at 3:30pm. Please check the monthly menu on our webpage to see what is being served each day. During the summer program, a breakfast snack will be served at 7:45am each day. Breakfast snacks are included in your tuition fees during the summer.

Accidents/Injuries

All adult Galaxy staff members receive training in 1st Aid and CPR. If a child has a minor injury, the attending staff person will treat the injury and inform the **parents/guardians via phone call or through our accident/injury report form.** If a serious accident should occur, the staff will contact the parent/guardian and call 911. If emergency treatment is necessary, the child will be taken to Buffalo Emergency Care and the parent will be responsible for all medical expenses.

Illness and Absence from the Program

In case of illness a child should not attend Galaxy Kids Program if ANY of the following symptoms occur: Fever above 99 degrees, severe cold, undiagnosed rash, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, upset stomach, body aches or head lice. Please contact the coordinator if your child has any communicable diseases so that we can inform other parents that their child may have been exposed.

Chronic Health Conditions

If your child has a medical need or chronic health condition, please contact the Galaxy coordinator to

schedule a meeting prior to your child beginning our program. It is important to us that we have as much information as possible to provide the highest quality care for your child.

If a child should become ill with any of the symptoms described above, Galaxy Kids Program staff will contact a parent/guardian and request that the child be picked up from the program within one hour of being contacted. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, a program staff member will get in touch with an emergency contact as listed on your Parent Portal.

Communicable Diseases

To avoid the spread of germs and for the benefit of the ill child, a child displaying any of the above symptoms will be asked to rest in a quiet area away from other children while waiting. Your child/children may not return to Galaxy Kids Program until she/he has a written doctor's notice, has not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours, or has been on medication for at least 24 hours.

Please Note: Because head lice is terribly contagious and extremely difficult to eradicate, Galaxy Kids Program reserves the right to check each child's head upon arrival and may refuse to care for any child who shows any evidence of lice infestation.

If you have signed up your child for a day to attend the Galaxy Kids Program and your child is ill and unable to attend we ask that you call us as soon as possible. To call your child in sick, please call the 763-477-7555. You will be charged for the day. However, if we need to locate where your child is because you have not notified us, we will also charge a Finder's Fee.

Administering Medications

A form from a doctor must be presented before any prescription medications can be given to any child at Galaxy Kids Program. Medication must be in its original container, properly labeled. These medications will be kept in a locked location, away from children. Over-the-counter medications may be administered if a Medication Form is on file with a parent's signature.

State of Minnesota Rule 3 Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers (Section 9503.0140,

Subparagraph 7) states: "non-prescriptive medications and topical ointments must be administered according to the manufacturer's instructions." Galaxy Kids Program requires parent/guardian authorization for administration of non-prescriptive medications such as Children's Tylenol.

Insurance

Medical insurance coverage for the Galaxy Kids Program is the responsibility of the parents.

Sunscreen

Children will have the opportunity to go outside each day that weather permits. It is important that you put sunscreen on your child each day. Students are allowed to keep this in their backpacks to re-apply throughout the day. Parents are responsible for supplying sunscreen for their child during program hours. Sunscreen should be labeled with your child's name and grade. If sunscreen is not provided, your child will do alternative indoor activities in place of outdoor activities unless a waiver is signed.

Blankets/Extra Clothes

Preschool/kindergarten students should bring the following for daily use: blanket for nap time and an extra set of clothing and underwear in case of accidents. Please put the extra clothing in a storage bag labeled with the child's name and kept in his/her backpack at all times. Notices will be sent home if extra clothing was used or if you need to take the blanket home to wash. We take precautionary measures to maintain the blankets here as well.

Galaxy Kids Program follows District Policy 516 in regards to Health and Safety in the District Parent/Student Handbook.

Child Guidance/ Behavior Management

Galaxy Kids Program is dedicated to creating a positive and encouraging classroom community by implementing positive behavior guidance techniques with all children. Our program is dedicated to being inclusive of children of all abilities. Our goal is to teach children positive ways of dealing with conflict while maintaining a safe and caring environment for each child. Galaxy Staff

follow the School Discipline Policy 506 from the District Student/Parent handbook.

Our program staff use developmentally appropriate language to help children make desirable choices, to become cooperative persons who are responsible for their own actions, and who respect the rights, feelings, and property of others. Staff members are committed to being positive role models, employing positive, non-threatening techniques, and consistently acknowledging and encouraging positive behaviors and attitudes.

Behavior Expectations

The basic expectations for students to remember are:

1. We respect ourselves, others and property
2. We behave in a safe and orderly way.
3. We act as responsible citizens.

Unacceptable Behaviors:

- Any violations of the District Disciplinary Policy
- Violations of listed basic expectations.

Examples of unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Physical aggression
- Drugs, alcohol, tobacco or weapons used or in possession on the premises.
- Destruction of property.
- Unsafe activities such as leaving the area without permission, behavior which endangers others, etc.
- Behaviors that disrupt activities and/or other program participants.

Consequences for Unacceptable Behaviors:

- Loss of Galaxy privileges or activities.
- Positive conflict resolution between all parties involved and program staff.
- Meeting with Galaxy staff and other children involved. Positive redirection.
- If behavior is severe, parents will be contacted to pick up their child immediately.
- Suspension from the program from 1-5 days.
- If negative behaviors are continuous, parents will meet with program staff for a conference. Behavior improvement action steps will be developed and signed by child, parent, and program staff.
- If there is no improvement using the new behavior plan, parents will be notified to discuss possible disenrollment from the program.

Galaxy Staff will notify enrollees, as well as parents, of any violations and resulting disciplinary actions. The Galaxy staff will document this notification on a behavior report and give a copy to the Galaxy supervisor.

We follow district policies 506 and 525 for all violent and severe behaviors from the District Student/Parent Handbook.

For additional information regarding students with disabilities, please see the Americans with Disabilities Act. <https://www.ada.gov/>

Program staff will meet with the Community Education Director and other appropriate district staff regarding decisions that need to be made due to severe discipline.

Bullying

Galaxy Kids Program followings ISD 883's Policy 514: Bullying Prohibition Policy. The policy defines

"Bullying" as:

"Bullying" means intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is objectively offensive and:

1. an actual or perceived imbalance of power exists between the student engaging in the prohibited conduct and the target of the prohibited conduct, and the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern; or
2. materially and substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or performance or ability to participate in school functions or activities or receive school benefits, services, or privileges. The term, "bullying," specifically includes cyberbullying as defined in this policy.

"Cyberbullying" means bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, 514-3 including a post on a social network Internet website or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device. The term applies to prohibited conduct which occurs on school premises, on school district property, at school functions or activities, on school transportation, or on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists, or off school premises to the extent that it substantially and materially disrupts student learning or the school environment."

If children are displaying behavior that is consistent with bullying and previous behavior interventions have not been successful, a meeting will be scheduled with the parents and program coordinator to discuss a Behavior Plan.

Staffing Ratios

We follow the ratios of staff to children recommended by the State of Minnesota, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the MN Afterschool Accreditation Program (MAAP). Independence will be encouraged by allowing children to do things for themselves, but a staff member must be present at all times. Student workers may be included in the staff to student ratios; however they will not be alone with children at any time. Additional staff are scheduled during high-risk activities, such as field trips or community outings.

Preschool: 1: 10 (maximum 20)

Kindergarten-Grade 6: 1: 15 (maximum 30)

Mixed Group: For mixed age group we staff in accordance with the youngest age group present

Emergency Procedures

Galaxy Kids Program follows all of ISD 883's Emergency Procedures. Emergency drills are completed and documented on a scheduled basis.

Lockdown Procedures-Soft

Soft lockdown procedures will be implemented if there is a threat outside the school building or a non-threatening emergency circumstances that people need to be kept away from.

1. Coordinator or building principal will announce "SOFT lockdown" procedures.
2. Staff members will direct all students to the nearest classroom, including those outside.
3. Custodians will lock exterior doors.
3. Staff will clear hallways, restrooms, and other rooms that cannot be secured.
4. Staff members will close all shades, lock classroom doors and control all movement inside the classroom. Students will **continue activities as planned within the classroom.**
5. Coordinator or building principal will announce "all clear" when the situation has resolved.

Lockdown Procedures-Hard

The threat/intruder is inside the building

1. Coordinator or building principal will announce "HARD lockdown" procedures.
2. Staff will immediately direct all students, staff, and visitors into the nearest classroom or secured space and **LOCK THE DOORS.**
3. Staff members will turn off lights and keep all students away from windows and doors and out of sight.
4. Staff members will not allow parents/guardians to enter the building during an active hard lockdown. Parents will be notified if a hard lockdown occurs and will be notified as soon as it is safe to pick up your children.
5. Everyone in the building will remain in place until the situation has resolved.
5. Coordinator or building principal will announce "all clear" when the situation has resolved.

Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a fire or smoke from a fire that has been detected staff members will:

1. Evacuate students to the nearest designated safe area. See map located on each classroom door.
2. Staff members will take their tracking board along with them and ensure all children have been accounted for. A designated staff member will take the master attendance sheets along and ensure all students signed into the program have been accounted for.
3. Report missing or unaccounted for students to the coordinator right away.
4. No one may reenter the building until the building is declared safe by fire or police personnel.

Sheltering Procedures

1. Coordinator or building principal will announce when students should take shelter.
2. Staff members will move their group to the designated safe area nearest to where the group is located. Staff members will take their tracking board along with them and ensure all children have been accounted for. Staff and students will take the closest and safest route to the designated shelter.
3. Staff members will implement "drop and tuck" procedures: Face an interior wall, drop to knees and roll forward on the balls of your feet. Tuck head down and place hands on top of head and neck.
4. Once all students are safely sheltered, staff will

take attendance to ensure all students are accounted for.

Severe Weather

School Closing: Galaxy Kids Program will be CLOSED if school is closed for the day. Families are still financially responsible for the day.

2-Hour Late Start: Galaxy will OPEN at the regular time. If the decision is made to close school, Galaxy will remain OPEN depending on the severity of the weather. Parents will be contacted immediately if the decision is made to close Galaxy.

Early Dismissal: If school is dismissed early, Galaxy will remain OPEN depending on the severity of the weather. Parents will be contacted immediately if the decision is made to close Galaxy.

After School Activities Cancelled: If after school activities are cancelled, Galaxy will remain OPEN regular hours depending on the severity of the weather conditions.

Invoices will be adjusted in the event a child's time at Galaxy is extended.

Announcements will be made on the district website at www.rockford883.org, local radio and TV stations as well as phone call notice to district families.

During summer session, Galaxy Kids Program will maintain the following inclement weather policies:

If inclement weather occurs and poses a risk for children and program staff, Galaxy Kids Program may close. Program staff will contact you to inform you of the program closing. Supervision will be provided up to 2 hours after the closing announcement.

We follow District Policy 806 Crisis Management for all Emergency Situations from the District Student/Parent Handbook. This manual can be found on the Rockford Schools website at www.rockford883.org. Click on District and then District Policies.

Energy Curtailment

During the summer months Rockford Area Schools participate in a program called Excel Energy Peak Control, which means we are obligated to shut down the majority of electricity in our district. The school district works with Excel to make the best use of

available power during these limited power use times. To keep our kids cool and safe, we may bring them to the Community Center Field House on these days. The hours of peak control vary with each control period. These days only take place in our district on odd numbered days when the heat index is high. If it is an even numbered day, we are allowed to operate as usual unless there is an extreme emergency.

Programming

Galaxy Kids Program strives to ensure our lesson plans and curriculum supports youth development and engagement. Lesson plans and activities focus on all aspects of youth strengths and needs, including physical, social, emotional, and cognitive/academic needs. Lesson plans and Activity Planning Forms will be adjusted to reflect the needs, interests and abilities of all students. Developmental needs will be intentionally supported through daily activities, including daily lesson plans, monthly schedules, transition games, and daily informal interactions with students.

Transportation

Students will only be transported during program hours in authorized school vehicles. Field trip transportation is provided by 4.0 Transportation. Transportation can also be provided by Galaxy employees who have received training to drive a district-owned van. Children will never be transported in staff member's personal vehicles for any reason.

Field Trips

During non-school days, especially the summer program, Galaxy Kids Program will be attending field trips. It is essential to arrive with adequate time before departures as Galaxy Kids will not delay a departure to wait for late arriving children. Please do not send additional money with your child unless informed that you may do so. On the days of field trips, no other on-site care will be available. As a reminder, children will need to bring a cold bag lunch/drink for ALL field trips. Parents/guardians are responsible for contacting program staff by 8:00 AM if a child/children are unable to attend a field trip. You will pay for the field trip if you have signed up your child on your monthly Calendar Form.

We will also take walks to the Rockford Public Library during the summer program. You will receive a monthly schedule of our visits. It is important that your child have a valid library card in order to attend. This only applies to students entering grades 1-6 as we do not take preschool and kindergarten students. To see which days your child will be attending, be sure to check our website or the on-site parent bulletin board for the schedule.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Galaxy staff members plan activities that are designed for students to be actively involved with other Galaxy kids during their time in the program. Bringing personally owned electronic devices to Galaxy is discouraged. Galaxy is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen items of this nature. Student use of district-owned technology is closely monitored. Students must follow guidelines for appropriate use of devices such as iPads. Galaxy will not allow photos to be taken of staff or other students. Posting photos on social media will result in a conference with parents and further disciplinary action. Please see District Policy 506 and 524R in the District Student/Parent Handbook.

Pets/Animals in the Program

On occasion, Galaxy Kids Program may have working service dogs at our locations. We also may have presentations from outside organizations involving animals. Parents/Guardians are asked to check with the supervisor and/or staff before bringing any animals into the program. You will be notified in writing if any animals will be present in the program for any reason.

Community Partnerships

Galaxy Kids strives to provide opportunities for our students to excel within their school and community. Galaxy maintains community partnerships with several business to provide additional learning experiences for our students.

Data Privacy

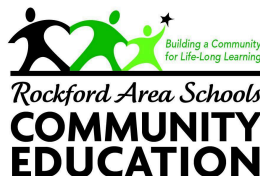
This notice is being given to you to make you aware of your rights with any family information that you provide to Galaxy Kids Program. The information we request on your registration forms is important for us to be able to serve your child. Certain information, such as emergency and health information, is required by the MN Department of Human Services to have on file. All information provided to Galaxy Kids Program will be kept in confidence and made available within our program to our staff only. If your services are subsidized, fully or in part, we are required to allow access by the funders of your services to your records if requested. Please see policy 515 in the District Student/Parent Handbook.

2025-2026 School Year Fees		
Before School Care 6:00am-8:00am	\$11.25 per day	Consistent Schedules
	\$12.25 per day	Pick Your Day Schedules
	\$13.25 per day	Drop-In Care
Preschool Half-Day Care 8:00am-12:15pm or 10:45am-2:55pm	\$17.50 per day	Consistent Schedules
	\$18.50 per day	Pick Your Day Schedules
	\$19.50 per day	Drop-In Care
Preschool School-Day Care 8:00am-2:55pm	\$27.75 per day	Consistent Schedules
	\$28.75 per day	Pick Your Day Schedules
	\$29.75 per day	Drop-In Care
After School Care 2:55pm-6:00pm	\$16.00 per day	Consistent Schedules
	\$17.00 per day	Pick Your Day Schedules
	\$18.00 per day	Drop-In Care
1 hour, Before or After School 7:00am-8:00am or 2:55pm-4:00pm	\$8.25 per session	Consistent Schedules
	\$9.25 per session	Pick Your Day Schedules
	\$10.25 per session	Drop-In Care
Non-School Day 6:00am-6:00pm	\$38.00 per day	Consistent Schedules
	\$40.00 per day	Drop-In Care
Activity Fee for field trip or on-site presenter	Cost of Activity	
2025 Summer Fees		
Full Day 6:00am-6:00pm	\$38.00 per day	Consistent Schedules
	\$39.00 per day	Pick Your Day Schedules
	\$40.00 per day	Drop-In Care
Weekly Rate Monday- Friday, 6:00am-6:00pm	\$174.75 per week Consistent Schedules Only	
Activity Fee for field trip or on-site presenter	Cost of Activity	
Partial Day AM or PM 6:00am-12:00pm OR 12:00pm-6:00pm	\$27.75 per day	Consistent Schedules
	\$28.75 per day	Pick Your Day Schedules
	\$29.75 per day	Drop-In Care
Additional Fees as Needed		
Finder's Fee	\$5.00	
Late Payment Fee	\$25.00	
Late Schedule Fee <i>For Pick Your Day Schedules</i>	\$25.00	
Late Pick-Up Fee	\$5/First 10 minutes, \$1 per minute after the first 10 minutes.	
Registration Fees		
Registration (required fall and summer)	\$40.00 per child OR \$75 max per family	

Rockford Area Early Childhood Programs



2025-26 Staff Handbook



Rockford Area Early Childhood Programs is a
program of the Rockford Area Schools Community
Education Department.

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Introduction

Welcome to Rockford Early Childhood Programs; we are glad to have you as part of our team. The purpose of this handbook is to assist you in knowing more about the Early Childhood Programs, your responsibilities as staff, and Early Childhood policies and procedures.

Whether a staff of ECFE (Early Childhood Family Education) or SR (School Readiness (Launching Pad Preschool)), our first mission is to be a warm, welcoming and safe place where parents and children feel a sense of belonging and importance. We strive to provide this for all of our families and help it guide us in our work with them.

Please take some time to familiarize yourself with the contents of the Early Childhood Staff Handbook. The introduction includes general information specific to the Early Childhood Programs. Also included in the Handbook are important Personnel Policies. If you need further information, all Rockford Area School District policies can be found on the school district website, www.rockford.k12.mn.us. Since the Early Childhood Programs are part of the Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School, its handbook is included as well.

Philosophy

ECFE's Mission and Message: To strengthen families through education and to offer support for parents as they provide the best possible home environment for the healthy growth and development of their children. The task of parenting is important. ECFE recognizes and supports parents' understanding of their children, as well as their parental roles. What parents do to guide and nurture their own children along with their skills in working with others who share responsibility for their child's development (teachers, schools and other in the community) is critical to each child's future and the future of our nation.

ECFE/SR: We believe that a child learns best in an atmosphere of love, warmth and acceptance. Our teachers listen to children, allow them to take the initiative, and yet guide them in productive and non-competitive ways.

Our program is founded on the belief that all children have great potential, are curious, and interested in constructing their own learning. We encourage positive peer and social relations, development of critical thinking skills, and facilitate the development of self-esteem by fostering independence and problem-solving skills.

We further believe that parents are a child's first and primary teachers and we enhance and support parents in this important role.

It is important to remember that development is a journey, not a race. Children benefit from the individual, measured pacing of the journey, not from achieving developmental milestones at the earliest opportunity. We offer only

developmentally appropriate activities for the children and will not push beyond what they are comfortable doing.

Jean Piaget generally is recognized as the leader in the field of early childhood education in the research and understanding of a child's development. From ages two to seven, a child is developing many of the cognitive skills that are the foundation for all formal learning. Attempts to hurry a child's cognitive development are not worthwhile: Piaget's research documents that the stages of cognitive development cannot be skipped, nor is it possible to speed through them. While most children at the youngest ages are able to memorize and recite, these skills do not represent meaningful learning in the preschool years. In our setting, we encourage deep and complex thinking. This fosters the tendency in children to be curious, to wonder, investigate then to question, study, and analyze so they can think critically. This is true preparation for life-long learning. "Academics" are very much embedded within our daily work. They are found in both the ordinary moments of our day and in the project work that we may do.

Children have a real understanding only of that which they invent themselves, and each time we try to teach them something too quickly, we keep them from reinventing it themselves.

~ Jean Piaget

Curriculum

Our staff has been greatly influenced by training we have received in Reggio Emilia-Inspired Philosophy. We are members of the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance and the Minnesota Reggio Network. We attend Reggio networking sessions and continually explore literature about Reggio to broaden our knowledge.

Creative Curriculum is research based, aligned with the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs), and reflective of our Reggio-inspired approach to early education. Ours is an emergent curriculum – we are always learning and changing as we strive to ascertain what works best for providing children with tools for learning.

Together, the Reggio Philosophy and Creative Curriculum foster methods of teaching children that reflect “best practices” for age and developmentally-appropriate activities that are exciting, creative, and best encourage children’s growth and learning.

What is a Reggio-inspired approach?

Reggio Emilia, a city in northern Italy, is the home of what many people consider the best program in the world for young children, ages birth to six.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy sees the child as unique, strong, and full of potential; it envisions environments that are reflective of learning and relationships between children, teachers and parents.

The Reggio Emilia approach to education is committed to the creation of conditions for learning that will enhance and facilitate the child’s construction of his or her own powers of thinking through the fusion of all the expressive, communicative and cognitive languages.

The Reggio Emilia approach is based upon the following principles:

- The image of the child as curious, competent, and able to build theories.
- Shared discussions among children, among adults, and between adults and children are ways children represent what is learned. Through repeated conversations and revisiting ideas, children can reconstruct their earlier theories.
- The Reggio approach is about guiding children's ideas with provocations. There is collaboration on many levels. Parents are considered an essential collaborator and parent participation is desired and supported.
- The Reggio Emilia approach calls for the introduction of a wide array of creative media and activities as a means of enhancing children's creative, social, and cognitive development. The children represent their ideas and emotions through many "languages," including spoken and written words, visual arts, drama, music, movement, construction and more.
- The teacher's role within the Reggio Emilia approach is complex. Teachers co-explore the learning experience with the children to provoke ideas, problem solve, and foster critical thinking skills. Teachers help children see the connections in learning and experiences and help children express their knowledge through representational work.
- Teachers document children's processes of learning in many ways - through photographs, written records, journals, etc. Projects can emerge from children's ideas and/or interests, or by knowing what is of interest to children, teachers can introduce them: shadows, puddles, tall buildings, construction sites, nature, etc.
- Time is a critical factor but not measured by the clock or calendar. Children's own personal rhythms and own sense of time is considered important.

Staff

Teachers are typically licensed in early childhood education and are carefully selected by our interviewing committee. Teachers are required to attend workshops, conferences, and other in-service training opportunities to keep abreast of the best way to enhance children’s learning.

Coordinator: Tiffany Reinhard

Administrators: Melissa Joseph, Community Education Director

Advisory Council: Composed of community members, including parents with children in the program, the advisory council assists with direction, support, program development, public relations, and evaluation of the program.

Absences/Sick Days/Substitutes

When a sub is needed unexpectedly due to illness, sick child, etc., please call the Early Childhood Program (ECP) Coordinator. If it is after hours or you can’t reach the Coordinator in the office, call his/her cell phone and leave a message, or text him/her. Then, contact Teachers on Call to request a substitute, if unable to cover it internally. Often the Coordinator can assist you in securing a substitute for subsequent days, if needed, due to your own or your child’s illness. Sometimes the Coordinator can adjust staff or check on another staff’s availability.

When you are requesting to be gone for a family function, vacation, appointment, etc., approval must be gotten from the ECP Coordinator in advance of looking for a sub.

Our first priority is to staff our program, and sometimes you may not be aware of other circumstances that have evolved that may affect staffing. Though the Coordinator will try to be flexible and honor your requests, there could be a time when it may not be feasible due to extenuating circumstances. Once it is approved, then secure a substitute and let the Coordinator know who/when, etc.

Confidentiality

It is expected of all staff to be vigilant about confidentiality and data privacy. You will often be aware of sensitive information regarding children and their families and it is expected that this information will not be discussed except with the coordinator, the Community Ed Director, and/or other staff working directly with the child/family, on a need-to-know basis.

When speaking about an incident to a parent, always use the phrase, “the other child;” DO NOT USE NAMES.

Home or work phone numbers/addresses, etc., of staff, or parents and children should not be given out to anyone other than staff. Staff can take a message and relay the information needed to the other party.

The only exception is when a parent has given written permission to share phone numbers, email address, or mailing address with other children/families in the class.

Dress

Staff should wear clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for working with children. Appearance should be neat and clean.

Emergency School Closing/Late Start

If school is closed for any reason, then Preschool and ECFE classes (including evening) will also be canceled. If there is a two-hour late start, there will be no morning Preschool or morning ECFE classes; afternoon/evening classes will be in session as usual.

Every effort will be made to make-up any classes that have been cancelled, dependent on time permitting in the K-12 school calendar/ECFE session. Please refer to District Policy 806, district school closing procedure for more information.

Emergency Procedures

We will participate in fire, tornado, and safety drills so the children are familiar with the procedures.

The following procedures would be followed for these specific emergencies:

1. Tornado - designated place of safety in our building
2. Fire – designated emergency exit routes
3. Winter weather closing - children will be dismissed to parents/guardians, buses, or GKP according to emergency procedures outlined by parents on Emergency Dismissal forms.
4. Power failure in the building – the program will follow the direction of the Superintendent; children may be sent home.
5. Minor scrapes and scratches - school health staff have been trained in first aid to be able to deal with this type of medical care.
6. *Stranger in the building, or threat in the community* drills, referred to as "safety" drills, are practiced regularly with a lockdown procedure in place.
7. Missing child - staff will search the area while the coordinator/teacher contacts the parents. If necessary, police will be called.

Guidance Policy for Children

By noticing children behaving positively and commenting to them for this, the need for discipline is greatly reduced. We believe positive reinforcement, redirection of negative behavior, and an explanation of what is expected and why is the best and the easiest way of handling inappropriate behavior. Yet, at times, purposeful discipline becomes necessary for the good of the individual child and the other children in the program.

The following is the course of action that will be taken, if needed:

1. First time - identify the undesirable action to the child as being inappropriate.
2. Second time - reminder of rule.
3. Third time - brief exclusion from the group and/or brief loss of privileges. (Child is excluded from the group for a very short time in an observable location. This type of time out is not meant as punishment, but as an opportunity for the child to take time away from the activity that led to the disruption.)
4. If the inappropriate behavior continues, a parent-teacher conference will be requested to discuss alternative measures of guidance.

Referral:

The Launching Pad Preschool is designed to serve students ages three to five years old. It is a non-mandated community education preschool program. Though every effort is made to meet the educational needs of every student, if a child's behavioral, developmental or cognitive needs exceed the typical services offered to children in our program, then we will seek parental permission to begin the referral process for consultation and/or assessment to the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) team. This is rooted in our commitment to the success of all students by providing developmentally appropriate education to each one.

Gifts to Employees

Refer to District Policy 421

Employees are not allowed to solicit, accept, or receive a gift from a student, parent, or other individual or organization of greater than nominal value. Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to write letters and notes of appreciation or to give small tokens of gratitude.

Health Information

District #883 has a licensed school nurse on duty at all times. All immunizations must be current according to state law. A child in preschool must complete Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening (offered by the school district) prior to being enrolled in the program, within 90 days after the enrollment date, or when a child reaches the age of 3 years and 7 months. Parents should call our office to set up an appointment at 763-477-7500.

For a child's well-being and the protection of the other children, a child should be kept home if he/she has the following:

Red eyes	Heavy cough
Upset stomach	Ear ache
Open sores	Swollen glands
Fever	Diarrhea

Children should be fever free for 24 hours *without* the aid of medicine (Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, etc.)

before returning to school. Also, when the illness includes vomiting or diarrhea, a child should wait to return to school until it has been 24 hours since the last incident.

The classroom teacher or Coordinator is responsible for contacting a parent if there is a concern regarding a child coming to school without adhering to this policy. Respect for the parent and concern for the child and the child's classmates should always be conveyed.

If a child becomes ill at school, the teacher will notify the parents, or the contact person listed on the emergency contacts if the parents cannot be reached. The child should rest in the nurse's office, if possible, while waiting to be picked-up. If not possible, the child should rest in a quiet place in the classroom away from the other children. There may be a possibility of the child resting in the ECP Office, if staff is available.

If a contagious illness exists among the preschool children, please notify the ECP Office staff so appropriate notification can be sent home with the children. Please keep the ill child's name in confidence when addressing any concerns of other parents.

The district student health services office is staffed by a licensed nurse. Other health services may be provided to students under the direction and supervision of a licensed school nurse. In the event of an emergency, 911 will be notified along with the parent/guardian.

Medication

All prescription medications require a doctor's order and signed parent permission. The medication must be brought to the school in its original container with a label prepared by a pharmacist. This form must be completed annually (once per school year) and/or when a change in the prescription or requirements for administration occurs. Medication, with the exception of Epi-Pens, will be stored in a locked receptacle in the EC Office. Epi-Pens can be stored in the child's respective classroom.

On Time/Late Staff

All employees are expected to report to work on time. If you are going to be unexpectedly late, contact the ECP Coordinator immediately.

Photo ID's

Staff is required to wear a photo ID/name badge. Children and parents should be able to easily identify staff if they have a concern or question. These will be provided each year, though staff must have their photo taken when the all-school picture day takes place. If joining the staff during the year, please contact Payroll at the District Office for your photo and name badge.

Pick-Up for Preschool Children:

- Parents are requested to bring their child to the classroom no more than 10 minutes before scheduled

starting time. **However, if a student is at the door once the REAMS bell sounds for K-4 entry, students will be welcomed.** A child should not be dropped off outside the elementary school unless arrangements have been made previously with ECP staff.

- Parent must notify LPP if someone other than the parent will pick the child up from school on any one day or on a regular basis.
- Parents must notify LPP and transportation if their child is to get off the bus at any place other than the normal drop-off point. (A child may only be delivered to an area within the general bus route.) The transportation supervisor requests a three-day notice and parents are asked that they deviate from the normal bus route only in case of an emergency.
- Parents should pick their child up outside the classroom promptly at the scheduled release time.

Telephone/Copier/Computer/Fax

The use of cell phones or work phones should be kept to a minimum, be brief, and on an emergency basis during work/teaching time. The same is expected in regards to texting, IM, etc. Teaching time is defined as, “when children/parents are present.” Work time includes prep time before and after class, including time between classes, unless it is an employee’s break/lunch time. The copier/fax machine/computer should not be used for personal use.

Time Sheets/Pay Day

All staff will use SMARTer to sign-in and out during their work day. Changes/corrections need to be communicated in writing to the Coordinator by 3:30 PM on the 15th and last day of every month. If you have questions, please see the ECP Coordinator.

Title IX

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment. All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools.

More information about Title IX can be found at: <https://www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-ix>

Tobacco-Free Schools

Refer to District Policy 419

School district students and staff have the right to learn and work in an environment that is tobacco free. School policy is violated by any individual’s use of tobacco, tobacco-related devices, or electronic cigarettes in a public school, on school grounds, in any school-owned vehicles, or at any school events or activities.

Toileting Assistance

Two staff members should be present, if possible, to assist a child with his/her toileting issues. If two staff are not available, the staff person assisting the child will notify another staff member that they will be assisting a child with toileting needs. The staff person providing assistance should use the bathroom that is usually used by the children. Respectful and appropriate conversation and actions will be employed at all times with the child requiring assistance.

Acknowledgement Form

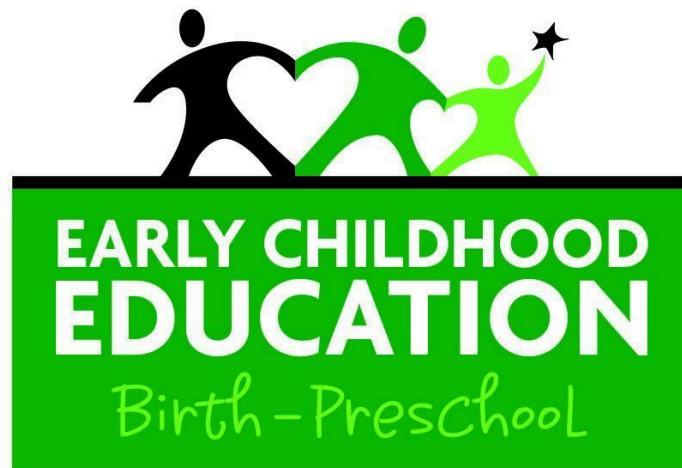
I have received a copy of the 2025-26 Rockford Area Early Childhood Programs Staff Handbook.

Staff Printed Name

Staff Signature

Date

The Launching Pad Preschool



2025-26 Parent Handbook



Launching Pad Preschool is a 4-Star rated Parent Aware Program. The highest rating offered, it reflects a commitment to high quality programming using research-based best practices, while preparing children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Rockford Area Early Childhood Programs is a program of the Rockford Area Schools Community Education Department.

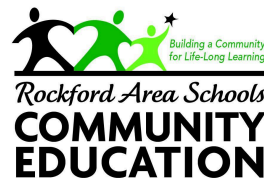


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Introduction

Welcome to the Launching Pad Preschool! The purpose of this handbook is to assist you in knowing more about this program offered through Rockford Community Education. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook. It includes information specific to the Launching Pad Preschool.

Tiffany Reinhard, Coordinator
reinhardt@rockford.k12.mn.us

Philosophy

We believe that a child learns best in an atmosphere of love, warmth and acceptance. Our teachers listen to children, allow them to take the initiative, and yet guide them in productive and non-competitive ways.

Our program is founded on the belief that all children have great potential, are curious, and interested in constructing their own learning. We encourage positive peer and social relations, development of critical thinking skills, and facilitate the development of self-esteem by fostering independence and problem-solving skills.

We further believe that parents are the child's first and primary teachers and we enhance and support the parents in this important role.

It is important to remember that development is a journey, not a race. Children benefit from the individual, measured pacing of the journey, not from achieving developmental milestones at the earliest opportunity. We offer only developmentally appropriate activities for the children and will not push beyond what they are comfortable doing.

Jean Piaget generally is recognized as the leader in the field of early childhood education in the research and understanding of a child's development. From ages two to seven, a child is developing many of the cognitive skills that are the foundation for all formal learning. Attempts to hurry a child's cognitive development are not worthwhile: Piaget's research documents that the stages of cognitive development cannot be skipped, nor is it possible to speed through them. While most children at the youngest ages are able to memorize and recite, these skills do not represent meaningful learning in the preschool years. In our setting, we encourage deep and complex thinking. This fosters the tendency in children to be curious, to wonder, investigate then to question, study, and analyze so they can think critically. This is true preparation for life-long learning. "Academics" are very much embedded within our daily work. They are found

in both the ordinary moments of our day and in the project work that we may do.

Children have a real understanding only of that which they invent themselves, and each time we try to teach them something too quickly, we keep them from reinventing it themselves. ~ Jean Piaget

Staff

Teachers are typically licensed in early childhood education and are carefully selected by our interviewing committee. Teachers are required to attend workshops, conferences, and other in-service training opportunities to keep abreast of the best way to enhance children's learning. Assistants are all parents and some have had children in our program. District #883 has a licensed school nurse on duty at all times.

Coordinator –Tiffany Reinhard

Children's Teachers - Michelle Anderson, DeAnn Lommel, BethAnn Brooks, Lindsey Stotts

Assistant Teachers - Lisa Feyen; Katelin Schroeder, Cathy Egbert, ~~Kimberly Johnson~~, Courtney Thorson.

Administrator: Melissa Joseph, Community Education Director

Advisory Council: Composed of community members, including parents with children in the program, the advisory council assists with direction, support, program development, public relations, and evaluation of the program. Please contact your child's teacher or the coordinator if you wish to serve on the Advisory Council.

Program Information

Enrollment: Each class has one teacher and one assistant and a maximum of 16-18 children.

Funding: Our program is supported by tuition fees from parents along with a small amount of funding from the state for tuition assistance purposes.

Location: Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School, 7650 County Road 50, Rockford, Minnesota, classrooms 209, 210, 211, 212, and 305.

Telephone Calls - Messages

The Early Childhood Programs phone number is 763-477-7500. All teachers have voice mail and you will be able to leave a message for your child's teacher. *If it is a very important message, such as a change in your child's dismissal routine, please speak to someone in the Early Childhood Office or REAMS office.*

Birthday Snacks

Please send nutritious foods rather than sweets. Since nutrition is one of the main components in our preschool program, **please do not send cake, cupcakes, cookies, candy, caramel-type popcorn, "fruit snacks," or other sweets.** State law does not allow homemade treats.

Hours:

Morning class: 8:05 - 10:45 AM

Afternoon class: 12:15 - 2:55 PM

All-day class: 8:05 AM - 2:55 PM

Days: Launching Pad Preschool ~~classes are scheduled for 60, 90, or 150 class sessions during the 2024-25 school year. The~~ days off due to no school are built into the tuition total, ~~so you are not losing any of the 60/90/150 days when there is no school.~~

School closings/delays: If school is closed for any reason, then preschool classes will also be canceled. If there is a two-hour late start, there will be no morning preschool; all day preschool will be 2 hours late and PM preschool will be held as usual.

Make-Up Days: ~~After the first 2,~~ when preschool is cancelled due to weather related events, Launching Pad Preschool will make-up as many preschool sessions as the K-12 school calendar and program calendar permits: ~~after the 2 cancellations.~~ As these occurrences are beyond our control, refunds will not be issued.

Transportation: Parents are expected to provide transportation or arrange for car-pooling. Free transportation is available if there is room on regularly scheduled district bus routes.

Children who ride the bus to and/or from school are met by the assistant teacher at the bus stop every morning and at mid-day. Teachers and assistants walk children to the individual buses each afternoon.

Snacks: Nutritious snacks will be served daily. We ask that parents help provide snack food to assist in keeping the cost of tuition down. Food will not be used as punishment or reward. Again, no sweet treats, please.

Field trips: Parents will be notified of any field trips and may be asked to volunteer to help supervise children. A small fee may be required for some field trips.

Clothing/backpack: Your child's clothing should be comfortable, washable, and designed so that he/she is generally able to manage toileting by him/herself. Classes go outside when the weather permits. Therefore sweaters, snowsuits, raincoats, caps, mittens and boots should be easy and big enough for the child to dress him/herself. Please clearly mark each item with the child's name for identification, particularly snow boots, snowsuits, jackets, etc. Your child will need to carry a large backpack so he/she can bring artwork, notices and other items to and from school.

Student Withdrawal: If you need to withdraw your child from Launching Pad Preschool, we require a written notice of 10 business days prior to your end date. Failure to do so will result in you being billed for the tuition of the required 10 business days.

Curriculum

Our staff has been greatly influenced by training we have received in Reggio Emilia curriculum. We are members of the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance and the Minnesota Reggio Network. We attend Reggio networking sessions and explore literature about the Reggio approach to early education.

Creative Curriculum is research based, aligned with the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs), and reflective of our Reggio-inspired approach to early education. Ours is an emergent curriculum – we are always learning and changing as we strive to ascertain what works best for providing children with tools for learning.

Together, the Reggio Philosophy and Creative Curriculum foster methods of teaching children that reflect “best practices” for age and developmentally-appropriate activities that are exciting, creative, and best encourage children’s growth and learning.

What is a Reggio-inspired approach?

Reggio Emilia, a city in northern Italy, is the home of what many people consider the best program in the world for young children, ages birth to six.

The Reggio Emilia philosophy sees the child as unique, strong, and full of potential and envisions environments that are reflective of learning and relationships between children, teachers and parents.

The Reggio Emilia approach to education is committed to the creation of conditions for learning that will enhance and facilitate the child’s construction of his or her own powers of thinking through the fusion of all the expressive, communicative and cognitive languages.

The Reggio Emilia approach is based upon the following principles:

- The image of the child as curious, competent, and able to build theories.
- Shared discussions among children, among adults, and between adults and children are ways children represent what is learned. Through repeated conversations and revisiting ideas, children can reconstruct their earlier theories.
- The Reggio approach is about guiding children's ideas with provocations. There is collaboration on many levels. Parents are considered an essential collaborator and parent participation is desired and supported.

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- Teachers document children's processes of learning in many ways - through photographs, written records, journals, etc. Projects can emerge from children's ideas and/or interests, or by knowing what is of interest to children, teachers can introduce them: shadows, puddles, tall buildings, construction sites, nature, etc.
- Time is a critical factor but not measured by the clock or calendar. Children's own personal rhythms and own sense of time is considered important.

Breakfast/Lunch:

During the 2023 Minnesota Legislative Session, lawmakers signed into law the Free School Meals program for students:

Eligible for 1 reimbursable breakfast, free of charge:

- AM classes and all-day classes

Eligible for 1 reimbursable lunch, free of charge:

- All-day classes

Even with this change, districts are still required to keep track of meals served to each individual child and families that qualify for benefits. We will continue to collect the Application for Educational Benefits. Students qualifying for benefits increases federal and state funding to support learning experiences for students in Rockford Area Schools. Qualifying for benefits also helps your family reduce fees in other areas of your child's school experience.

Parents may provide cold lunches and purchase milk for \$.60 each. Lunch is to be eaten in designated areas only. If your child brings his/her lunch:

- Make sure the lunch is clearly labeled.
- Low sugar and high fiber are important.
- Remember protein/vegetables/fruits/grains.
- Please don't send candy or more than one cookie.

If you intend to purchase milk, it is necessary to have funds available in your student's food service account. When you log into [Infinite Campus Parent Portal](#)* you will see the Food Service tab in the menu. On this tab you can view individual or family meal account balances, view daily meal purchases in real time, and sign

up to receive low balance e-mail notifications. You have the convenience of making online payments directly through [Infinite Campus Parent Portal](#).

All-Day Preschool

Children will have preschool in the morning and then there will be a lengthy break for lunch and a quiet time, or naptime, for those who choose to sleep. The afternoon will continue with another session of preschool that will be at a more relaxed pace, with time for enrichment activities and group time.

Please send a small blanket, one that can remain at school with your child for naptime. We will furnish a soft mat for your child, but a blanket from home will add to their comfort. Please put your child's name on the blanket.

Calendar

We follow the school year calendar of Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School, except that we begin later and end earlier, and offer mid-year parent-teacher conferences.

Conferences

Every family has a parent/child conference with the teacher before classes begin in September. Parents also have the opportunity to have a formal conference to discuss their child's progress in January. At the end of the year, each parent receives a summary report of his/her child's progress.

Daily electronic journals Emails

Teachers e-mail parents a recap of each day. ~~Parents who do not have e-mail service receive a paper copy of the e-mail.~~

Gifts to Employees

Refer to District Policy 421

Employees are not allowed to solicit, accept, or receive a gift from a student, parent, or other individual or organization of greater than nominal value.

Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to write letters and notes of appreciation or to give small tokens of gratitude.

Guidance Procedures

By noticing children behaving positively and praising them for this, the need for discipline is greatly reduced.

We believe positive reinforcement, redirection of negative behavior, and an explanation of what is expected and why is the best and easiest way of handling inappropriate behavior. Yet, at times, purposeful discipline becomes necessary for the good of the individual child and the other children in the program.

The following is the course of action that will be taken, if needed:

1. **First time** - identify the undesirable action to the child as being inappropriate.
2. **Second time** - reminder of rule.
3. **Third time** - brief "break-time" from the activity to calm down and/or help regulate oneself.
4. If the inappropriate behavior continues, a parent-teacher conference will be requested to discuss alternative measures of guidance.

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For your child's well-being and the protection of the other children, your child should be kept home if he/she has the following:

Red eyes	Heavy cough
Upset stomach	Ear ache
Open sores	Swollen glands
Fever	Diarrhea

Children should be fever free for 24 hours *without* the aid of medicine (Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, etc.) before returning to school. Also, when the illness includes vomiting or diarrhea, please wait to return to school until it has been 24 hours since the last incident.

If your child becomes ill at school, the teacher will notify the parents or the contact person on the emergency card if the parents cannot be reached. You should have someone who can care for your child if he/she cannot remain at school.

The district student health service is staffed by a licensed nurse. Other health services may be provided to students under the direction and supervision of a licensed school nurse. In the event of an emergency, 911 will be notified along with the parent/guardian.

Please notify us if your child has a contagious illness. The staff will notify you if a contagious illness exists among the preschool children.

All prescription medications require a doctor's order and signed parent permission. The medication must be brought to the school in its original container with a label prepared by a pharmacist. This form must be completed annually (once per school year) and/or when a change in the prescription or requirements for administration occurs. Medication, with the exception of Epi-Pens, will be stored in a locked receptacle in the EC Office. Epi-Pens can be stored in the child's respective classroom.

Attendance:

If your child will be absent from preschool, please call the attendance line at 763-477-7525 and leave a message.

Title IX

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment. All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools.

More information about Title IX can be found at:

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Tobacco-Free Schools

Refer to District Policy 419

School district students and staff have the right to learn and work in an environment that is tobacco free. School policy is violated by any individual's use of tobacco, tobacco-related devices, or electronic cigarettes in a public school, on school grounds, in any school-owned vehicles, or at any school events or activities.

Tuition/Fees

Tuition is divided into a **nine ten-payment plan and is due on the 1st of the month – all payments are the same regardless of school vacation days, conferences, etc.**

Payment months:

June, by the September conference, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, **and May.**

TUITION IS DUE ON THE 1st DAY OF EACH MONTH. A \$25.00 LATE FEE WILL BE ASSESSED FOR PAYMENTS MORE THAN 5 BUSINESS DAYS LATE. If your tuition is more than three weeks late, LPP reserves the right to

withdraw your child from the program if arrangements have not been made with the Coordinator. There is a non-refundable registration fee: \$50 for the first child - \$40 for the second child that is due with the application in order to process the registration.

If your child is absent for an extended time, you will still be responsible for preschool tuition, as we cannot offer that slot to anyone else unless you withdraw your child from the program.

Class options

Children must be at least 3 by 9/1/2025 for:

5 days/week (MTWThF) 8:05 AM–10:45 AM:
\$365/month.

**3 days/week (MWF) 8:05 AM–10:45 AM or
12:15 PM–2:55 PM:** \$250/month

**2 days/week (T/Th) 8:05 AM–10:45 AM or
12:15 PM–2:55 PM:** \$200/month.

2 days/week ALL DAY (T/Th) 8:05 AM–2:55 PM:
\$310/month.

Children must be at least 4 by 9/1/2025 for:

5 days/week ALL DAY (MTWThF) 8:05 AM–2:55 PM:
\$640/month

3 days/week ALL DAY (MWF) 8:05 AM–2:55 PM:
\$415/month.

Late fees: There is a \$25 late fee for tuition payments received more than 5 business days past the first of each month. There is a \$10 late fee for each 15 minutes a child is picked up late from preschool.

Drop-off/Pick-Up for Preschool children:

- Parents are requested to bring their child to the classroom no more than 10 minutes before scheduled starting time. A child should not be dropped off outside the elementary school on their own unless arrangements have been made previously with ECP staff.
- Parent must notify LPP if someone other than the parent will pick the child up from school on any one day, or on a regular basis.
- Parents must notify LPP and transportation if their child is to get off the bus at any place other than the normal drop-off point. (A child may only be delivered to an area within the general bus route.) The transportation supervisor requests a three-day notice and parents are asked that they deviate from the normal bus route only in case of an emergency.
- Parents should pick their child up outside the classroom promptly at the scheduled release time.

Busing

Bus transportation to and from preschool is available if:

- 1) The pick-up/drop-off point is on the regular bus route and,
- 2) There is space available on the bus. Busing policy permits only one address for pick-up each day and one address for drop-off each day.

Parent Participation

We welcome parents into our classrooms as observers and/or helpers. Please call your child's teacher to arrange a time for your visit.

What we expect from you:

- **Please pay tuition promptly on the 1st of the month. You may pay online on *ELEYO*, or by check or cash in our office.**
- Talk to the teacher or coordinator about any concerns you have about the program, your child, or related matters.
- Inform the EC office of any changes in phone number (work or home), address, or emergency information.
- Make sure your child has an adequate night's rest before sending him/her to school.
- Assess your child's health before sending him/her to school. (See Health Information above.)
- Read any correspondence via email or sent home with your child as you check the backpack each day.
- Label your child's personal items.
- No expensive or fragile items should be sent to school with your child - these may get broken or lost.
- Arrange to have an ill child picked up from the health office promptly.

What you can expect from us:

- An atmosphere of warmth, love and acceptance.
- Individual, positive attention for each child.
- A conscientious and thoroughly planned program with age-appropriate activities.
- A pleasant, safe, well-supervised, and healthy environment.
- Information sent home on a regular basis about activities, special events, or if there are concerns about a particular situation.
- Confidentiality of all information pertaining to children or families.
- Opportunities for you to be involved in your child's education.
- Children who ride buses will be met at the buses in the AM and be placed individually on buses in the PM.
- Our staff is required by law to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

Sample Daily Schedule

A daily schedule and on-going documentation of the children's experiences are displayed in each classroom as well as our common areas. Parents are strongly encouraged to pay attention to the displays as they provide a glimpse into the inner life of the classroom community. Children learn about time from the daily, predictable routines that are established.

A sample of the daily schedule may include:

5-10 minutes

ARRIVAL

Free choice time

15-20 minutes

MEETING

Hello, sharing, story time and explain new activities

80 Minutes

PLAYFUL LEARNING

Hands-on activities, explore learning stations; projects

HEALTHY SNACK & WATER

Wash hands, social interaction, conversation, and manners. Children choose snack as a self-directed, independent activity

15 minutes

MUSIC & MOVEMENT CIRCLE

Songs, music, finger plays

10-15 minutes

GROSS MOTOR

Outdoors or play in large motor room; extra story or songs

10 minutes

DISMISSAL

Get ready, good-byes, pick-up or buses

Math: Hands-on activities provide concrete experiences with counting, matching, sequencing, weight, size, volume, and one-on-one correspondence; children also experiment with shapes and manipulatives to learn classifying, sorting and predicting.

Interest centers for developmentally appropriate activities:

Creative: Art, music, building blocks and dramatic play.

Literacy: Writing tools, paper, alphabet, books, story writing and documenting.

Science: Exploration, natural science, water/sand experimentation; "How?" "What?" "Why?" "Where?" "How much?"

Music: Experimenting with music, singing, listening, creating, performing, movement exploration, rhythms, playing instruments and exposure to many types of music.

Large muscle activity: A large muscle room and outdoor play area offer many opportunities for running, climbing, jumping, sliding, riding and balancing.

Acknowledgement Form

I have received a copy of the 2025-26 Launching Pad Preschool Parent Handbook.

Student Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date



BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK

2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR



OUR MISSION

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

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INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared as a guide for current board members and prospective board candidates on the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the Rockford Area Schools Board of Education. It is also intended to inform the general community on how the Board fulfills professional responsibilities.

BOARD POLICY GOVERNANCE

Like many school districts in the state of Minnesota and around the nation, the Rockford board utilizes the tenets of policy and governance to support its work and to assist it in defining the roles of the Board and the mission, vision, and values of the District. It is the Board's role with direction from the community to set policy, develop clear expectations for results, and to evaluate progress. The Superintendent, with the assistance of the district leadership team, carries out the district's daily operations in alignment with board policies and expectations. This allows the board to maintain a system-wide focus and supports an appropriate distinction between policy, management, and administration.

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

The community's voice is most directly heard in their vote for whom they select to represent them. *Each board member represents the whole district.* As elected representatives, Board members are responsible for making many decisions on behalf of the community. There are just a handful of exceptions where the board is allowed/required, by state law, to conduct a community-wide vote. Examples of this provision are when the school board moves forward with a levy referendum to raise taxes in the community to support the ongoing operation of the district and when the board may decide to move forward with a bond referendum to increase taxes to improve or expand district facilities or capital projects.

LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY 2025-2026

Eric Gordee- Chair
612-251-1557
eric.gordee@rockford883.org

Jessica Johnson- Vice Chair
612-709-1221
jessica.johnson@rockford883.org

Chris Morgan- Treasurer
320-333-4497
chris.morgan@rockford883.org

Jamie Hillstrom- Clerk
952-807-2722
jamie.hillstrom@rockford883.org

Dr. Beth Praska- Director
763-360-7329
beth.praska@rockford883.org

Kevin Sjodin- Director
651-246-2718
kevin.sjodin@rockford883.org

BOARD COMMITTEES



ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS

SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEES AND AD HOC COMMITTEES

SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEES		2025
1	FINANCE COMMITTEE	Morgan
		Gordee
		Sjodin
2	POLICY COMMITTEE	Johnson
		Hillstrom
		Praska
3	DISTRICT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE	Gordee
		Morgan
		Praska
4	NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE	Johnson
		Sjodin
		Hillstrom
SCHOOL BOARD AD HOC COMMITTEES		2025
5	FACILITIES COMMITTEE	Gordee
		Morgan
6	CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE	Johnson
		Hillstrom
7	CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE	Praska
		Gordee
8	COMMUNITY EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD	Morgan
		Sjodin
9	COMMITTEE AT-LARGE	Johnson
		Hillstrom
		Sjodin
10	COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE	Gordee
		Hillstrom
		Sjodin
SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE		2025
11	MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE (MSHSL)	Sjodin
		Hillstrom
12	CHAMBER COMMITTEE	Hillstrom
		Sjodin
13	LEGISLATIVE/MSBA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY	Hillstrom
		Gordee
14	ASSOCIATION OF METRO SCHOOL DISTRICTS	Gordee
		Johnson
15	MEEKER & WRIGHT SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE (MAWSECO)	Johnson
		Sjodin
16	NORTHWEST SUBURBAN INTEGRATION SCHOOL DISTRICT (NWSISD)	Gordee
		Praska
17	SAFF	Hillstrom
18	MREA REPRESENTATIVE	Praska

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Superintendent - Dr. Jeff Ridlehoover

763-477-9165 Ext. 4002

jeff.ridlehoover@rockford883.org

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent - Courtney Neibert

763-477-9165 Ext. 4004

courtney.neibert@rockford883.org

Director of Business Operations - Mike McNulty

763-477-9165 Ext. 4006

mike.mcnulty@rockford883.org

Director of Technology - Jeff Kienitz

763-477-7540 Ext. 4008

jeff.kienitz@rockford883.org

Director of Community Education - Melissa Joseph

763-477-4563 Ext. 3804

melissa.joseph@rockford883.org

Consultant CFO - Bridget Peterson

bridget.peterson@rockford883.org

THE STORY OF THE ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our History

Rockford Area Schools have a rich history and storied tradition, originating in 1856, two years before Minnesota became a state! From our earliest days, until the present, we have continued to educate and serve district residents with a commitment of strong academics and a comprehensive educational program that encompasses arts, activities, and the three magnet school programs offered today. For more information, and a detailed description of the history of Rockford Area Schools, please visit <https://www.rockford883.org/district/history>.

Rockford Area Schools Today

The Rockford School District encompasses over 42.43 square miles. The district has a Pre-K through twelfth grade enrollment of approximately 1680 students and a total district population of 9,450 residents. Rockford Area Schools serves all or a portion of the communities of Buffalo, Rockford, Greenfield, and Corcoran and is located in Hennepin and Wright counties.

STRATEGIC PLAN

District Mission (Our Core Purpose)

In partnership with our communities and families, Rockford Area Schools provides challenging opportunities to engage, inspire, and educate globally-minded citizens.

Our Vision (What we Intend to Create)

Rockford Area Schools provides a supportive, rigorous, and relevant learning culture producing courageous learners prepared to enter a global society.

Our Core Values (What Drives Our Words and Actions)

- Excellence: To be our best, expect our best; to be inspired daily to become the very best we can be
- Students First: A safe, healthy environment to challenge, engage and inspire all students
- Community: It's about all of us, all the time
- Integrity: Align actions and words with values and beliefs while respecting differences
- Stewardship: Care and responsibility with our resources including natural and social environments
- Student Experience: All students have access to engage in a rich arts and academics environment, and an abundance of extracurricular opportunities

Strategic Directions (Drivers of Our Continuous Improvement)

Student Achievement and Growth

- Elevate instruction through quality curriculum and professional development, to provide our students with a robust schooling experience that encourages them to reach their full potential.
- Rationale: To provide each and every student with a comprehensive education that provides opportunities to pursue their own personal/professional goals and life aspirations.

Healthy and Supportive Learning Environment

- Definition: Promote respect and collaboration at all levels to foster secure relationships where people feel valued and safe, empowering them to share new and innovative ideas and advocate for their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.
- Rationale: People do better when they feel better.

Community, School, and Family Partnerships

- Develop supportive and trusting relationships through community outreach and partnerships that encourage engagement that drives school and community growth.
- Rationale: Community and family engagement drives school success and enrollment. Partnerships where there is mutual trust and support helps to foster this involvement.

Culture of Collective Purpose

- Definition: Through interconnectedness and interdependence, we create a school community where each person belongs, contributes, and feels a sense of ownership.

- Rationale: To create a culture of connectedness where each individual understands their unique value and vital role as part of the collective entity.

Stewardship of Resources

- Managing our resources in a responsible and ethical way by effectively investing in our people, infrastructure, and finances.
- Rationale: To create systems and structures that allow our resources to be maximized and provide transparency and trust throughout the school community.

LISTING OF DISTRICT FACILITIES/SCHOOLS

Facilities Maps

Rockford Area Schools District Office

- 6051 Ash Street | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-9165
- Fax 763-477-5833

Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School (REAMS)

- 7650 County Road 50 | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-5837
- Fax 763-477-5025
- Principal: Brenda Nyhus
- Principal email: brenda.nyhus@rockford883.org
- Serves grades PreK-4

Rockford Middle School – Center for Environmental Studies (RMS-CES)

- 6051 Ash Street | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-5831
- Fax 763-477-5832
- Principal: Paul Warzecha
- Principal email: paul.warzecha@rockford883.org
- Serves grades 5-8

Rockford High School - IB (RHS)

- 7600 County Road 50 | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-5846
- Fax 763-477-6123
- Principal: Paul Menard
- Principal email: paul.menard@rockford883.org
- Serves grades 9-12

Rockford Community Center (RCC)

- 7650 County Road 50 | Rockford, MN 55373
- Ph. 763-477-5294
- Director of Community Education: Melissa Joseph
- email: melissa.joseph@rockford883.org

Requirements for School Board Candidates

School District #833 Board of Education members are elected officials. Elections are held in November of even-numbered years. To avoid having all six seats up for election simultaneously, the seats are scheduled for election on an alternating basis, with three seats open one year and the remaining three being open two years later. This pattern and process then repeats itself.

Eligibility Requirements (Source: *Minnesota School Boards Association*)

To be eligible for a School Board seat, you must be:

- At least 21 years old
- An eligible voter
- A district resident for at least 30 days prior to the election/appointment
- Not a convicted sex offender

Term of Office

Board members are elected to four-year terms commencing on January 1 of the year following the November election and ending on December 31, four years later. A member who has been appointed to fill the unfinished term of a member will need to run for election depending on when they were appointed. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms a member can serve.

Filling Vacancies (Source: *MN Statute 123B.09*)

A vacancy on the Board shall occur when a member dies, resigns, or ceases to be a resident of District #833. In addition, if a member of the Board of Education is unable to serve on the Board and attend its meetings for ninety (90) days or more because of illness or prolonged absence from the District, the Board may, at any regular or special meeting thereof, through resolution declare a vacancy to exist. All vacancies will be filled according to Minnesota Statutes.

The term of a member elected during a special election shall not exceed the term of the member they are replacing. Nor can the term of a Board of Education member be lengthened by the Member's resignation and subsequent selection by the Board.

Minnesota Statute requires that once the Board approves an appointment, the appointed board member cannot be seated until 30 days after the appointment.

STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL BOARD LEADERSHIP

(Source: *MSBA 2017 and TeamWorks International*)

School boards are most effective when members focus on the big picture: creating policy, setting goals, and engaging stakeholders, all with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. When boards focus on administrative issues, school districts suffer. Divided boards lead to a divided community, Rockford Board members vote according to district interests as they interpret, listen, and seek to understand the diverse perspectives of individuals and group interests on any issue or situation.

The Rockford Board strives for excellence in governance, operates in partnership with the Superintendent, strives for excellence in management, and partners for excellence in consultation with students, families, the general public, and staff.

Standard 1: Conduct and Ethics

The School Board, as a whole, provides leadership to the community on behalf of the school district by conducting its business in a fair, respectful, legal, and responsible manner.

An effective, high-performing school board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

1. Recognizes that the School Board team consists of school board members and the Superintendent and evaluates its performance at least annually.
2. Takes full responsibility for its activity and behavior, at and away from the school board table.
3. Encourages its members to express their individual opinions, respect others' opinions, and vote according to their convictions.
4. Speak with one voice after reaching a decision.
5. Spending time on board governance work rather than staff work – focuses on the ends and not the means.
6. Provide for orientation, onboarding, and ongoing training for all School Board members.
7. Follow established policies, including the chain of command, by directing families, members of the general public, and staff to the appropriate person to resolve their concern.
8. Set an example of respectful and civil leadership.

Standard 2: Vision

The School Board in close collaboration with the Superintendent and with community input, envisions the educational future of the community and then formulates the goals, defines the outcomes, and sets the course for the school district.

An effective and high-performing School Board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

1. Use clear, focused, attainable, and measurable goals and outcomes to support gains in student achievement.

2. Develop a multi-year plan, which includes well-crafted school district belief statements, a mission statement, a vision statement, strategic directions, and an annual district operational plan (DOP) with goals and objectives that enable the school board to evaluate school district performance.
3. Regularly monitor the district operational plan (DOP) to evaluate progress toward goal achievement and school district success.
4. Ensure that the school district belief statements, mission statement, vision statement, strategic directions, and operational plan goals and objectives are reflected in School Board policies, mirrored in the budget planning and implementation efforts, and supported district-wide.
5. Communicate the strategic directions and progress on the annual operational plan goals to the community.

Standard 3: Structure

To achieve its vision, the School Board establishes organizational and physical structures for student and staff success.

An effective, high-performing School Board strives to meet the following benchmarks:

1. Create organizational and physical structures in which all students and staff have the resources and support to maximize achievement and success. The School Board creates the conditions for success throughout the district.
2. Advocate and provide for learning through a rigorous curriculum, effective technology, and a safe and secure environment.
3. Select and employ one person – the Superintendent – as the school district’s chief executive officer to lead and manage the school district.
4. Hold the Superintendent accountable for school district performance and compliance with written school board policy.
5. Delegate the authority to the Superintendent to recommend and evaluate all school district staff within the standards established through written school board policies.
6. Accept ultimate responsibility for the care, management, fiscal oversight, and control of the district while understanding that the day-to-day operations will be conducted by the staff.

Standard 4: Accountability

The School Board is accountable to the community for constantly monitoring the conditions affecting the school district as a whole. The School Board and individual members are also accountable to themselves, students, families, other Board members, the Superintendent, and staff.

An effective, high-performing School Board strives to meet the following benchmarks.

1. Recognize the duty to itself and the community to determine whether the authority delegated to the Superintendent is being used as intended.

2. The School Board shall engage in a self-evaluation process at least annually to determine how successfully they have performed in meeting the expectations established in district policies, the district mission statement, vision statement, core values, strategic directions, and district operational plan.
3. Evaluate the Superintendent's performance annually.
4. Use student achievement data and other agreed-upon indicators as the basis for assessing progress toward school district goals and compliance with School Board policies and state and federal laws.
5. Recognize the distinction between "monitoring data" (data used by the school board to address accountability) and "management data" (data used by staff for making operational decisions).

Standard 5: Advocacy and Communication

The School Board advances its vision at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

An effective, high-performing School Board strives to meet the following benchmarks.

1. Focus on community-wide concerns and values that best support student achievement and a positive daily student experience rather than being overly influenced by special interests.
2. Develop communication strategies to build trust between the School Board and the Superintendent, staff, students, and community.
3. Utilize a public relations strategy that supports the flow of information in/out of the district.
4. Engage and build relationships with both public and private stakeholders.
5. Advocate on local, state, and national levels.

In general, Board members are expected to follow a code of ethics that will guide their decision-making as it relates to the unique expectations and needs of the Rockford Area Schools. MN Statute 123B.09 as well as the District's Code of Ethics Policy 209 which expectations, functions, and legal obligations for board members: Source ISD #883 Policy 209.

EXPECTATIONS OF A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Source: School District #833 Policy 209, Code of Ethics

Norm of Practice for School Board Member Communications AROUND ISSUES OR SCHOOL RELATED BUSINESS

(References to Minnesota Policy, Statute, and Open Meeting Law)

1. Email from Superintendent of Schools to the Entire Board

- Response Protocol: Board members should not reply to all as this could inadvertently create a "meeting" under Minnesota's Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. § 13D.01). Any response should be directed privately to the superintendent or board chair/vice chair.
- Discussion: Discussions that require board deliberation must take place in an open meeting to comply with Open Meeting Law, ensuring that any substantive discussions remain public.

2. Email from a Staff member, Parent or Community Member to the Board

- Response Protocol: Individual board members should not respond. A formal response should come only from the Superintendent of Schools or Board Chair/Vice Chair.
- Followup response Protocol: When any party communicates with the board, the superintendent or the board chair will promptly inform all board members of follow up communication. The follow-up will include minimum necessary detail to ensure that the board remains focused on governance while clearly delineating that management responsibilities rest with the superintendent. This approach reinforces accountability and keeps the board aligned with its strategic role.
- Inclusion: If any person is mentioned in your communication, they should be included in the response.
- Compliance: In compliance with Minnesota's Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. § 13D.01), avoid engaging in discussions via email that may constitute board deliberation. Forward the matter to administrative channels for further resolution.

3. Email from a Staff Member to an individual Board Member

- Response Protocol: Politely acknowledge the message and include the appropriate leadership in your reply. Board members should refrain from engaging in operational matters, which are the purview of the administration. Ensure compliance with Minn. Stat. § 13D.01 to prevent any communication from becoming an inadvertent "serial meeting."
- Inclusion of Superintendent, Board Chair, or Vice Chair: The superintendent and/or board chair/vice chair should be included in the response to ensure transparency.
- Inclusion: If another person is mentioned in your response, they should be included in the response.

4. Email from a Parent About a School or Student Issue to an individual Board Member

- Response Protocol: Board members should acknowledge the concern but direct parents to the appropriate school-level administrators for individual issues, respecting the chain of command. Avoid discussing specific student matters, in compliance with privacy laws such as FERPA, and adhere to Open Meeting Law by ensuring discussions that require board action are conducted publicly.
- Inclusion of Superintendent, Board Chair, or Vice Chair: Responses should include the superintendent and/or board chair/vice chair to ensure proper channels handle the issue.
- Inclusion: Any individual mentioned in your communication should also be included in the response.

5. Email from a Community Member to an individual Board Member

- Response Protocol: Acknowledge the communication, referring the community member to appropriate district channels (e.g., district office or board meeting) for further discussion. Avoid engaging in direct decision-making through private communication, as this could violate Minn. Stat. § 13D.01 if discussions amount to board deliberation outside of a public meeting.
- Inclusion of Superintendent, Board Chair, or Vice Chair: Any response should include the superintendent or board chair/vice chair to ensure proper follow-up.
- Inclusion: Any individual mentioned in your communication should also be included in the response.

6. Phone Call or Personal Conversation Related to the District

- Response Protocol: Listen respectfully and direct the individual to proper channels. Document significant points and share them with board leadership if necessary. Ensure that no commitments are made that could bypass the board's governance process. Personal conversations should not be used for board deliberations to comply with Minnesota's Open Meeting Law.
- Inclusion of Superintendent, Board Chair, or Vice Chair: Any follow-up or formal action resulting from the conversation should include the superintendent and/or board chair/vice chair.
- Inclusion: Any individual mentioned in your communication should also be included in the response.

7. Messaging from Staff, Parent, or Community.

- Response Protocol: Acknowledge the communication, in response alert the sender of the appropriate channel for written communications are email and to please send your message to district email.

In all scenarios, board members must adhere to Minnesota Open Meeting Law (Minn. Stat. § 13D.01), which requires that board deliberations on school district matters be conducted openly and in a public forum. Any communication where a person is mentioned should include that person in the response. Additionally, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) should guide any communications involving student information to ensure privacy compliance.

8. Getting stopped in public (school event, grocery store, garage sale, etc.) by a concerned staff, student or parent.

-Response Protocol: Check the name, status, and get a phone number for contact. Always seek to identify the situation or interest, but generally, do not agree or commit to resolve personally.

Redirect the staff member to their supervisor, and notify the Superintendent's Office. CAUTION: Do not get involved in employment/contractual issues.

Redirect parent to teacher/principal/administrator as appropriate and notify the Superintendent's Office. CAUTION: Don't attempt to deal with issues of groups, only the individual parent.

Redirect the student to their principal and notify the Superintendent's Office. CAUTION: If a safety concern is raised, follow district procedures.

Overall:

- Do not agree to confidentiality or commit to limiting your options of notification.
- Be available for contact in the future if redirecting does not address the concern.
- Be alert to patterns of like concerns, and if present, notify the Superintendent's Office.
- If the concern raises governance or political questions/concerns, contact the Board Chair in addition to the Superintendent's Office.

9. Information about yourself, the school board, or the school district is incorrectly referenced in a social media post

-Response Protocol: CAUTION! As a School Board member, it is not advised to engage in social media debates and criticisms.

Inclusion of the the Board Chair and the Superintendent's Office: Make them aware of the issue so that, if warranted, appropriate district staff can quickly provide factual information on the social media platform. Also, it may be determined that legal counsel and/or law enforcement may be contacted if there is a concern regarding confidentiality or safety.

Ideally, the school district will have staff and community advocates who will participate in social media groups regularly to communicate district information and monitor news and activity that pertains to the school district.

10. Having a concern or complaint as a school board member

-Response Protocol: Contact the Board Chair and the Superintendent directly, preferably in person or by phone to express your specific concern. Don't engage in serial meetings with other board members (a violation of the Open Meeting Law). Be clear as to the nature of your concern, is it about another board member, an administrator, a staff member, a policy, or a current issue before the board? Be clear as to:

1. What you have experienced.
2. What your thoughts are about the issue?
3. What are your feelings about the issue and the circumstances related to it?
4. What do you want to see happen to address your concern?

Identify what in your concern is governance work and what is management work.

Seek to increase your understanding, with an assumption of trust and competence for your board colleagues and district staff.

Don't represent other individual's interests or other group interests as your own.

Don't raise issues as a surprise in work sessions or business meetings. Allow the Board Chair and Superintendent time to research and prepare for a board discussion, if warranted.

11. Having a disagreement with a report or presentation to the Board?

Response Protocol: Submit questions and concerns to the Superintendent's Office following the existing Board protocols. Reflect and identify the specific reasons for your concern/s. Request a meeting with the Superintendent to discuss your concern/s. Do not surprise administrators or board colleagues in business meetings or work sessions with your disagreements and/or concern/s. Praise publicly and confront privately.

Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism in Meetings:

- Attend all School Board meetings, including work sessions, committee meetings, Board retreats, and required professional development sessions.
- Come to meetings prepared for discussion of the agenda items.
- Listen to the opinions and views of others including, but not limited to other school board members, administration, staff, students, and community members.
- Whenever possible (and as soon as possible), email the Superintendent and Chair with questions or concerns that arise when reviewing materials for a meeting, along with any errors that you may notice. This will allow the administration to prepare and address the questions in their presentations, along with correcting any errors in advance of the meeting.
- Vote your conscience after informed discussion unless abstaining because of a conflict of interest.

- Support the decision of the Board even if it differs from your position concerning the issue.
- Recognize the integrity of your predecessors and associates and show appreciation and respect for their work.
- Be motivated by a desire to provide the best possible education for the students of our district.
- Consistently remind yourself about the proper duties and functions of a school board member.

The Functions and Work of a School Board Member:

- Focus on governance and policy work as much as possible.
- Remember, your responsibility is to set policy – not to implement policy.
- Consider yourself a trustee of public education and do your best to protect, conserve, and lead the work.
- Recognize that your responsibility, exercised through the actions of the school board as a whole, is to see that the school district is effectively managed and operated – not to manage it yourself.
- Work in partnership with the Superintendent/chief executive.
- Delegate the implementation and management of School Board decisions to the Superintendent.
- Develop new district policies as needed and review existing Board policies on a scheduled basis.
- Develop a vision for the district along with strategic directions to guide the work of the board and administration.
- Collaborate with the Superintendent to develop the priority goals for the annual district operational plan.
- Establish a plan for consistently monitoring progress in reaching the goals in the operational plan.
- Align the annual budget and allocation of resources with the priorities identified in the annual operational plan.
- Ensure that facilities are safe, and secure and meet the needs of students and staff.
- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders.
- Collaborate with community partners.
- Advocate for preK–12 public education at the local, state, and national levels.
- Provide by levy of tax, necessary funds for the operation of the school district.
- Approve and/or negotiate contracts with employee groups and with other entities for services appropriate and necessary for the operation of the school district.
- Hire and annually appraise the Superintendent.
- Perform other acts as the School Board shall deem reasonable and necessary for the operation and governance of the school district.
- Commit to ongoing professional development both as individual board members and collectively as a board.

Legal Obligations of a School Board Member:

- Comply with all federal, state, and local laws related to work as a school board member.
- Comply with all school district policies as adopted by the School Board.
- Abide by the rules and regulations as promulgated by the Minnesota Department of Education and other state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over school districts.
- Recognize that school district business may be legally transacted only in an open meeting of the School Board.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and refrain from using a school board position for personal gain.
- Take no private action that will compromise the school board or administration.
- Guard the confidentiality of information that is protected under applicable law.

ADDRESSING SCHOOL BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY AND SELF-EVALUATION

The Board and each of its members must be committed to faithful compliance with the provisions of the board's policies. Failure to deal with violations of its policies risks the loss of public confidence in the Board's ability to govern effectively. In the event of a member's violation of policy or other forms of misconduct, the board shall address the issue by using the following steps:

1. Conversation in a private setting between the offending member and the school board Chair or other individual members; such conversation will be reported to the balance of the board.
2. Discussion in a public meeting between the offending member and the full school board.
3. Public censure, by simple majority vote, of the offending member of the school board, as well as removal from committees and leadership positions, to which the member has been appointed or elected.
4. Removal from the School Board for proper cause by a concurrent vote of at least four members. The Board member to be removed will be duly notified of the time and place of the meeting for which the vote is to be taken and for the reasons for the proposed removal. The Board member will be given an opportunity to be heard in defense against the removal (MN 123.B.09; Subd. 9).

NOTE: Most Board member issues and situations are intended to fall into Category 1. Categories 2, 3, and 4 are intended for extreme and/or repeated instances of violations where Category 1 has not resulted in a change in member behaviors.

School Board Self Evaluation:

Effective School Board leadership practice recommends that a board go through a process of self-evaluation on at least an annual basis. Self-evaluation is a proactive step that a School Board can take to hold themselves collectively accountable for monitoring their ongoing effectiveness. The purpose of the self-evaluation is to provide the board with an opportunity to reflect on their work over the previous year and identify areas where they could benefit from further discussion and/or training. Suggested components of the self-evaluation process are:

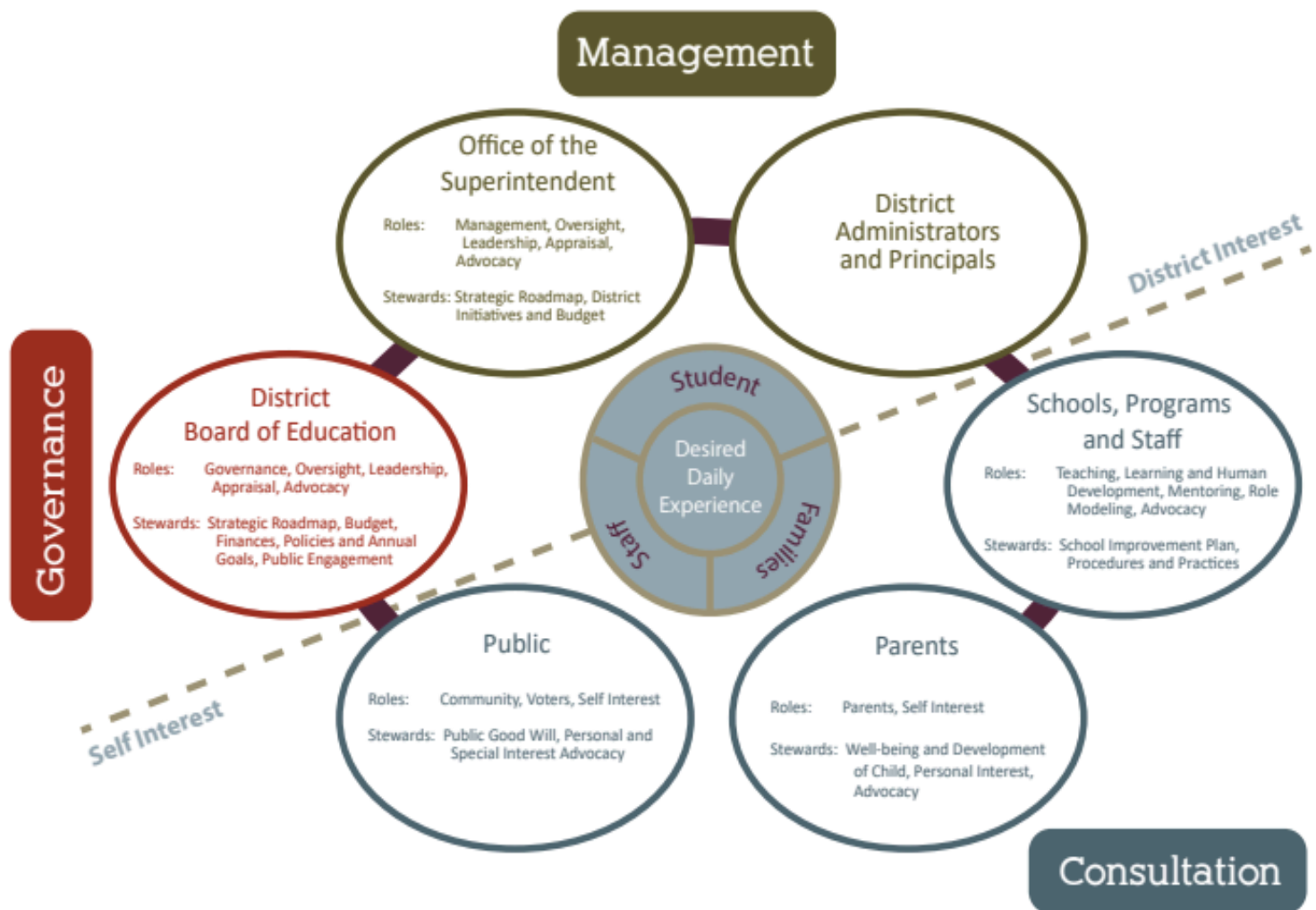
- Collectively identifying the most important categories of board work in the previous year (or those categories that have been previously identified as high priorities).
- Board members are allowed to individually and with anonymity to respond to a survey regarding these categories. NOTE: This information is typically sent to the administrative assistant, who supports the school board, to be collated and then all responses are shared with board members.
- A work session is then scheduled for the Board in which discussion can take place to identify themes that have emerged from the survey.
- Based on this discussion an action plan is developed to address the issue/s which have been identified.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARDS

Source: MSBA; Center for Public Education, 2019

- Effective School Boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.
- Effective School Boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
- Effective School Boards are accountability-driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
- Effective School Boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communication structure to inform and engage internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
- Effective School Boards are data-savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
- Effective School Boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.
- Effective School Boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each form their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
- Effective School Boards participate in team development and training, sometimes with their Superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values, and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Rockford Area Schools operate under the tenants of the Educational Leadership Support Systems Framework, created and shared by *Teamworks International* (outlined below). This framework places the desired daily experience of students at the center and outlines the parameters and partnership of effective governance, management, and consultation.



ROLES OF THE SCHOOL BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION

Source: TeamWorks International

While there is some degree of overlap in roles and responsibilities, it is more important to understand the difference between the groups, especially in teams of authority.

Governance, Management, and Consultation:

Acting as a group, the **School Board** has the sole authority (no other entity has it) of school district **governance** and the board has six primary responsibilities:

- Create the conditions in the district for all students to be successful and for all staff to be able to do their best work.
- District governance and policy review and development.
- Operational performance oversight and organizational direction.

- Board governance policy.
- Superintendent relations.
- Public engagement, community relations, and advocacy for public education.

Roles Related to Board Responsibilities:

- Establishing, reviewing, and updating policies based on legislative changes and recommendations from the Superintendent.
- Hiring and evaluating the Superintendent, the chief administrator, and the only employee whom the Board supervises.
- Addressing questions and concerns about items on the Board/s agendas and/or the Superintendent.
- Annually approving budget parameters, and the subsequent annual overall budget established within the parameters.
- Identifying decisions that require community engagement and directing the administration to seek input and/or feedback before board action.
- Advocating for students and the school district with legislators.
- Approving policies, as recommended by the Superintendent, that will support/guide the management and operation of the school district.
- Working with the Superintendent to establish goals aligned with the district's strategic directions and monitoring progress toward the attainment of those goals.

*The above roles are primary examples and are not intended to be a full and complete list of all roles and responsibilities of the Board of Education.

District administration has the sole authority (no other entity has it) of school district **management** and the administration has six primary responsibilities:

- Resource management: financial, human and physical.
- Instructional leadership at the district and principal levels.
- Performance management & appraisal and professional development.
- Continuous improvement.
- Aligning procedures and practices with district policy.
- Relationships with parents, community members, and staff.

Roles Related to administrative responsibilities:

- Implement policy and make recommendations for policy updates and changes.
- Hiring, supervising, and evaluating all staff and all operations.
- Addressing questions and concerns about school/district operations including questions and/or concerns about staff members (other than the superintendent).
- Allocating and managing resources (financial, human, and physical) within the board-approved budget and budget parameters. Examples include determining specific class sizes and class offerings within the board's parameters.
- Engage in ongoing efforts to assess and develop meaningful relationships with parents and the general community.

- Support the board's advocacy including but not limited to, information gathering and issue identification.
- Review, select, and implement curriculum, including materials, in a manner consistent with board-approved policies.
- Develop and implement in collaboration with the board an annual district operational plan to achieve district goals. This process is focused on continuous improvement, system accountability, professional development, and a robust communications plan to inform all internal and external stakeholder groups of progress toward goal attainment

*The above roles are primary examples and are not intended to be a full and complete list of all roles and responsibilities of the Board of Education.

Staff, students, parents, guardians, and the general public have the sole authority (no other entity has it) of **consultation** and these entities have four primary responsibilities.

- Voice of self and collective interest.
- Assessing risks and merits of various options as part of the decision-making processes and/or the daily operations of the district.
- Responsibly resisting or opposing change.
- Provide input and feedback to the School Board and the administration.

Application of Excellence in Governance

NOTE: The following scenarios are intended to provide examples of how it is recommended that School Board members address various types of concerns from the general public, parents, staff, and students.

COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

Compensation

Board compensation is reviewed annually by the board during the organizational meeting and voted on for approval. All board members receive a base yearly stipend. Additional stipends are given based on officer status, participation in required school board committees and attendance at ad hoc committee meetings. All compensation details are provided in the [School Board Compensation guide](#).

Reimbursement Procedures

Board members are expected to fill out a [board report voucher](#) monthly indicating any meetings attended that month along with the duration of each meeting. For board members actively involved in negotiations indicate your monthly activity on the voucher. This form is provided in the board members folders at each board meeting and is to be given back to the administrative assistant to be processed in a timely manner.

ELECTION AND ROLES OF SCHOOL BOARD OFFICERS

Source: Rockford Public Schools Policies 201 and 202.

Election of Officers

The Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Clerk of the Board are elected annually at the Board's January Organizational Meeting. Before the Organizational Meeting, during a December work session, the Board will have a conversation and discussion regarding officers for the subsequent year. In the event of an election year, newly elected board members will be invited to the December work session and asked to partake in the board conversation and discussion to ensure sound transition plans by exiting board members and create a positive collaborative environment to facilitate the subsequent year planning. To elect Board Officers, Board policy and MSBA first meeting in January guidelines will be used to determine the acting chair. The new acting chair will guide the elections of the remaining board officers by following the Board policy and MSBA processes and procedures. In the case of a stalemate, the Board will follow proper MSBA processes and procedures to elect officers. Once elected and sworn into office, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Clerk will immediately assume their duties. In the event of an election year, newly elected board members will be invited to the December work session to ensure sound transition plans by exiting board members and create a positive collaborative environment to facilitate the subsequent year planning.

Roles of Board Officers

There are four official officers of the School Board: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Clerk. These positions are determined annually at the Board's Organizational Meeting. Officers must be elected to maintain the order of meeting proceedings. In addition, all board members maintain equal rights and equal voices.

Role of the Chair:

Provides leadership to the Board, ensures the faithful execution of the Board's processes, exercises responsibilities with integrity, reflects the spirit and intent of the Board's policies, and serves as the Board's official spokesperson. The Chair has the following specific authority and duties:

- Monitor Board actions to ensure that they are consistent with the Board's own rules and policies and with other obligations imposed by agencies whose authority supersedes the Board's authority.
- Conduct and monitor Board meeting deliberations to ensure that Board discussion and attention are focused on Board issues, as defined in Board policy.
- Assure that Board meeting discussions are productive, efficient, orderly, and open.
- Conduct Board meetings using the authority as described in Robert's Rules of Order.
- Represent the Board as its official spokesperson about issues decided by the Board and other matters related to official Board business.
- The Chair is not authorized to exercise any power as an individual to supervise or direct the Superintendent or any employee of the district.
- The Chair may delegate authority, when appropriate to other Board members but the Chair remains accountable for members' use of that delegated authority.

- Execute all documents authorized by the Board , except as otherwise provided by law.
- Countersign all orders upon the Treasurer for claims allowed by the Board, represent the district in all actions and perform all the duties usually incumbent on the Chair.
- Facilitate the process of assigning board members to district committees and as liaisons with other organizations.
- On behalf of the Board and in concert with the Superintendent and Vice-Chair, develop proposed meeting agendas for business meetings, work sessions and retreats.

Role of the Vice-Chair:

- The Vice-Chair shall perform the Chair's duties in the event of the Chair's temporary absence.
- Serves in an executive capacity, participating in all governance prep meetings with the Superintendent and Board Chair.
- Facilitates Board Work sessions.
- Conduct and monitor Board meeting deliberations to ensure that Board discussion and attention are focused on Board issues, as defined in Board policy, in partnership with Board Chair.
- Assure that Board meeting discussions are productive, efficient, orderly, and open, in partnership with the Board Chair.

Role of the Treasurer:

- Works closely with the Director of Business Operations.
- Serves as chair of the finance committee consistent with policy 213.
- Makes all reports which are called for by the Board and which are consistent with Minn. Stat. 123B.14

Role of the Clerk:

- The Clerk shall keep and maintain permanent records of the Board, including records of the minutes of school board meetings and other required records of the school board. All votes taken at meetings required to be open to the public pursuant to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law will be recorded for that purpose. Public records maintained by the school district shall be available to members of the public during the school district's regular business hours. Minutes of school board meetings shall be available for review at the school district's administrative offices after they have been prepared. Minutes of a school board meeting shall be approved or modified by the school board at a subsequent meeting.
- Serves as chair of the policy committee consistent with policy 213.
- Review meeting minutes with the Executive Assistant prior to approval of the board.
- Other duties of the Clerk as defined in Minn. Stat. 123B.14
- Performs the duties of the Chair in the absence of temporary absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Standard Operating Procedures

The Rockford Area School Board's standard operating procedure for general meetings closely follows Robert's Rules of Order, which is a widely used manual for parliamentary procedure. Here's a breakdown of how this works in practice, including specific elements like not interacting with the audience, being recognized by the presiding officer to contribute, and the process for motions, discussions, questions, and approvals:

1. Order and Decorum

Meeting In public

- School Board meetings are meetings in Public not public meetings that follow a published and approved agenda for the purpose of governance and approval of items for effective and efficient operations of the business of the district.
- During the meeting, board members and participants are not permitted to engage directly with the audience. This helps maintain order and ensures that the meeting progresses smoothly.
- Audience members have designated times for public comments, and these are structured into the agenda. While it is best practice to have a process to garner public comments, it is not required. Currently, the public comment portion is held at the beginning of the regular session board agenda. The chair reads a standard templated notice to the audience for how public comments are received. While important to hear the public, it is equally important not to promise or comment in the moment. Individuals might be providing feedback for a planned agenda item that evening or might be suggesting the Board consider an issue in the future. If a direct response back is warranted, best practice is to have the chair, designee, or Superintendent follow-up with the individual, as needed, after appropriate research has occurred to the issue being raised.

2. Recognition by the Presiding Officer

- Members wishing to speak must first be recognized by the presiding officer. This involves raising a hand or signaling to the presiding officer.
- Once recognized, the member can then proceed to speak. This prevents multiple people from talking at once and ensures orderly communication.

3. Process of Motions

- A member makes a motion to introduce new business or a decision to be made. This is done by saying, "I move that..."
- The motion must be seconded by another member, indicating that at least one other person believes the matter deserves discussion.
- Once a motion is seconded, the presiding officer opens the floor for discussion. Members can express their views, ask questions, and debate the merits of the motion.

- The presiding officer ensures that the discussion remains focused and orderly, calling on members who wish to speak.

4. Questions and Deliberation

- During discussion, members may ask questions to clarify details about the motion. They must direct their questions through the presiding officer.
- The presiding officer may answer directly or call upon the relevant member or staff to provide the necessary information.

5. Requesting Gallery Participation

- From time to time, a staff member with additional knowledge of a subject at hand might be in the audience. It is inappropriate for any board member or superintendent to call upon that individual without recognition by the presiding officer.
- If the situation arises where a Board Member or Superintendent would like to request the staff speak, the request must be presented to the presiding officer and ultimately the presiding officer decides to recognize or not recognize the additional person.
- If the presiding officer chooses not to recognize the requested individual, generally, this is to maintain decorum and order, and is handled situation by situation.

6. Approval of Items

- After sufficient discussion, the presiding officer will call for a vote on the motion. Some votes are required to be roll-call and may be called by the clerk.
- The motion passes if it receives the required majority, as specified by the governing rules (simple majority, two-thirds, etc.)
- A board member is required to abstain from voting on any item that may have direct or family impact.
- Abstentions will be added to the final vote associated with the majority.

7. Adjournment

- Once all business has been addressed, a motion to adjourn can be made and seconded.
- The presiding officer will then call for a vote on adjourning the meeting.

By adhering to these structured procedures, school board meetings can function efficiently and democratically, ensuring that all members have the opportunity to contribute while maintaining order and focus on the agenda.

Board Meetings

A quorum of members is defined as four (4) or more members of the Board and a quorum must be present for a Board meeting to be official and before any action can be taken by the board. All meetings of the Board are considered public meetings, including committee meetings, and therefore shall be open to the public to attend.

At the organizational meeting (held no later than January 15th each year) the Board will set its meeting schedule for the upcoming year. Additional “special” meetings may be called, as

needed, throughout the year. All meetings not previously approved during the organizational meeting are considered special meetings and must be properly noticed to the public.

The Board Chair presides over all meetings, and along with the Vice-Chair and Superintendent, sets the agenda for the committee-of-the-whole and regular board meetings. Meetings are conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules Order.

Attendance at Board Meetings

All Board members are expected to attend all meetings (including work sessions, committee meetings, special meetings, and Board retreats). However, it is recognized that sometimes scheduling conflicts will occur. Therefore, a member should notify the Board Chair and the Superintendent, or the Executive Assistant to the School Board at least 24 hours (and preferably sooner) before the meeting whenever they are unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

Organizational Meeting

The Board is required to hold an organizational meeting no later than January 15th of each year. The primary purpose of this meeting is to elect members to serve as Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Clerk. The Rockford School Board also uses this meeting to establish regular meeting dates for the year as well as a number of other business items.

Regular Business Meetings

The school board conducts their regular Board Business Meetings on the third Monday of each month. Odd months are held after the board work session beginning at 6:30 pm, even months beginning at 5:30 pm. Regular business meetings are held in the boardroom of the Rockford Area Schools District Office, located 6051 Ash St. Rockford, Minnesota.

Work Sessions

Odd months are held prior to the regular meeting of the board beginning at 5:30 pm. Even months are held on the first Monday of the month beginning at 5:30 pm. Work Sessions are held in the boardroom of the Rockford Area Schools District Office, located at 6051 Ash St. Rockford, Minnesota.

The work session is used to provide the Board with additional information regarding important topics that are either currently in front of the Board or those that will be coming to the Board soon. These sessions also provide board members with additional time for discussion of the items.

Board Retreats

The School Board will schedule retreats as needed during the year for planning work and for professional development sessions.

Special Meetings

A meeting is labeled a "special meeting" if it is called after the meetings for the year have been scheduled and approved by the Board at the Organizational Meeting in January.

For a special meeting, the School Board will post written notice of the meeting's date, time, place, and purpose/s. The School Board's actions at the special meeting are limited to those topics included in the notice. The notice will also be delivered, by standard or electronic mail,

to each person who has filed a written request for notice of special meetings. The notice will be posed and mailed, or delivered at least three days before the date of the meeting.

Emergency Meetings

An emergency meeting is a special meeting called because of circumstances that, in the judgment of the school board, require immediate attention. If the school board discusses or acts upon any matters not specifically related to the emergency, the minutes of the meeting must include specific descriptions of those matters.

Closed Sessions

Minnesota Statutes govern what constitutes a closed session. They are the Labor negotiations strategy, Bureau of Mediation Services, preliminary considerations of charges, performance evaluations, attorney-client meetings, dismissal hearings, coaches' opportunity to respond to non-renewal, discuss certain non-public data, purchase and sale of property, and security matters. For additional information on how the Rockford School Board addresses closed sessions reference Board Policy #205.

Annual Review Items

Some items are reviewed as a part of an [annual rotation](#). These items are updated by the District office.

Call to Order

The following call to order statement is read at the beginning of each board meeting.

As a reminder, this is a meeting in public, not a public meeting. Public input shall be taken during the Public Comment section of the agenda.

The School Board's purpose is to ensure that the educational system within our jurisdiction operates effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of students, parents, teachers, and the community at large under 6 main tenants

1. Setting Vision and Direction
2. Policy Creation and Oversight
3. Budget Approval and Financial Oversight
4. Hiring and Evaluation of Superintendent
5. Community Engagement
6. Advocacy and Leadership

Overall, the school board's role is to provide strategic leadership and governance to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality education that prepares them for success in school and beyond.

****Definitions****

- Setting Vision and Direction- The school board is responsible for setting the overall vision and direction for the school district. This involves establishing goals, priorities, and objectives that align with the needs and expectations of the community.
- Policy Creation and Oversight- School boards develop policies that govern various aspects of the educational system, including curriculum, student conduct, staff hiring

and evaluation, budgeting, facilities management, and more. These policies provide a framework for decision-making and ensure consistency and fairness across the district.

- Budget Approval and Financial Oversight- School boards play a crucial role in approving the district's budget and ensuring that financial resources are allocated appropriately to support educational programs and initiatives. They also oversee financial management practices to ensure accountability and transparency.
- Hiring and Evaluation of Superintendent- The school board hires and evaluates the superintendent, who serves as the chief executive officer of the school district. The superintendent is responsible for implementing the board's policies and managing the day-to-day operations of the district. This is the only employee the board has authority. All other employees fall under the superintendent's management responsibility.
- Community Engagement- School boards serve as a link between the school district and the community, representing the interests and concerns of various stakeholders. They engage with parents, teachers, students, and other community members to gather input, address issues, and foster collaboration.
- Advocacy and Leadership- School boards advocate for the needs of the district and its students at the local, state, and sometimes national levels. They may work with legislators, government agencies, and other organizations to promote policies and initiatives that support educational excellence and equity.

COMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

There are numerous committees on which Board members serve. Some of these are internal committees that operate within the purview of the district and others which may be governed by external entities. Committee meetings (formal meetings in which a quorum of the Board is in attendance) convened by the school board are subject to the Open Meetings Act of Minnesota, meaning that they are open to the public to attend.

It is the responsibility of the School Board to assign members to serve on committees as well as liaisons to the various organizations and partnerships affiliated with the school district. Board committee assignments for the subsequent year are discussed during the December work session and the slate is approved at the annual organizational meeting in January. The work session discussion is to ensure board alignment between member interest/s, abilities, and time commitment with the committees on which they serve. Many of the roles on Board Committees are connected to officer appointments; therefore, officer appointment is a critical consideration when discussing official Board Committees. Board committees consist of 3 members each, Finance Committee (Chair, Treasurer & Director), Policy Committee (Clerk & 2 other board members), District Operations Committee (One officer and two board member), and Negotiations (One officer and two board members).

Rockford Area Schools have four main committees:

Finance:

The finance committee meets with the District Director of Business Services and Superintendent to discuss key issues related to the financial health of the district. These items typically include budget planning, enrollment & revenue projections, potential levy or bonding needs, and the impact of current and future employee contracts.

Policy:

One of the primary responsibilities of a School board is to develop new policies and to review existing policies. The Board Policy Committee reviews policies and recommends them to the full Board for review, discussion, and approval. The committee meets quarterly to review policies that arise either from legislative changes (due to changes in state statute or federal law) or from administrative changes (arising from district staff or board members). Once reviewed and approved by the Policy Committee, the policies are brought forward to the Board, which presents them to the community for a “first reading” by placing them on the regular business meeting agenda.

“First Readings” serve as an introduction of the policy or changes to the policy, to district staff and the community. It is a way of providing notice that the Board is seeking to implement these rules and regulations. The public is afforded two additional school board meetings to review the proposed policy and to provide feedback.

District Operations:

This meets with the District Director of Business Operations and/or Superintendent and other related designees as needed to review the status and needs of the physical resources. This includes all infrastructure needs of the district with a priority placed on deferred and current maintenance needs of all district buildings and athletic facilities.

Negotiations:

The negotiations committee meets with the Superintendent, Finance Director, and other members of the district administrative team to develop strategies for contract negotiations with all district employee groups. Committee members also attend all negotiations meetings with bargaining units.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Board members serve as liaisons to various organizations and partnerships affiliated with the school district. It is the Board’s responsibility to assign members to these ad hoc committees and this is typically done at the Board Organization Meeting in January. Ad hoc committee assignments for the subsequent year are discussed during the December work session. The assignments from the previous year are reviewed and the Board considers as a whole if any committee assignments should be added or removed for the subsequent calendar year. The Board then discusses and determines assignments during the December work session. The work session discussion is to ensure board alignment between member interest/s, abilities, and time commitment with the committee roles they are asked to serve. Committee assignments

will be confirmed at the January Organizational Meeting. Examples of liaison roles are listed below:

Facilities Committee

Board Chair and Treasurer serve on this committee with community business representatives, Director of Operations and Superintendent. Meets three times per year to review finance and business topics as well as buildings and grounds projects as needed.

Continuing Education Committee

Serve as Rockford Board representative. The purpose of the committee is to promote professional growth of certified staff. It will also verify Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and requirements for clock hours for relicensure. Meets regularly as needed.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Committee

Serve as Board representative on this advisory committee. The purpose of the committee is to provide community input for new initiatives and curriculum instruction. Committee plans to meet two to three times per year; meeting time and location TBD.

Community Education Advisory Committee

Serve as Rockford Board representative on committee. The advisory board makes program recommendations to the school board. Meets quarterly, usually in the evening. This committee also includes the ECFE/School Readiness Advisory Committee. Committee meets four times a year as needed in the evening.

Meeker & Wright Special Education Cooperative (MAWSECO)

Serve as Rockford representative on MAWSECO governing board. Usually meets monthly in the evening on the fourth Tuesday at the MAWSECO building in Howard Lake. For more information, go to www.mawseco.k12.mn.us.

Northwest Suburban Integration School District (NWSISD)

Is a collaboration of seven school districts in the northwest metro region. The member districts are Anoka–Hennepin, Brooklyn Center, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose, Elk River, Fridley, Osseo, and Rockford. The purpose of the collaboration is to establish educational programming at one or more sites located within the boundaries of the seven school districts. The programming shall include comprehensive performance-oriented curricula and instruction, including magnet school programming, and may include, but shall not necessarily be limited to, early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, adult learning, extended day/extended year learning opportunities, childcare, parent education, and community outreach.

Schools Advocating for Fair Funding (SAFF) & Minnesota Rural Educators Association (MREA)

- SAFF: In collaboration with approximately 30 other K-12 school districts, SAFF advocates for improved tax equalization to address the unfair tax burden on taxpayers in low-property wealth school districts. SAFF does so by engaging with state leaders,

facilitating collaboration between both administrators and school board members, and by providing financial analysis and comparison to highlight the funding needs.

- MREA: Focuses, lobbies, and educates member districts on topics that are of highest importance to schools in greater Minnesota. This includes funding sources and equitable distribution as well as other resources such as human capital, technology, and instructional needs.

Committee At-Large

Serve as Rockford board representative. The committee meets as needed to discuss items under study such as activities, technology, transportation, food service, student data support, referendum steering committee, spearheading of superintendent search and other district needs.

Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)

Rockford Area Schools along with approximately 40 other K-12 school districts, is a member of the AMSD organization. The mission of AMSD is to advocate for metropolitan school districts and advance legislation that supports student achievement. AMSD is a strong voice for public education both at the Legislature and in the media with a proactive agenda and a commitment to action. AMSD's primary task is to lobby at the state level for the needs of metropolitan school districts. However, AMSD's Board believes that its lobbying efforts are most effective when the organization plays a role in shaping the broader public debate on K-12 issues and advocates for policies that benefit the State as a whole.

Communications Committee

This committee is composed of two board appointees with the Board Chair serving in an advisory capacity. Meetings will occur as needed.

Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL)

Serve as board representative to the Minnesota State High School League. Receives mailings and usually has state level meetings at MSBA Leadership Conference. For more information, go to www.mshsl.org

Chamber Committee

Serve as Rockford School District representative to the Rockford/Greenfield Chamber of Commerce. Meets on a regular bi-monthly basis during the day in Rockford. Only one member, representing the board, can attend the meetings.

Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA)

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is a private, nonprofit organization that exists to support public school boards and public education. The MSBA is a leading advocate for public education: supports, promotes, and strengthens the work of public school boards through professional development opportunities, policy development and maintenance, legislative guidance and information, and legal advice.

MSBA offers a four-phase training program for board members which supports them in developing a foundational understanding of their work as educational leaders.

POSITIONS THAT REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

NOTE: There is only one position that reports to the school board.

Role of the Superintendent

The Superintendent of Schools reports directly to the board and holds all executive and administrative authority and responsibility for the effective operation of the school, excluding those areas of control that are required by statute to be exercised directly by the Board. The Superintendent acts as the district leader with the support of the district's administrative team. The Superintendent may delegate specific powers or duties to assistants and subordinates while maintaining final responsibility for any actions taken. The Superintendent is also responsible for evaluating her/his leadership team.

Key Functions and Responsibilities of the Superintendent

- Vision, Continuous Improvement, And Focus of District Work.
 1. Partner with the board to design a vision for high student achievement and for every student to have a high-quality daily school experience.
 2. Responsible for the structure, practices, and outcomes for continuous improvement in all aspects of school and district functions, in alignment with the district strategic directions and annual district operational plan (DOP).
 3. Facilitate the process of identifying/executing the district's goals and objectives.
- Communication and Collaboration
 1. Interact effectively with the School Board.
 2. Establish and maintain effective internal and external communication systems.
- Policies and Governance
 1. Develop procedures that define how policy will be implemented.
 2. Work with the Policy Committee to draft policy for the full board.
 3. Recommend to the Board policies on all school system functions.
 4. Implement Board policies.
 5. Demonstrate effective leadership skills and professionalism in the daily management of the school district.
- Instruction
 1. Lead the district in the development and implementation of a rigorous and relevant curriculum that leads to increased student achievement.
 2. Set clear expectations for district-wide high-quality instruction and comprehensive assessment.
 3. Set clear expectations for a district-wide commitment that every student will have a positive daily school experience.
 4. Provide full access and full opportunity for all students.
 5. Develop and maintain a leadership culture where professional development is highly valued and all staff are expected to grow and develop their skills to meet the needs of all students.

- Resources
 1. Recommend to the Board the employment and selection of the administrative, instructional, and support staff.
 2. Assign, evaluate, and support district staff.
 3. Oversees and administers the procurement and use of district funds and facilities to maximize efficiency and minimize waste.
 4. Identify and address specific district tasks or problems that emerge (such as the need for new facilities or the need for a levy campaign).

- Allegations raised against person under the authority of the Board

If allegations are raised against the one person under the direct authority of the Board (the Superintendent), it is imperative to follow a fair process when reviewing these allegations. The standard operating recommendations are as follows:

1. If a member of the Board obtains or receives any evidence or documentation related to allegations against the Superintendent, they must promptly provide this information to the board Chair or Vice Chair, along with a clear explanation of how it was obtained.
2. The Chair has delegated authority from the Board to contact the District legal counsel. In matters such as this, it is imperative to exercise that authority. The Chair should contact legal counsel immediately, including the Vice Chair.
3. There are some instances when the primary District legal counsel will recommend securing alternative legal counsel to avoid any presumed or real conflicts of interest.
4. Best practice is for two members of the Board to work together on the issue. It is recommended that the Chair and Vice Chair serve in this capacity together.
5. Chair and Vice Chair will jointly meet with the legal counsel to review the allegations charged against the Superintendent.
6. Legal counsel will guide the Chair / Vice Chair on appropriate next steps.
 - a. Determine if an investigation is required
 - b. If an investigation is recommended, determine type of investigation required, likely requiring securing a third-party investigator
 - c. Determine communication with the alleging party, as appropriate
 - d. Determine if a leave of absence is required to carry out an investigation
 - e. Determine communication plan with the Board to ensure alignment with data privacy and open meeting law considerations. There are instances where one-way communication makes sense to inform the Board of factual information, with an implicit reminder that this is one-way communication and not a time for discussion/feedback
 - f. If a leave of absence is required, determine broader communication plan
 - i. Communication with Direct reports
 - ii. Communication with Staff

- iii. Communication with parents
- iv. Communication with community
- g. Based on the allegations and/or outcome of the investigation, legal counsel will also help navigate necessary communication with government agencies or law enforcement as applicable.
- h. Determine timing for formal board meeting to discuss allegations. Typically, this will occur in a closed meeting session and legal counsel will help to determine timing of that meeting. According to MN Statute, a closed meeting can only occur one time per allegations; the balance of meetings must be held in open format.
- i. Resolution of allegations/next steps will be recommended by legal counsel and it is recommended they attend closed meeting sessions with the investigator to present findings and discuss next steps.

TITLE IX

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment.

All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools

More information can be found at

<https://www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-ix>

SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES

Policy 201 - Legal Status of the School Board

Policy 202 - School Board Officers

Policy 203 - Operation of School Board - Governing Rules

Policy 203.1 - School Board Procedures; Rules of Order

Policy 203.2 - Order of the Regular School Board Meeting

Policy 203.5 - School Board Meeting Agenda

Policy 203.6 - Consent Agenda

Policy 204 - School Board Meeting Minutes

Policy 205 - Open Meetings and Closed Meetings

Policy 206 - Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints about Persons at School Board Meetings

Policy 207 - Public Hearings

Policy 208 - Development, Adoption and Implementation of Policies

Policy 209 - Code of Ethics

Policy 209 - Code of Ethics Addendum

Policy 210 - Conflict of Interest - School Board Members

Policy 211 - Criminal or Civil Action Against School District, School Board Member, Employee or Student

Policy 212 - School Board Member Development

Policy 213R - School Board Committees

Policy 214 - Out-of-State Travel by School Board Members

WORKS CITED

Eligibility Requirements for School Board Members, Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)

Rockford Public Schools 200 Series Policies

Standards for School Board Leadership, Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)
Governance and Management, TeamWorks International

Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) School Board Workshop Series

Last updated: 4/15/2025

This handbook will be reviewed and updated each summer.

2025-26

1:1 District Issued Device Handbook



Rockford Area Schools – District 883
A Tradition of Excellence, One Student at a Time.

4/1/2025

Rockford Area Schools

1:1 District Issued Device Handbook

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[ANNEXES](#)

[Annex A: 1:1 District-Issued Device Policies, Guidelines, & Agreement Forms](#)

Rockford Area Schools

1:1 District Issued Device Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to the Rockford Area School District's Device Integration Handbook. As we embark on this journey together, we are excited to guide both parents and students through the seamless integration of digital technology into education. Our goal is to equip you with the skills and tools needed to thrive in an ever-changing world dominated by information and technology.

In the sections that follow, you will gain a deeper understanding of how technology plays a pivotal role in modern education. From exploring the vast realm of information to experiencing the personalized advantages of having your own device, this handbook will empower you to make the most of your educational journey.

As you explore each content area, you'll discover how your personalized device acts as a catalyst for critical thinking, problem-solving, and dynamic interactions. We will also delve into the transformative impact of technology on teaching and learning, revealing how it enhances both the curriculum and your engagement.

Guidelines and protocols are outlined to ensure a positive and responsible use of your devices. Our commitment to your growth and success is evident throughout, as we guide you in leveraging technology to navigate challenges, foster critical thinking skills, and actively participate in our vibrant educational community.

Remember, your personalized device is more than just a tool – it's a gateway to a world of knowledge, a catalyst for personal growth, and a bridge to your future success. Embrace it, explore it, and harness its potential to shape not only your educational journey but also your journey beyond these walls.

The policies, procedures, and information within this document apply to all technology used at the Rockford Area Schools - Independent School District 883 by students, staff, or guests, including any other device considered by the administration to fall under this handbook.

This handbook is a collection of selected policies and administrative guidelines, as well as rules and regulations of the Rockford Area Schools District 883. If there is a conflict between Board policy and this handbook, the Board policy shall take precedent.

Teachers may establish supplementary requisites for technological utilization within their respective classrooms.

Digital Learning Enhancement Plan Goals

Goal 1: Digital Empowerment for Enhanced Learning: Provide students with cutting-edge digital tools to enrich and expedite the learning process. By equipping students with these tools, we aim to foster a dynamic learning environment that encourages exploration, engagement, and deeper understanding of subjects.

Goal 2: Innovative and Blended Learning Approach: Employ innovative and blended learning strategies to revolutionize the delivery of our curriculum. By integrating technology into education, we seek to promote higher-order thinking skills, ensuring that students not only grasp foundational knowledge but also develop critical thinking abilities necessary for real-world problem-solving.

Goal 3: Tailored Learning for Individual Growth: Craft personalized content that caters to the unique learning needs of each student. Through customization, we aspire to provide an education that adapts to every student's pace, strengths, and areas of improvement, fostering a holistic and effective learning experience.

Goal 4: Optimized Classroom Instruction: Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of classroom instruction through technology integration. By leveraging digital tools, we aim to create an interactive and dynamic learning atmosphere, where teachers can engage students more deeply, resulting in improved comprehension and retention of subject matter.

1.0 Receiving Your District Issued Device/Accessory

Student Technology will generally be distributed during the first week of school.

Parents/guardians and students should complete and sign the Technology Acceptable Use and Device Agreement forms prior to students being issued a device. These documents will need to be submitted at student registration. The forms should be made available through the district's parent portal programs (Infinite Campus).

1.1 Agreement for Financial Responsibility

The assigned devices covered in this plan belong to Rockford Area Schools and will be returned at the end of the academic school year. Students who transfer, withdraw, or are expelled will need to return the device and accessories at the time of withdrawal. Devices assigned to students that are not returned may be considered and treated as stolen property. If a payment request is rendered and is not received, the account may be turned over to a collection agency and/or law enforcement agency.

If damage occurs to the device or accessory, the student should immediately report the damage and turn the device or accessory in. The device or accessory will be repaired or replaced by the district. Incidents of gross negligence or repeated incidents may result in financial restitution

from the family, up to the cost of the entire device, if warranted. These costs are general costs and may fluctuate based on current market costs. Prices fluctuate with the market and inflation costs. Some of the costs are listed below:

- Chargers - \$20 to \$40.00 each
- Keyboards with trackpad - \$50.00 to \$65.00
- Screens vary in cost from \$49.73 to \$89.50
- Full replacements currently vary from \$250.00 for the Acers and \$275 for the HP 14 model. This cost doesn't include the licensing needed for Google and other services.

1.2 Device Check In

Student technology and accessories, including the charger, will be collected at the end of each school year for maintenance over summer vacation. The district will strive for each student to retain their original technology each year while enrolled at Rockford Area Schools in grades 6 to 12. When asked to do so, students must surrender/return the technology and accessories to Rockford School District. Any student who transfers out of the district will be required to return their technology and accessories. The average lifespan for a chrome book has been extended to about seven years allowing the device to be in compliance with state testing requirements.

2.0 Taking Care of Your Device

2.1 General Precautions

Your personal device is a valuable tool that enhances your learning experience and empowers you to explore new horizons. To ensure its optimal performance and longevity, it's important to take proper care of your device. Follow these guidelines to maintain the functionality and reliability of your device:

1. **Keep it Clean:** Regularly clean the screen, keyboard, and exterior of your device using a soft, lint-free cloth. Avoid using harsh chemicals or abrasive materials that could damage the surface.
2. **Handle with Care:** Carry your device carefully to prevent scratches and impact damage. When handling your device, be gentle and avoid dropping it or subjecting it to unnecessary force. Keep food and liquids away from the devices.
3. **Charging Protocol:** Charge your device using the provided charger and cable. Avoid using third-party chargers, as they may not be compatible and could potentially harm your device. Overcharging can also impact battery life, so disconnect the charger once your device is fully charged.
4. **Temperature Awareness:** Keep your device in a moderate temperature range. Extreme heat or cold can affect battery performance and the overall functionality of your device. Avoid leaving it in direct sunlight or in a cold environment for extended periods.

5. **Software Updates:** Regularly update your device's software to ensure it has the latest security patches and features. These updates help maintain the device's performance and protect it from potential security vulnerabilities. The district will periodically push updates out to the devices.
6. **Safe Transport:** When not in use, store your device in a safe and secure location. Avoid leaving it in areas prone to extreme temperatures, humidity, or the risk of theft.
7. **Internet Safety:** Use your device responsibly when accessing the internet. Be cautious of the websites you visit, and avoid clicking on suspicious links or downloading unfamiliar files that could potentially harm your device.
8. **Cords:** Carefully insert the headset cables, charging cable, and other cords into the device.
9. **Adjust Screen Brightness:** To conserve battery life and reduce eye strain, adjust the screen brightness to a comfortable level, especially when you're working in well-lit environments.
10. **Take Care of the Charger:** Keep your charger in a separate compartment of your bag to avoid tangling with other items. Avoid bending or stressing the charger cable excessively.

2.2 Carrying Devices

Here are some tips to help students carry and use Chromebooks efficiently:

1. **Position in Bag:** Place your Chromebook in the dedicated laptop compartment, if your bag has one. If not, choose a central location in your bag where it's less likely to experience impacts.
2. **Avoid Overloading:** While it's tempting to carry all your textbooks, notebooks, and other items in your bag, try to keep it relatively light to avoid putting excessive weight on your Chromebook. Do not place the device in a place where it may get stepped on.
3. **Avoid Rough Handling:** Be mindful when placing your bag on the ground or any surface. Avoid dropping your bag or placing heavy items on top of it.

2.3 The Basic Care of Your Device

Remember, taking good care of your device helps it last longer and work better, so you can get the most out of your learning. If you face any problems or have questions about how to keep your device in good shape, don't hesitate to ask the school's tech support for help. Your device is a strong tool – treat it well so it keeps being useful to you.

Keeping your Chromebook screen clean is important for maintaining good visibility and a pleasant user experience. Here are some screen cleaning tips for Chromebooks:

1. **Turn Off Your Chromebook:** Before cleaning the screen, turn off your Chromebook or put it in sleep mode to avoid accidentally triggering actions while cleaning.
2. **Use a Microfiber Cloth:** A microfiber cloth is gentle on the screen and effectively removes dust, fingerprints, and smudges. Avoid using paper towels, tissues, or rough materials that could scratch the screen.
3. **Dampen the Cloth:** If there are stubborn smudges or dirt, lightly dampen the microfiber cloth with water. Make sure the cloth is not dripping wet; just slightly damp is sufficient.
4. **Avoid Harsh Chemicals:** Do not use harsh cleaning agents, ammonia-based products, or any abrasive substances on your Chromebook screen. These can damage the screen's protective coatings.
5. **Gently Wipe the Screen:** Starting from the top, gently wipe the screen in a circular or vertical motion. Apply minimal pressure to avoid damaging the screen.
6. **Focus on Problem Areas:** If there are specific areas that require more attention, gently rub in a circular motion with the dampened cloth until the smudges are gone.
7. **Dry the Screen:** After cleaning, use a dry portion of the microfiber cloth to wipe away any remaining moisture.
8. **Avoid Excess Moisture:** Make sure the cloth is only slightly damp. Excess moisture can seep into the device and cause damage.
9. **Don't Spray Liquids Directly:** Avoid spraying cleaning solution or water directly onto the screen. Moisture can seep into the edges and potentially damage the internal components.
10. **Clean the Keyboard and Body:** While you're at it, you can also gently wipe down the keyboard and the body of the Chromebook with the damp microfiber cloth. Just be careful not to let any moisture drip into the keys.
11. **Be Gentle with Touchscreens:** If your Chromebook has a touchscreen, be extra gentle when cleaning to avoid applying too much pressure on the screen.
12. **Regular Maintenance:** Make screen cleaning a part of your regular maintenance routine to prevent buildup of dirt and oils.
13. **Avoid Screen Protectors:** While screen protectors can provide an extra layer of protection, they can also affect touch sensitivity and display clarity. If you choose to use a screen protector, make sure it's specifically designed for your Chromebook model.
14. **Clean Hands:** Before using your Chromebook, ensure your hands are clean to prevent transferring oils and dirt to the screen.

15. **Use Compressed Air for Keyboard:** If dust or debris gets caught in your keyboard, use compressed air to gently blow them out. Hold the Chromebook at an angle to prevent the debris from falling back into the device.

Regular, gentle cleaning using the right techniques will help keep your Chromebook screen looking clear and vibrant while prolonging its lifespan.

3.0 Using Your Device at School

Devices are meant to be used at school every day. Besides following what teachers expect for using technology, you can also use the device to check your student portal, review assignments, read announcements, verify schedules, and more. It's important for students to bring their device to all classes, unless a teacher tells them not to.

3.1 Devices Left at Home

If a student forgets their district-provided device at home, they can borrow a temporary device from the Technology Office or the Media Center. The borrowed device must be given back by the end of the school day. They should also call home to let a parent or guardian know about their oversight. If a student keeps leaving their device at home, they might have to leave it at school for a week or more. Repeating this behavior could lead to further actions decided by the school principal or other administrator.

3.2 Device Undergoing Repair

The Media Center will offer temporary devices for students whose devices are being fixed because of regular use or warranty problems. However, if the repair is needed because the general precautions weren't followed or there was purposeful harm, the student might face disciplinary actions set by the school principal or other administrator.

3.3 Charging Your Device's Battery

Every day, students should bring their devices to school with a full battery. Students must charge their devices every evening. If a student's device isn't fully charged or runs out of battery during the day, it's their responsibility to charge it.

3.4 Device Settings

Here are some Chromebook setting guidelines:

1. **Privacy Settings:** Make sure your privacy settings are set to protect your personal information. Avoid sharing sensitive details online.
2. **Screen Brightness:** Adjust the screen brightness to a comfortable level for your eyes, especially in well-lit areas.
3. **Notifications:** Customize your notification settings to avoid distractions during classes. Mute or limit notifications when you're studying.

4. **Backgrounds:** If the device settings allow, choose appropriate wallpapers or backgrounds that are school-friendly. Avoid using distracting or inappropriate images. Using improper content as a screensaver or saving it on the device provided by the district is not allowed. Having pictures of guns, weapons, explicit content, inappropriate language, alcohol, drugs, symbols related to gangs, or any other content that's not suitable for school can lead to disciplinary measures.
5. **Passwords/Pin:** Set up a strong password or PIN to secure your Chromebook. Keep this information private and don't share it with anyone.
6. **Auto-Lock:** Configure your Chromebook to automatically lock after a period of inactivity. This adds an extra layer of security.
7. **Chrome Extensions:** If allowed, install educational Chrome extensions that can assist with your learning. Avoid adding unnecessary or distracting extensions.
8. **Bookmarking:** Organize your bookmarks for easy access to educational resources, online textbooks, and helpful websites.
9. **Storage Management:** Regularly clean up and organize your files. Delete any unnecessary files to free up storage space.
10. **Backup:** Use Google Drive to back up important files to prevent data loss in case of device issues.
11. **Accessibility Settings:** If needed, adjust accessibility settings to cater to your specific needs. Chromebooks offer features for better readability and navigation.
12. **Language and Input:** Set your preferred language and keyboard input for ease of use.
13. **Time Management:** Use the calendar app to schedule tasks, assignments, and events. Set reminders to stay on top of your responsibilities.
14. **Google Classroom:** Your school uses Google Classroom, familiarize yourself with its features to efficiently manage assignments and class materials.
15. **Safe Browsing:** Enable safe browsing settings to protect yourself from potentially harmful websites or content.
16. **Charging Reminder:** Keep an eye on your battery level and charge your Chromebook regularly to avoid running out of power during class.
17. **Sharing and Collaboration:** Learn how to share documents and collaborate on Google Drive. This is useful for group projects.
18. **Help and Support:** If you're unsure about any settings or features, don't hesitate to ask your teacher or tech support for assistance.

Remember that Chromebooks are tools for learning, so setting them up properly can help you focus on your studies while staying safe and productive online.

3.5 Sound

Keep the sound turned off unless you get permission from your teacher for learning reasons. You can bring your own headphones or earbuds to use with your device. The school generally doesn't provide headphones, except for school testing.

3.6 Home Internet Access

Students can connect their district-provided devices to WiFi for internet access. This helps them use the device at home or outside school. If you have trouble with the internet at home, get in touch with your parents or the Internet Service Provider (ISP) for help. You can also contact technology support during the school day for assistance.

If necessary, many students can access free internet services to support their learning needs. These services help students stay connected and engaged in their studies, even when they're outside of school. Several organizations and programs offer free WiFi access in public spaces, libraries, and community centers. Additionally, some Internet Service Providers (ISPs) offer discounted or even free internet plans specifically for students and low-income families. Please contact your local ISP for details. These initiatives aim to bridge the digital divide and ensure that every student has the opportunity to access educational resources and online learning platforms without limitations.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the United States has various programs and initiatives aimed at promoting internet access and bridging the digital divide. One of the well-known programs is the Lifeline program, (<https://www.fcc.gov/general/lifeline-program-low-income-consumers>) which offers discounted phone and internet services to eligible low-income individuals and families. The exact details and availability of these programs may change over time, so it's recommended to visit the FCC's official website or contact them directly for the most up-to-date information on programs related to free or discounted internet services for students and low-income households.

4.0 Managing Your Files and Saving Your Work

4.1 Saving Documents with the Device

Each student has a school managed Google account which includes Google Email, Drive and Classroom. The access levels within the programs are determined by regulation, age, policy, and parents. Students should regularly save their work to Google Drive from their devices. It's important to back up essential files as a precaution against data loss in case of malfunctions, system resets, or re-imaging. Google Drive offers ample storage and the convenience of accessing documents from various devices. For instance, a student can write a document on

Chromebook, save it to Google Drive, and retrieve it on their device. Alternatively, documents can be saved by emailing them to oneself.

It's the student's responsibility to ensure work isn't lost due to technical issues or accidental deletion. Device problems are not a valid excuse for not submitting assignments.

4.2 Network Connectivity

The Rockford Area School District cannot assure that its network will be operational at all times. If the network experiences occasional downtime, the District will not take responsibility for any lost or unavailable data. It's important to note that using applications that evade established Rockford School District policies, proxies and filtering violates the Acceptable Use Policies. Repeated violations may lead to disciplinary measures.

5.0 Applications Installed into the Devices

5.1 Installed Applications

The pre-installed applications provided by the Rockford School District must be kept functional and readily accessible on the device at all times. It's required for students to utilize their school email or other computer logins. Moreover, it's explicitly prohibited to use proxy or torrent sites to bypass the firewall or filtering mechanisms. This policy is in place to maintain a secure and productive digital environment.

5.2 Additional Applications

Occasionally, the school might introduce applications intended for specific courses. These applications will be accessible through the District's self-service programs like Google Work Space, Chrome Extensions, Apple ID, Adobe Console, or the Microsoft Console.

5.3 Personal Applications and Inspection

Students are permitted to download applications for personal use, but these applications must align with the district's Acceptable Use Policy and the MN Student Data Privacy Act. Students should discuss additional applications needed for instructional purposes with their teacher and follow the procedures established for vetting and posting the applications. Keep in mind that non-school applications can be removed by school personnel whenever necessary. The school reserves the right to randomly monitor devices to ensure appropriate application usage and regulatory compliance. It's important to remember that these devices belong to the school, and school Administration or staff may request inspections at any time, requiring passcodes or passwords to unlock the device.

If any games or applications are found to be inappropriate, they will be removed, and there could be disciplinary consequences. During class time, personal application usage is allowed based on the teacher's discretion. Failing to follow classroom rules regarding application usage may result in disciplinary action.

You can use personal applications at home, provided that:

1. **Applications:** The applications' content (games, music, etc.) is suitable for a district/school-owned device and aligns with the district's Acceptable Use Policy.
2. **Consent:** You have permission from your parent/guardian.
3. **Assignments:** All school-related tasks are complete.

5.4 Procedure for changing or re-loading software

If unlawful software or malware is found, the applications and files may be removed, and this might even require the device to be re-imaged. In situations of technical issues, re-imaging the device could be necessary for resolution. However, it's important to note that in these instances, the school cannot be held responsible for any software that gets deleted due to the re-imaging process.

5.5 Application upgrades

Occasionally, there are upgraded versions of licensed software offered. For students in PK-12, there might be instances where they need to update their district-approved applications using the various district self-service programs. The district's patch management program will also push many updates out to the devices automatically. This may sometimes cause the device or application to work slower for a short period of time as it updates.

6.0 Acceptable Use

The Rockford School District is delighted to offer access to devices (equipped with essential programs for classes), the district network (providing email and online classroom access), student data storage, and the Internet. To access these resources, students and parents need to sign and return the provided form to the school.

While these materials aim to enrich educational goals, students might find ways to access non-educational content or use the provided hardware and software beyond its intended purpose. Therefore, it's crucial to adhere to the rules. Not following these rules could lead to temporary or permanent loss of internet, email, or other technology privileges. Violations may result in disciplinary consequences, including suspension or expulsion. In some cases, law enforcement agencies might be involved.

Using these technologies in an educational setting comes with responsibilities.

6.1 Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents and guardians play a crucial role in supporting students' effective and responsible use of devices like the districts' 1:1 Chromebooks. Here are some responsibilities they should consider:

1. **Understanding School Policies:** Familiarize themselves with the school's policies regarding Chromebook or other device use, including acceptable use, internet safety, and care and maintenance guidelines.
2. **Communication with School:** Stay informed about any updates, announcements, or workshops related to the Chromebook program by regularly checking school communications and attending parent-teacher meetings.
3. **Supervision:** Monitor your child's Chromebook or other device usage, especially for younger students, to ensure they are using it for educational purposes and following school and family guidelines.
4. **Setting Expectations:** Establish clear expectations for Chromebook or other device use at home, including designated study times and appropriate websites and applications.
5. **Internet Safety:** Educate your child about internet safety, responsible online behavior, and the importance of protecting personal information.
6. **Device Care:** Teach your child how to properly care for the Chromebook or other device, including carrying it safely, cleaning the screen, and charging it.
7. **Charging Routine:** Help your child develop a routine for charging the Chromebook or other device, so it's ready for use during school hours.
8. **Filtering and Monitoring:** Consider using parental control software or built-in filtering tools on your home network to ensure their child's online activities are appropriate and safe.
9. **Open Communication:** Encourage your child to communicate any issues, concerns, or experiences related to the Chromebook or other device, whether technical or social.
10. **Addressing Issues:** If their child faces technical problems or struggles with using the Chromebook, parents should support them by seeking assistance from the school's tech support team.
11. **Creating a Learning Environment:** Provide a quiet and comfortable space for their child to use the Chromebook for studying and completing assignments.
12. **Time Management:** Help their child manage screen time and strike a balance between online and offline activities.

By actively participating in the child's Chromebook or other device usage and promoting responsible digital citizenship, parents and guardians contribute to a positive and productive learning experience.

6.2 School Responsibilities

Rockford School District has several responsibilities when implementing a Chromebook or other device program. Here are some key ones:

1. **Policy Development:** Rockford School District has developed comprehensive policies and guidelines for device use, covering acceptable use, internet safety, data privacy, device care, and consequences for misuse.
2. **Technical Support:** Rockford School District is committed to provide technical support for students, teachers, and parents to address any issues related to device setup, software, connectivity, and troubleshooting ensuring that each student receives a functional device and necessary accessories, like chargers.
3. **Device Management:** Implement a Mobile Device Management (MDM) system to manage and monitor devices, including software updates, security patches, and remote device management.
4. **Internet Filtering:** Set up internet filtering and content blocking to protect students from accessing inappropriate or harmful content.
5. **Digital Citizenship Education:** Offer digital literacy and responsible technology use programs to educate students about online behavior, privacy, cyberbullying, and ethical use.
6. **Teacher Training:** Provide professional development to teachers on integrating technology effectively into the curriculum and managing a classroom using Chromebooks and other devices.
7. **Curriculum Integration:** Work with educators to align the use of devices with educational goals and incorporate digital resources into the curriculum. The Rockford School District strives to be ready for blended and E-Learning days, as needed.
8. **Security and Privacy:** Ensure that student data is stored securely, follow data privacy regulations, and obtain parental consent for any data collection or sharing.
9. **Network Infrastructure:** Maintain a reliable and robust network infrastructure to support a high number of devices and ensure consistent connectivity.
10. **Equity Considerations:** Address potential equity issues, such as providing devices to students who lack internet access at home or ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities.
11. **Regular Maintenance:** Establish a schedule for device maintenance, updates, and repairs to keep devices in good working condition.

12. **Parent Communication:** Keep parents informed about the program's objectives, guidelines, and any changes through regular communication channels.
13. **Content Filtering:** Regularly review and update content filtering to adapt to new online threats and ensure a safe online environment.
14. **Data Backup and Recovery:** Implement data backup systems to prevent data loss and have protocols in place for recovering lost or corrupted data.
15. **Evaluation and Improvement:** Continuously assess the effectiveness of the program, gather feedback from stakeholders, and make improvements based on the collected data.
16. **Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with community organizations and internet service providers to address connectivity issues for students who lack internet access at home.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, school districts can create a successful and well-managed 1:1 device program that enhances learning experiences while ensuring student safety and data privacy.

6.3 Student Responsibilities

Highlighted below are some acceptable use responsibilities for Rockford Area School's students when using Chromebooks or other devices on and off campus:

1. **Educational Purpose:** Use the device primarily for educational purposes, including assignments, research, and communication related to schoolwork. Students should read, understand and follow the Rockford School District Acceptable Use Policy for Technology. The policy can be reviewed by clicking [Policy 524 - Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy](#).
2. **Responsible Behavior:** Behave respectfully and responsibly online, treating others as you would in a face-to-face environment.
3. **Cyberbullying Prevention:** Do not engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or any harmful online behavior towards peers or others.
4. **Respect Copyright:** Adhere to copyright laws by only using and sharing content that you have the rights to, and giving proper credit when necessary.
5. **Privacy Awareness:** Respect the privacy of others by not sharing personal information or images without permission.
6. **Safe Browsing:** Use the internet for appropriate and safe content, refraining from accessing or sharing inappropriate or harmful material.

7. **Appropriate Communication:** Communicate online in a courteous and respectful manner, adhering to proper language and tone.
8. **Reporting Issues:** Report any inappropriate content, cyberbullying, or any issues you encounter online to a teacher or school authority.
9. **Device Care:** Handle the device responsibly, keeping it clean and protected from damage.
10. **Password Security:** Keep your login credentials private and secure, avoiding sharing them with anyone.
11. **Respect Classroom Rules:** Follow teachers' instructions regarding device use in the classroom, including when and how devices should be used.
12. **Digital Etiquette:** Maintain proper digital etiquette when communicating with teachers, classmates, and others.
13. **Report Misuse:** If you notice any fellow student misusing technology or violating acceptable use policies, report it to a teacher or appropriate school staff.
14. **Respectful Sharing:** If required to collaborate on projects or share files, ensure that shared content is respectful and relevant to the task.
15. **Internet Safety:** Be cautious while sharing personal information online, and avoid engaging with strangers.
16. **Online Etiquette:** Understand and follow netiquette guidelines when interacting with others on the internet.

By following these acceptable use responsibilities, K-12 students contribute to a safe and productive digital learning environment while developing essential skills in responsible technology use.

6.4 Student Activities Strictly Prohibited

Listed below are some activities that are strictly prohibited for Rockford School District students when using Chromebooks or other devices in an educational setting:

1. **Cyberbullying and Harassment:** Engaging in any form of cyberbullying, harassment, or online intimidation towards peers, teachers, or others is prohibited. Rockford Area Schools Policy 514 provides additional information. The policy can be reviewed by clicking [Policy 514 – Bullying Prohibition Policy](#). Inappropriate messaging, chatting, using social media's tools and applications is prohibited.
2. **Inappropriate Content:** Accessing, sharing, or creating explicit, offensive, or inappropriate content, including images, videos, or messages. Sending mass emails or spamming is included. Sending, accessing, uploading, downloading, or distributing,

offensive, profane, threatening, pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit materials are additional examples of prohibited conduct.

3. **Hacking or Unauthorized Access:** Attempting to hack into school systems, other students' accounts, or unauthorized access to files or networks.
4. **Plagiarism and Copyright Violation:** Copying or using others' work without proper attribution or permission, and sharing copyrighted material without authorization. Use of sites selling term papers, book reports and other forms of student work is an additional example of prohibitive conduct.
5. **Malicious Software:** Downloading or installing malware, viruses, or other malicious software that can harm devices, networks, or data.
6. **Unauthorized Devices:** Connecting unauthorized hardware, such as USB drives or external devices, without explicit permission. Students swapping or sharing devices amongst each other for non-educational purposes is discouraged.
7. **Proxy or VPN Usage:** Using proxies or VPNs to bypass school filters or security measures, or to access blocked websites.
8. **Personal Social Media During Class:** Using personal social media accounts or messaging platforms during class time without teacher permission.
9. **Distraction During Class:** Using devices for non-educational purposes during class, causing distractions to oneself or others.
10. **Cyberstalking:** Engaging in cyberstalking or repeatedly harassing others online.
11. **Unauthorized System Changes:** Making unauthorized changes to device settings, configurations, or software. The changing of device security settings (exceptions include personal settings such as font size, brightness, etc.) are discouraged.
12. **Sharing Personal Information:** Sharing personal information, contact details, or addresses with strangers online. Students should refrain from giving out personal information except in an instructional context or in the performance of Rockford School District business and with permission of the school district.
13. **Unauthorized Streaming or Downloads:** Streaming or downloading content not related to school activities during class or study time.
14. **Impersonation:** Pretending to be someone else or being anonymous, whether a student, teacher, or anyone else, online is prohibited.
15. **Vandalism and Defacement:** Vandalizing or defacing websites, online documents, or any digital content. Vandalism (any malicious attempt to harm or destroy hardware, software or data, including, but not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses or

computer programs that can infiltrate computer systems and/or damage software components) of school equipment will not be allowed.

16. **Sharing Passwords:** Sharing login credentials, passwords, or passcodes with others, compromising security.
17. **Online Gambling:** Engaging in online gambling or participating in any illegal online activities.
18. **Accessing Inappropriate Sites:** Accessing websites or content that is not suitable for an educational environment.
19. **Unauthorized Purchases:** Making online purchases using school devices or accounts without proper authorization.
20. **Violations of Privacy:** Violating others' privacy by sharing private messages, images, or information without consent. Gaining access to other student's accounts, files, and/or data is an example. Password sharing is another example of prohibitive conduct.
21. **Doxing:** Posting personal information or encouraging others to share personal information about individuals online.

Strictly adhering to these prohibited activities ensures a safe and productive digital learning environment, promotes responsible technology use, and prevents disruptions within the school community.

6.5 Legal Propriety

It is important to follow trademark and copyright laws as well as all license agreements. Not knowing the law doesn't exempt you as ignorance of the law is not immunity. If you're uncertain, seek guidance from a teacher or parent.

Plagiarism goes against district and school policies. Students should always attribute sources, whether you're quoting or summarizing. This includes all kinds of internet media like images, videos, music, and text.

The use or possession of hacking software is completely forbidden. Breaking state or federal laws can lead to legal action or school-related consequences.

6.6 Student Discipline

Devices provided by the Rockford School District are primarily intended for educational use. However, they can also be used at home for other purposes, with a focus on prioritizing school-related activities. If a student violates any part of this handbook, the District's Acceptable Use Policy or other established disciplinary policies/plans while using the device at home or school, appropriate consequences will apply as outlined in the policy.

- 1. Discipline in the School Environment:** Each school's discipline policies encompass the use of devices in a learning environment. Refer to school-specific materials or directly contact the school Principal for more information. Rockford Schools District Policy 506 contains additional information relating to student discipline. The policy can be reviewed by clicking [Policy 506 – Student Discipline Policy](#).
- 2. Gradual Discipline Approach:** Disciplinary measures follow a progressive approach. Initial, minor infractions might result in milder consequences compared to repeated or more severe offenses. The following examples are for illustration purposes, as appropriate steps will vary based on the student and situation. The following list are examples and may not be all inclusive.
 - Verbal warning
 - In-class repercussions
 - School-based consequences
 - Contact with parents
 - Referral to administration
 - Limited or loss of access to certain applications
 - Loss of device or mobile devices during class
 - Loss of device or network access for a longer duration
 - Suspension
- 3. Classroom Interventions:** For minor infractions, initial interventions will likely take place within the classroom. These could include verbal warnings, adjustments to seating arrangements, and communication with parents.
- 4. Consequences:** If a user engages in unauthorized activities, the student's school officials can revoke network access without prior notice. Additionally, access to the device itself can be withdrawn by school officials if unauthorized activities are detected.

6.7 Cyberbullying

As stated earlier in section 6.4, students using devices and other technology services are reminded of the district's policies regarding bullying and harassment, including cyberbullying. A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Bullying, like other violent or disruptive behavior, is conduct that interferes with a student's ability to learn and/or a teacher's ability to educate students in a safe environment.

The following policies provide additional guidance:

District Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence) - the policy can be reviewed by clicking [Policy 413 – Harassment and Violence](#).

District Policy 514 Bullying Prohibition Policy - the policy can be reviewed by clicking [Policy 514 – Bullying Prohibition Policy](#).

District Policy 524 (Acceptable Use Policy for Technology) - the policy can be reviewed by clicking [Policy 524 - Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy](#).

7.0 Protecting and Storing your Device

7.1 Device Identification

Students will receive devices with special labels attached by the Technology Services Department. These labels must remain on the devices at all times, regardless of what happens. If a label becomes detached, students should promptly return the device so that we can apply a new label. The school maintains a comprehensive inventory of all devices. When the labels are scanned into the inventory system, this procedure assigns responsibility for the devices to the respective users.

7.2 Passcode Protection

Student devices provided by the district must have passcode or password protection. In Elementary and Middle School, many of these passcodes are already set by the school district and given to the student. In High School, most students can set their passcodes themselves.

It's crucial for students to keep their passcodes secret. Passcodes should never be shared, published, or posted. If a student doesn't follow this agreement or any part of this standard, there might be unintended consequences, like a breach of data privacy.

If a student forgets their passcode or suspects it has been compromised, they should reach out for assistance to the Technology Services Department.

7.3 Storing Your Device

It is the student's responsibility to keep the devices assigned to them secure. Students are encouraged to take their district-issued devices home every day after school. Taking care of your Chromebook is important to ensure it stays in good condition and functions properly. Proper storage is a key part of keeping your device safe and ready for use. Here are some guidelines for storing your Chromebook:

1. **Safe Environment:** Store your Chromebook in a clean and dry place, away from direct sunlight, extreme temperatures, and moisture. Avoid placing it on surfaces where liquids could accidentally spill. Devices should not be stored in a student's vehicle when at school or at home.

2. **Charging:** Before storing your Chromebook, make sure it's charged to at least 50%. Long-term storage with a completely depleted battery could lead to battery damage.
3. **Closing the Lid:** When storing your Chromebook, close the lid gently. This helps protect the screen from potential damage.
4. **Disconnect External Devices:** If you've connected any external devices like USB drives or accessories, disconnect them before storing the Chromebook. This prevents accidental damage to ports and connectors.
5. **Secure Location:** Store your Chromebook in a secure location where it's less likely to be knocked over or stepped on. Avoid leaving it in places where it could fall, like the edge of a table or an unstable surface. Nothing should be placed on top of the device.
6. **Passcode Protection:** If your Chromebook has a passcode or password, make sure to engage this security feature before storing it. This adds an extra layer of protection against unauthorized access.
7. **Cleanliness:** Before storing, wipe the screen and keyboard with a soft, lint-free cloth to remove smudges and dirt. Avoid using abrasive materials or harsh chemicals.
8. **Avoid Weight:** Don't place heavy objects on top of your Chromebook, as this can damage the screen, keyboard, or internal components.
9. **Regular Use:** If you plan to store your Chromebook for an extended period, it's still a good idea to turn it on and let it update occasionally. This ensures that your device stays up-to-date with the latest software and security patches.

Remember that proper storage helps prolong the life of your Chromebook and ensures that it's ready for use whenever you need it. By following these guidelines, you can keep your device in excellent condition for a long time to come.

7.4 Devices Left Unattended

Ensuring the safety of the district-issued device is of utmost importance. It's crucial to never leave the device unattended, unless you are in the designated safe areas. Leaving the device unattended increases the chance of it being stolen. If the device is stolen due to being left unattended, the district may request the responsible person to cover the costs of a replacement device.

If an unattended device is found, it will be relocated either to the school office or the Technology Services office, where it can be safeguarded. Repeated occurrences of leaving the device unattended will result in disciplinary actions being implemented. Your cooperation in this matter contributes to the security and proper use of the devices provided by the district.

8.0 Repairing or Replacing your Device

8.1 Warranty

Rockford School District generally purchases devices with a standard warranty. This coverage assures protection against defects in materials and craftsmanship. The scope of this limited warranty encompasses standard usage, mechanical malfunctions, or defects in construction. In the event of such issues, replacement parts will be supplied for necessary repairs or device replacement.

It is important to note that this warranty does not cover damages arising from misuse, abuse, or negligence. We kindly request that all problems encountered with devices be promptly reported to the designated area for appropriate assistance. Your diligence in promptly addressing device concerns contributes to the smooth functioning of our equipment.

8.2 School/Student Responsibilities

In this section, we outline the responsibilities of both students and the school concerning the care, maintenance, and repair of school-issued devices. It's important that students understand their role in keeping devices functional and in good condition. Please refer to [Section 2.0 Taking Care of Your Device](#), for more details on device maintenance.

Device Malfunctions and Damages: Reporting and Repair

If a device malfunctions or sustains damage, it is the student's responsibility to promptly report the issue to the school office. Normal maintenance and repair issues are covered by the Technology Services Department of the Rockford School District. However, if damages are found to be a result of not following the safety procedures outlined in this handbook, the student may be held accountable for the associated repair charges. The district will consider a family's ability to reimburse the district for damages or repairs. One criterion used with the eligibility for free and or reduced meals.

School District's Repair Responsibility:

The school district is responsible for repairing the following:

- Devices that malfunction due to manufacturing or application defects.
- Devices that are damaged through regular use (excluding accessories like chargers, cords, cases, or other accessories).
- Any issue covered under warranty.
- First-time accidental damages may be covered and determined on a case by case basis.

Student/Family Responsibility:

Students and their families are responsible for the following:

- The District encourages the students to fully utilize the devices being issued to promote a successful learning environment. Ensuring that the devices are properly taken care, stored correctly, and transported in a protective manner is important.
- Replacing lost items and damaged accessories (cables, chargers, devices, cases, or other accessories). The school will replace the item and invoice the family.
- Fully covering repair costs for intentionally damaged devices.

Repair Costs:

The estimated replacement costs for some damages and repairs are found in [Section 1.1](#).

Repair Scenarios:

1. **1st accidental break:** Parents consulted with possible repair paid by school, loaner device provided, repaired device returned promptly. A decision would be made by the school and parent as to who pays the repair.
2. **2nd or further accidental breaks:** Repair paid by student, no loaner device provided (exceptions at administration's discretion), device returned after payment.
3. **1st intentional break:** Repair paid by student, no loaner device provided (exceptions at administration's discretion), device returned after payment.
4. **2nd or further intentional breaks:** Repair paid by student, no loaner device provided (exceptions at administration's discretion), device returned after payment.

Student Responsibilities During Repairs:

When a device requires repair, students are expected to:

- Notify parents/guardians about the repair and ensuing bill.
- Make payment to the school office promptly.
- If the break was intentional or a second break, students may work with pen and paper until repair and payment are completed (exceptions determined by administration).
- Inform teachers of any necessary adjustments to assignments.

Repair turnaround time is typically 1-2 days.

Examples:

- *Accidental breaks:* Device in a backpack, tripping, stepping on the device, dropping from a counter or desk.
- *Intentional breaks or damage:* Deep scratches inconsistent with normal wear, extreme bending, throwing the device, any damage admitted to being intentional by a student.

Understanding these responsibilities will help ensure the smooth functioning of devices and minimize disruptions in learning.

8.3 Claim

In the event that a district-issued device is stolen or damaged due to fire, students or parents are required to file a police or fire report. A copy of the report must be submitted to the Principal's office before a replacement device can be provided. To enhance awareness about district-owned equipment, the Rockford School District will collaborate with the schools' Resource Officers to notify the sheriff's department of the situation.

8.4 Device Protection Program

Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, Rockford School District will offer a voluntary Device Protection Program to help families mitigate financial responsibility in the event of accidental damage, theft, or loss of a school-issued device. The program is designed to provide peace of mind by covering common repair costs, including screen damage, keyboard malfunctions, and full device replacement due to theft (with a police report).

Families who choose to enroll will pay an annual fee of \$40 per student, with a family cap of \$80. Students who qualify for the Educational Benefits Program will receive a 50% discount. Enrollment must be completed within the first 30 days of the school year, or upon receipt of a device for mid-year enrollees. Families who do not opt into the program will be financially responsible for the full cost of any repairs or replacement due to damage or loss.

Claims are limited to one covered incident per year, with additional claims requiring partial payment for repairs. For more details, families can reference the full Device Protection Plan agreement online or contact the district's Technology Services Director at Jeff.Kienitz@rockford883.org.

9.0 Common Questions

Question: Does the school district encourage the use of BYOD (bring your own device)?

Answer: The Rockford School District is not endorsing a BYOD in lieu of receiving a district issued device for several reasons:

1. **Equity and Accessibility:** BYOD programs can exacerbate existing disparities in technology access among students. Not all students may have access to their own devices, leading to inequalities in learning experiences and potentially hindering those without devices.
2. **Consistency:** Using a variety of different devices can make it challenging for teachers to provide consistent learning experiences and technical support. Compatibility issues,

different software versions, and varying capabilities of devices can complicate lesson planning and troubleshooting.

3. **Security:** When students bring their own devices, there's a risk of introducing potentially harmful software, viruses, or security vulnerabilities into the school's network. Maintaining a secure digital environment becomes more complex when numerous devices are involved.
4. **Digital Divide:** A BYOD program can deepen the digital divide by allowing students with more advanced devices to access educational resources and applications that might not be available to those with older or less capable devices.
5. **Distractions:** BYOD programs can lead to increased distractions in the classroom, as students may use their personal devices for non-educational purposes during class time.
6. **Privacy Concerns:** Using personal devices can raise privacy concerns, as school staff may have limited control over the content accessed on students' devices. This can potentially lead to inappropriate content being displayed or shared within the school environment.
7. **Technical Support:** Managing a variety of different devices can strain the school's technical support resources. Troubleshooting issues on a wide range of devices can be time-consuming and complex.
8. **Policy and Regulation:** Schools need clear policies for device use, internet access, and data security. Implementing these policies consistently across various personal devices can be challenging.
9. **Teacher Training:** Teachers need training to effectively integrate technology into their teaching. Dealing with a variety of devices may require additional training and professional development.
10. **Liability:** Schools may be held liable for any damage, loss, or theft of personal devices brought to school premises. This could create legal complications.

It's important for a school district to carefully evaluate the benefits and challenges of a BYOD program and consider whether the potential educational gains outweigh the potential drawbacks. The 1:1 program at Rockford Area Schools is relatively new and the district is still learning the long-term viability and use of the 1:1 device and learning whether or not to implement a full or limited BYOD program.

Question: Does the school district have a device protection program for devices?

Answer: The school district intends to offer a device protection program for students and families. Please refer to [Section 8.4](#) in this manual. In addition, the district works to recycle and reuse the parts from the discarded chrome books and other devices to offset the cost of

purchasing parts. The district does this to reduce costs that may need to be recovered by invoicing students, parents or guardians assigned the devices.

Question: What if a student experiences a technical issue?

Answer: When technical issues arise, teachers are aware that such challenges are a natural aspect of using technology, and students should not face penalties due to these issues. Additionally, there are no restrictions preventing students from downloading assignments at school or home and printing them on paper. Teachers should not prevent students from choosing to complete assignments using paper.

Students will receive instruction in basic device troubleshooting to equip them with foundational skills. Students should have a grasp of these troubleshooting techniques. If a student encounters device problems beyond these basics, they should seek assistance from the Media Center or the Technology Services Department.

In certain cases, a student might need to temporarily exchange their device for a loaner during the day. However, given that all work should be saved to Google Drive, this switch should not disrupt the student's access to their work. It's crucial that students understand this, as it ensures their work remains accessible and uninterrupted.

Question: What if I forgot my password or username?

Answer: The student can talk with their teacher to resolve the issue. The student may be sent to the Technology Services Office for additional help in resetting user names or passwords.

Question: How should the camera and microphone be used on my device?

Answer: The use of microphones and cameras on Chromebooks or other devices is an integral aspect of modern learning. These features enable interactive and collaborative experiences, enhancing the educational process. To ensure a respectful and safe environment for all, the following guidelines are provided:

1. **Educational Use:** Microphones and cameras should be used for educational purposes only, as directed by teachers and in alignment with the curriculum.
2. **Privacy and Respect:** Students must be mindful of their surroundings when using microphones and cameras. Ensure that unintended or private content is not shared inadvertently.
3. **Consent:** When participating in live video sessions, students should be aware that their video and audio may be visible and audible to the entire class. By joining the session, students provide implied consent for their video and audio to be shared in the virtual classroom environment.

4. **Engagement:** During virtual classes, students are encouraged to engage actively by using cameras and microphones, as appropriate. This promotes a sense of connection and participation within the virtual classroom.
5. **Camera Etiquette:** Whenever possible, use appropriate backgrounds during video sessions. Ensure that the camera's focus is on the student and their learning environment.
6. **Muting:** When not actively participating, students are encouraged to mute their microphones to minimize background noise and distractions.
7. **Unauthorized Use:** Recording or capturing class sessions, including images, audio, or video, without explicit teacher permission is prohibited.
8. **Reporting Concerns:** If students encounter any inappropriate or concerning use of microphones or cameras, they should immediately report it to a teacher or school staff member.

By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a positive and effective online learning environment while respecting the privacy and rights of all participants.

Question: How will students save materials and projects?

Answer: Rockford School District utilizes Google for Education to help provide a framework of programs and support including Google Email and Drive. This is the primary source of storage for students. A couple other school-issued programs that contain storage are Adobe Creative Suites and Microsoft Office 365.

Question: Are programs used for curriculum vetted for use?

Answer: Yes, the program allowed for use in curriculum and instruction are listed on the school website. These are referred to as Digital Tools and can be located by clicking "[Digital Tools](#)."

Question: Can I use my personal and district assigned devices whenever I want in school?

Answer: The building principals may have an established best practice in place with regards to electronic devices during instructional time. The Principal may post this practice in the school's handbook or in other written form. In Rockford School District, teachers have the authority to decide whether electronic devices can be used during instructional periods. It's important to honor and comply with the instructions provided by each teacher. If a teacher permits the use of electronic devices, it's crucial to observe the following guidelines:

1. **Adherence to Policies:** Users must strictly follow district policies while using electronic devices.
2. **Educational Purposes:** Devices should be utilized solely for educational activities and purposes, as directed by the teacher.

3. **Minimized Distractions:** It's essential that device use does not create distractions or disruptions within the learning environment.
4. **In-Class Use:** Unless otherwise authorized by school personnel, electronic devices should only be used within the classroom during instructional time.

Teachers' decisions regarding the use of electronic devices are made to ensure effective learning and minimize disruptions. By adhering to their guidance and observing these guidelines, we contribute to a positive and focused educational environment.

Question: How do I connect to the internet off campus?

Answer: To connect a Chromebook to the internet at home, you can follow these steps:

1. **Power On:** Turn on your Chromebook if it's not already powered on.
2. **Wi-Fi Icon:** In the bottom-right corner of the screen, you'll see the network icon. It looks like a series of bars or a Wi-Fi symbol. Click on this icon.
3. **Networks Available:** A list of available Wi-Fi networks will appear. Locate your home Wi-Fi network from the list.
4. **Select Network:** Click on your home Wi-Fi network's name.
5. **Enter Password:** If your Wi-Fi network is secured (requires a password), a pop-up window will appear asking you to enter the network password. Type in the password accurately.
6. **Connect:** After entering the password, click the "Connect" button.
7. **Connected:** Once successfully connected, the network icon will change to show that you're connected to the internet.

Your Chromebook is now connected to your home Wi-Fi network, and you should be able to browse the internet and use online services. Remember that you'll need the correct Wi-Fi password to connect to a secured network.

If you have trouble connecting, make sure you're entering the correct password and that you're within range of your Wi-Fi router. If you continue to have issues, you might need to troubleshoot your Wi-Fi connection or contact your internet service provider for assistance.

Question: What if I don't have internet at home?

Answer: If you don't have internet access at home, there are still a few options to consider for using your Chromebook:

1. **Offline Mode:** Many Chromebook applications and tools can work in offline mode. You can work on documents, read e-books, and use certain applications without an active internet connection. Any changes you make will be synced once you're back online.
2. **Public Wi-Fi:** You might be able to find public Wi-Fi hotspots in your area, such as libraries, cafes, community centers, or even some public parks. Be cautious about using public Wi-Fi for sensitive activities and always prioritize your online safety.
3. **Mobile Hotspot:** If you have a smartphone with a data plan, you can enable mobile hotspot functionality. This turns your phone into a Wi-Fi hotspot, allowing your Chromebook to connect to the internet through your phone's data connection. Keep in mind that this could use a significant amount of data from your mobile plan.
4. **School or Community Resources:** Check with your school counselor, the district's Technology Services Office or local community organizations. They might have resources available to help students access the internet.
5. **Internet Service Assistance Programs:** Some internet service providers help provide programs for low-income households, providing affordable internet access to students and families. Check with local ISPs to see if you're eligible for such programs.

To find the most accurate and current information, you can visit the following websites:

FCC Lifeline Program: Visit the FCC's Lifeline Program page for detailed information about the program, eligibility criteria, and application process: [FCC Lifeline Program](#)

USAC Lifeline Program: The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) administers the Lifeline program. You can visit their website for application information and resources: [USAC Lifeline Program](#)

National Verifier: The National Verifier is a tool used to determine Lifeline eligibility. You can find more information about the National Verifier on the USAC website: [National Verifier](#)

It's important to communicate with your teachers and school if you don't have reliable internet access at home. They might be able to provide alternative assignments or offer solutions to support your learning.

10.0 Parents' Guide

Online Safety and Digital Citizenship Resources

Cyber Safety Guide for Parents

Ensuring the safety of our students in the digital world is a shared responsibility. As parents and guardians, you play a vital role in helping your child navigate the online landscape safely and

responsibly. This guide provides essential tips and strategies to promote cyber safety for your child:

1. Open Communication:

- Establish an open and ongoing dialogue with your child about their online activities.
- Encourage them to share their experiences, concerns, and any online interactions that make them uncomfortable.

2. Set Ground Rules:

- Establish clear guidelines for screen time, device usage, and online activities.
- Define appropriate online behavior, including treating others with respect and refraining from sharing personal information.

3. Educate About Privacy:

- Teach your child to safeguard their personal information, including full name, address, school, phone number, and passwords.
- Remind them that not everyone online may be who they claim to be.

4. Monitor Online Activities:

- Regularly review your child's online profiles, social media accounts, and friend lists.
- Keep an eye on the websites, applications, and games they use.

5. Use Parental Controls:

- Utilize device and app-specific parental controls to manage and limit your child's online experiences.
- Consider software that filters content, sets time limits, and monitors online activities.

6. Teach Critical Thinking:

- Help your child develop critical thinking skills to evaluate information and identify potential online threats.
- Discuss the importance of verifying information before sharing or believing it.

7. Encourage Reporting:

- Let your child know they can come to you with any concerns about online interactions or content.
- Teach them how to report inappropriate behavior or content on websites and applications.

8. Be a Role Model:

- Demonstrate responsible online behavior in your own interactions and discussions.
- Model appropriate screen time management and digital etiquette.

9. Online Friendships:

- Advise your child to only accept friend requests or connections from people they know in real life.
- Discuss the potential risks of communicating with strangers online.

10. Cyberbullying Awareness:

- Teach your child about cyberbullying and what to do if they encounter it.
- Encourage them to report any instances of cyberbullying to you or a trusted adult.

By actively engaging in your child's online experiences and equipping them with the tools to navigate safely, you empower them to make responsible decisions in the digital world. Remember that fostering open communication and trust is key to creating a positive and secure online environment for your child.

There are several websites that provide valuable resources and information to support parents in promoting cyber safety for their children. Here are a few trusted websites that offer tips, guides, and tools for parents:

1. **Common Sense Media:** Common Sense Media offers a variety of resources to help parents navigate the digital world with their kids. They provide reviews of applications, games, and movies, as well as articles on topics related to online safety and digital citizenship. Website: [Common Sense Media](#)
2. **ConnectSafely:** ConnectSafely is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting online safety. They offer resources for parents, educators, and teens, covering topics like social media, cyberbullying, and privacy. Website: [ConnectSafely](#)
3. **National Online Safety:** This organization provides a range of online safety resources and courses for parents and educators. They cover topics such as social media platforms, online gaming, and cyberbullying. Website: [National Online Safety](#)
4. **Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI):** FOSI offers guides and resources to help families navigate the digital world safely. They cover topics like screen time management, online privacy, and digital well-being. Website: [Family Online Safety Institute](#)
5. **StaySafeOnline:** Managed by the National Cyber Security Alliance, StaySafeOnline provides resources for families, educators, and businesses to enhance online safety. They offer tips, videos, and guides for parents. Website: [StaySafeOnline](#)

6. **NetSmartz Workshop:** Created by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, NetSmartz Workshop offers resources and interactive activities to educate kids and parents about internet safety. Website: [NetSmartz Workshop](#)
7. **Google Family Safety Center:** Google's Family Safety Center provides tools and tips to help families stay safe online. They offer resources on online privacy, managing screen time, and safe online communication. Website: [Google Family Safety Center](#)
8. **SANS Institute** – The Sans Institute promotes several ways to stay safe online. They work to help spread security awareness programs that can be used in your home. Website: [SANS Institute – Secure the Family](#)

These websites offer a wealth of information, guides, and tools that can help parents navigate the digital world with their children and promote a safe and responsible online experience. Always ensure to explore and evaluate the content on these websites to find the information that suits your specific needs.

Annexes

Annex A: 1:1 District-Issued Device Policies, Guidelines, & Agreement Forms

Permission Form for Access to Technology - Rockford School District 883

Signing this form gives permission for my enrolled child or children to access and use electronic technology provided by the Rockford School District for educational purposes. I understand and agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. **Educational Use:** I acknowledge that access to technology in the Rockford School District is intended for educational purposes and opportunities. I understand that all use of Rockford School District's electronic technology must align with educational programming and curriculum.
2. **Compliance with Guidelines:** My child agrees to comply with all district guidelines, policies, and agreements regarding the use of electronic devices provided by the Rockford School District.
3. **Ownership and Review:** I acknowledge that the school-issued device is the property of the Rockford School District. I understand that the district reserves the right to review or seize the device at any time.
4. **Privacy Expectations:** I understand that my child should have a limited to minimal expectation of privacy for materials or activity on the school-issued device. I am aware that the district may access and monitor device usage as needed to follow the Federal and State rules and regulations.
5. **Guideline Compliance:** I acknowledge that failure to comply with the Rockford School District - 1:1 District Issued Device Handbook, as well as all district policies including District Policy 524 Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy, District Policy 514 Bullying Prohibition, and District Policy 506 Student Discipline, may result in consequences including the loss of privilege to take the device home, use the school-issued device, or other appropriate disciplinary actions.

By signing this permission form, I affirm that I have read and understood the terms and conditions outlined above. I agree to ensure my child's compliance with these guidelines and to support their responsible and educational use of electronic technology provided by the Rockford School District.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: (Signature) _____ Date: _____

Student Name: _____ School: _____

Grade: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

I have read all the policies and guidelines in the Rockford School District - **1:1 District Issued Device Handbook**. I understand my responsibilities as a parent/guardian. I authorize Rockford School District - 883 to allow my student access to educational applications which may require a minimum age of 13 years or older.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Annex B: Rockford Area Schools Digital Learner Pledge Form

Digital Learner Pledge Form

I understand the importance of responsible and respectful use of technology as a digital learner. I commit to uphold the following principles to ensure a positive and productive digital learning experience:

1. Respectful Communication:

- I will communicate online with kindness, respect, and empathy, just as I would in person.
- I will avoid using language or behavior that may hurt, insult, or offend others.

2. Privacy and Personal Information:

- I will not share personal information, such as my full name, address, phone number, or passwords, online without permission.
- I understand that what I post online can be seen by others, and I will be cautious about sharing private details.

3. Cyberbullying Prevention:

- I will not engage in cyberbullying or any form of online harassment.
- I will report any instances of cyberbullying or inappropriate behavior I come across.

4. Intellectual Property and Citations:

- I will respect copyright laws and give proper credit when using others' work, images, or content.
- I will create and share original content, giving credit when I use someone else's work.

5. Digital Safety and Security:

- I will keep my passwords secure and not share them with anyone.
- I will be cautious about clicking on links or downloading files from unknown sources.

6. Device and Screen Time Balance:

- I will use technology for educational purposes and manage my screen time to maintain a healthy balance between online and offline activities.

- I will take good care of my device and accounts.
- I will not leave my device unattended.
- I will charge the devices battery so it is ready for class.
- I will be responsible for all damages or loss caused intentionally or by misuse or abuse.
- I agree to return the device, the charger and other accessories in good condition.
- I will not deface the device or place inappropriate decorations on the device.
- I will not deface or remove the serial number or inventory stickers on the device or accessories.

7. Responsible Research and Information Evaluation:

- I will critically evaluate online information to ensure its accuracy and reliability before using it for my assignments.

8. Online Etiquette:

- I will follow the guidelines set by my school and educators for online participation, discussions, and assignments.
- I will adhere to appropriate netiquette and refrain from disruptive or inappropriate behavior online.

By signing this pledge, I commit to being a responsible digital learner and contributing to a positive online environment for myself and others. I understand that my actions in the digital world reflect on me and the values of our learning community.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please keep this pledge form as a reminder of your commitment to responsible digital learning.

NOTES:

Reviewed by: Jeff Kienitz, Director of Technology

Written: August 2023

Revised/Reviewed: March 19, 2025

Outside Sources accredited with the formation of this handbook:

Hegna, Jen (Byron Public Schools) 1:1 District Issued Handbook, August 2023, Google Drive Shares

Samek, Joseph (Elk River Public Schools) 1:1 Chromebook Flyer and 1:1 Key Resources for planning 1:1 Rollout, August 2023, Google Drive shares

ChatGPT by OpenAI (chat.openai.com) used for clarification with grammar and structure, last updated September 2021.

Title IX:

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment.

All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools

More information can be found

at <https://www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-ix>

ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS ISD 883

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Welcome to Rockford Area Schools ISD 883!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Rockford Area Schools. Volunteers play a vital role in enhancing our students' educational experiences, and we greatly appreciate your time, talents, and dedication. This handbook provides essential information about our expectations, policies, and procedures to ensure a safe and positive experience for both volunteers and students.

District Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a rigorous and innovative educational environment that empowers every student to achieve success in a changing world. Volunteers contribute to this mission by supporting students, staff, and programs across our schools.

District Core Values

We believe in:

- **The brilliance of ourselves and others** – Everyone has the capacity and responsibility to foster the growth and brilliance of others.
- **Authentic community engagement** – Engaging and supporting our employees, families, and communities enhances the healthy development of each learner.
- **High expectations** – Instilling and upholding high expectations empowers students and staff to higher levels of achievement.
- **Collective responsibility** – Embodying the collective and urgent responsibility of anti-racist practices enriches a work and learning environment and community.
- **Persistent effort** – Through persistent effort, we will create anti-racist schools and academically successful learners.

- **Racial consciousness and cultural competence** – These qualities are essential to each person's ability to be a catalyst for change.
 - **Advocacy for equity** – Everyone has equal intrinsic worth, and we will advocate for the historically marginalized.
-

Volunteer Program Overview

Who Can Volunteer?

- Parents and guardians of students
- Grandparents and family members
- Community members
- Business and civic organization representatives
- High school students fulfilling service requirements

Ways to Volunteer

- Classroom assistance
 - Library and media center support
 - Mentoring and tutoring
 - Field trip chaperones
 - Event and extracurricular activity support
 - Office and clerical help
 - Facility and outdoor beautification projects
-

Volunteer Application Process

Annual Volunteer Application Renewal

All volunteers must complete a new application each school year. Applications can be found on the district website or at each school's main office. Completing an application does not commit you to volunteering, but it is a necessary step to get started.

Background Check Requirement

In compliance with **Minnesota Statute 123B.03**, all volunteers working with students must complete a background check, which includes:

- Criminal history check
- Sex offender registry check

Volunteers must provide a signed consent form and may be responsible for associated costs unless covered by the school district. If the results of the background check affect eligibility, the district will notify the individual accordingly.

Reference: Minnesota Statute 123B.03

Volunteer Guidelines and Expectations

Sign-In and Identification

- Volunteers must check in at the front office and wear a visitor badge while on school grounds.
- Volunteers should sign out upon leaving.

Professional Conduct

- Treat all students, staff, and fellow volunteers with respect.
- Dress appropriately for the school environment.
- Arrive on time and notify the school if unable to fulfill a volunteer commitment.
- Follow all school policies and procedures at all times.

Confidentiality and Data Privacy

- Volunteers are bound by **Minnesota Data Privacy Laws** and **Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Education Records)**.
- Personal, academic, or behavioral information about students must remain confidential.
- Any concerns about student well-being should be reported directly to a school administrator or staff member.

Volunteer Contact Restrictions

- Volunteers may not contact students outside of school without parental and administrative approval.
- Restricted contact includes social media, telephone communication, or meeting students off school grounds.

Cultural Awareness

Our community is culturally diverse. Volunteers should work positively with everyone and be aware of cultural differences to foster an inclusive environment.

Discipline Protocol

- Volunteers should not discipline students beyond maintaining order in their group or activity.

- Any behavioral issues should be reported to the supervising staff, as they are responsible for discipline.

Accident Reporting

- If an injury occurs while volunteering, report it immediately to the building health professional, Volunteer Services Coordinator, or supervising staff.

Record Keeping

- Accurate record-keeping of volunteer hours is crucial. Volunteers should log their hours as directed by the school.

Staff Responsibilities

- While volunteer suggestions are valued, staff members are legally responsible for decisions regarding student instruction and school management.

Mandatory Reporting

Minnesota state law requires all school personnel and volunteers to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. If a volunteer suspects a student is being harmed, they must:

- Immediately report concerns to a school administrator, counselor, or teacher.
- Avoid questioning the student or investigating on their own.
- Maintain confidentiality and allow school officials to handle the matter appropriately.

Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect may result in legal consequences. Rockford Area Schools provides training and resources to help volunteers understand their responsibilities under **Policy 414 (Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Children or Vulnerable Adults)**.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Rockford Area Schools is committed to maintaining an environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is prohibited in our educational programs and activities.

Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or education.

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting that individual.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Reporting Procedures:

- Any volunteer who believes they have been subjected to sexual harassment or has witnessed such conduct should report the incident promptly to the Title IX Coordinator or any school administrator.
- The district will investigate all complaints promptly and take appropriate corrective action to eliminate the conduct and prevent its recurrence.

For detailed information, refer to **Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence Prevention)**.

Bullying Policy

Rockford Area Schools is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation. Volunteers should be aware of and adhere to **Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition Policy)**, which states:

- Bullying is prohibited on school property, at school functions, and in school transportation.
- Volunteers should immediately report any instances of bullying to a school administrator or staff member.
- Retaliation against individuals reporting bullying is strictly prohibited.
- The district will investigate all reports and take appropriate action.

Reference: Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition Policy)

Field Trip and Event Guidelines

Field Trip Requirements

- Volunteers assisting on field trips must complete a background check.
- Volunteers must follow the direction of the lead teacher or staff member.
- No unauthorized stops or detours are allowed.

Emergency Procedures

- Follow staff instructions during fire drills, lockdowns, and other emergency procedures.
- Review the school's **Emergency Action Guide** for response protocols.

Reference: Policy 507 (Emergency Procedures)

Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation

We value the contributions of our volunteers and regularly recognize their efforts through:

- Volunteer appreciation events
- Certificates of recognition
- Acknowledgment in school communications

Additional Relevant Policies and Resources

Volunteers must adhere to the following **Rockford Area Schools** policies:

- **Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free School** (Policy 418)
- **Tobacco-Free Environment** (Policy 419)
- **Harassment and Violence Prevention** (Policy 413)
- **Internet Acceptable Use and Safety** (Policy 524)
- **Volunteer Background Check Policy** (Policy 404)
- **Student Privacy and Confidentiality** (Policy 515)
- **Bullying Prohibition Policy** (Policy 514)

These policies can be accessed at: **Rockford Area Schools Policies**

Title IX:

Rockford Area Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any educational program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including employment.

All Title IX reports and concerns should be directed to the Superintendent of Schools

More information can be found

at <https://www.rockford883.org/district/departments/human-resources/title-i>

Contact Information

For more information or to get started as a volunteer, please contact: Rockford Area Schools

ISD 883 Rockford Area Schools

651 Ash Street

Rockford, MN 55373

Phone: **763-477-9165**

Email: **Mike.McNulty@rockford883.org**

Website: **www.rockford883.org**

Thank you for your willingness to support our students and schools!

Building Contact Information:

District Office

 **Superintendent:** Dr. Jeff Ridlehoover


 **Office Phone:** (763) 477-9165

Rockford Elementary Arts Magnet School

 **Principal:** Brenda Nyhus

 **Office Phone:** (763) 477-5837

Rockford Middle School - Center for Environmental Studies

 **Principal:** Paul Warzecha

 **Office Phone:** (763) 477-5831

Rockford High School - IB World School

 **Principal:** Paul Menard

 **Office Phone:** (763) 477-5846

For additional information, visit www.rockford883.org

Emergency Contact Number: 911

Rockford Area Schools – Volunteer Emergency Response Guide



At Rockford Area Schools, the safety of our students, staff, and volunteers is our top priority. Please familiarize yourself with the following emergency procedures. If you witness an emergency, notify a staff member immediately or call 911 if necessary.

Fire Emergency



- **Evacuate** the building immediately using the nearest exit.
- **Do not use elevators.**
- Follow posted evacuation routes and proceed to the designated assembly area.
- Do not re-enter the building until authorized by emergency personnel.



Severe Weather (Tornado, High Winds, etc.)

- Move to a designated shelter area, typically an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor, away from windows.
- Follow staff instructions and remain in place until the “All Clear” is given.

Medical Emergency



- Call **911** for life-threatening conditions.
- Alert the main office or another staff member immediately.
- If trained, provide first aid/CPR until medical personnel arrive.

Lockdown Procedures



- **Lockdown** (Threat Inside): Move to the nearest secure room, lock doors, turn off lights, and remain silent.
- **Lockout** (Threat Outside): All exterior doors will be secured; remain inside the building and continue normal activities.
- Follow staff instructions and do not open doors until an official “All Clear” is given.

Suspicious Activity or Threats



- Report concerns immediately to a staff member or administrator.
- Do not approach or confront suspicious individuals.
- Follow school protocols for safety.



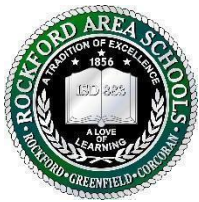
Chemical Spill or Gas Leak

- Move away from the affected area.
- Alert staff immediately.
- Follow evacuation or shelter-in-place instructions.

General Safety Tips for Volunteers

- Always wear your volunteer badge while on school premises.
- Be aware of your surroundings and report any safety concerns.
- Follow all staff instructions during emergencies.

For any questions regarding emergency procedures, please consult school administrators.
Thank you for your commitment to a safe school environment!



VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Rockford Area Schools

ROCKFORD AREA SCHOOLS
Independent School District #883
6051 Ash Street, Rockford, MN 55373

Volunteer Name: _____

Position: _____ Volunteer
(Name of Program)

Volunteer Start Date: _____

Volunteer End Date: The duration for this Volunteer Agreement may be adjusted or terminated by Rockford Area Schools at any time.

VOLUNTEER

Individuals, including School District employees, frequently wish to volunteer to assist with coverage, supervision, and other tasks related to student activities, athletics, or other functions. These service hours are performed for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. There is no requirement or expectation that any individual or employee performs volunteer services on behalf of the School District, nor any work-related benefit, incentive, or opportunity that will be provided or enhanced as a result of such services.

VOLUNTEER STATEMENT

I am interested in volunteering for this assignment. By signing this letter of assignment, I acknowledge and affirm that I will be performing these services voluntarily and without any expectation of compensation or other benefit. I understand the expectations outlined above and agree to abide by the guidelines set forth in this agreement and in the policies of the Rockford Area Schools District.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have carefully read this volunteer agreement, that I fully understand its contents, and agree to this assignment according to the terms and conditions listed above. By signing below, I express my understanding and intent to enter into this assignment willingly and voluntarily.

This agreement must be signed prior to volunteering.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____