

2026-2027

Rockford Area Schools Employee Handbook



Cindy Gapinski: Payroll/HR Coordinator cindy.gapinski@rockford883.org
Jeff Ridlehoover: Superintendent jeff.ridlehoover@rockford883.org

Updated by: Rockford Handbook Team, March 2026

Data Classification: Public Information | TLP: CLEAR

This handbook contains general employment guidance, administrative expectations, and workplace standards intended for district staff and may be disclosed in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and public employment requirements.

Disclaimer: This handbook is administrative guidance and does not replace Board Policy, collective bargaining agreements, individual contracts, or applicable state and federal law. In the event of conflict, governing law, Board policy, and negotiated agreements shall control.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter of Introduction	1
About this Handbook	1
District Operations and Information	2
Mission, Vision, Core Values and Strategic Direction	2
Board of Education	3
Policies & Administrative Procedures of the School Board	3
Employment Practices	4
Employer Expectation	5
Employee Expectations	6
Communication Expectations	6
Emergency School Closing/Late Start/Early Dismissal	9
Employee Rights	9
Discrimination, Harassment, Violence	10
Bullying Procedures	12
Drug Free Schools	12
Mandated Reporting- Child Abuse and Neglect	13
Attendance for Employees	14
General Information	17
Time off	17
Food & Nutrition Services	24
Fundraisers	25
Gifts & Gratuities	25
IEPs, 504 and Re-evaluations	25
Identification Badges	26
Layoffs & Seniority	26
Meet & Confer	26
Background Checks	26
Performance	26
Transportation & Travel	27
Payroll & Benefits – HR Info	28
Basic Information	28
Salary Information	34
Accident & Injuries	34
Solicitations	37
Technology	37
Title IX	39

Data Classification: Public Information | TLP: CLEAR

This handbook contains general employment guidance, administrative expectations, and workplace standards intended for district staff and may be disclosed in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and public employment requirements.

Disclaimer: This handbook is administrative guidance and does not replace Board Policy, collective bargaining agreements, individual contracts, or applicable state and federal law. In the event of conflict, governing law, Board policy, and negotiated agreements shall control.

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 collaborating 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

Jessica Johnson – Chair
 Eric Gordee – 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
 Chief Financial Officer – Bridget Peterson

Director of Community Education – Melissa Joseph
Director of Technology and School Safety – 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 based on 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 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 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 on 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 a significant 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, advertising 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 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 plans to attend. Periodically, staff meetings may be held for the purpose of hearing guest speakers, holding open forums, obtaining current 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 (preferably 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.

Communication Crisis 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 workday 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 conditions 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 accommodation should be made for qualified individuals with a disability or handicap unless such accommodation imposes 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 at 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.

The full link:

<https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/groups/Communications/documents/unzip/033912/033912.mp4>

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, because 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 County 763-682-7662, Hennepin County 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 About

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/lfsrserver/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 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 based on 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 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 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 guidelines 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 for eligible employees for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth.
- 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 requirements. 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 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 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 accommodation, 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 of work schedule or tasks. An employer cannot require an employee to take a leave or accept accommodation. Lactating employees have the right to reasonable paid break times to express milk at work unless they express 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 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 drills, intruder, bomb threat, and tornado information.

- Extra activities for substitutes
- Medical information for special needs students
- School rules
- Behavior rules
- Any special instructions for mainstream 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 regard to student data. If you have questions, please seek assistance from 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 to access 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 will not be included in the student's file.
- Assume emails or voicemails will not 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 expenditure 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 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 it 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 in 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. Certified staff, secretaries, custodians, paraprofessionals, and administrators provide these educational services. 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 participate 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 participate 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 meets 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 managed 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.
- Manage 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.
- Manage basic accountability and discipline needs.
- Support volunteer chaperones with their responsibilities.
- Support and train volunteer chaperones with basic accountability and discipline needs.
- Manage higher level discipline needs.
- Work with and report to the event leaders 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 an extended period. (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 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 2025-26 school year are as follows:

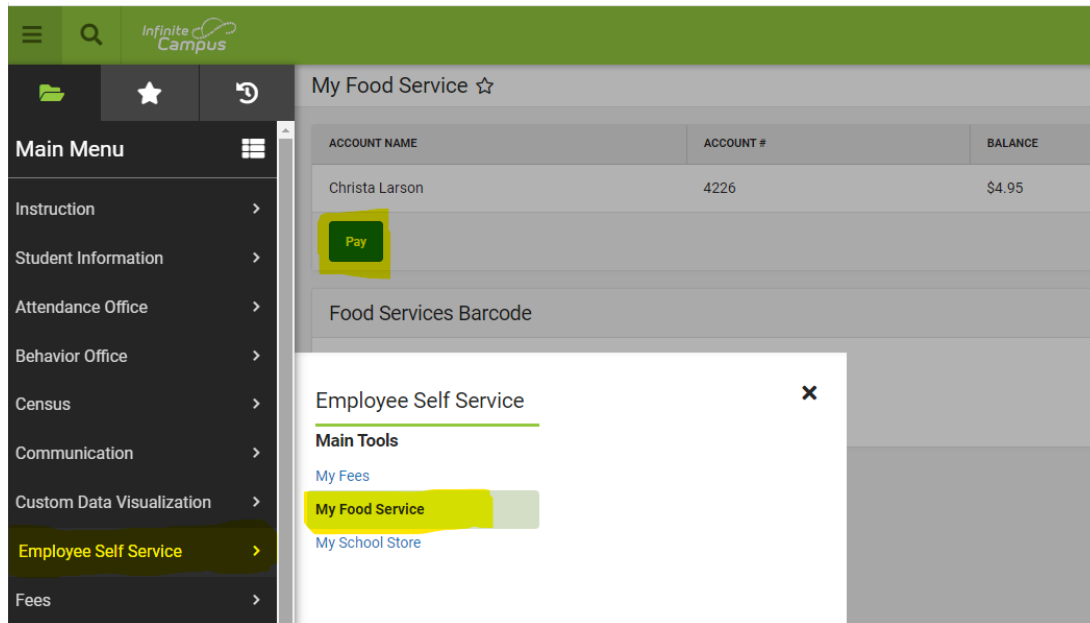
Breakfast \$2.50
Lunch \$5.05
Milk \$0.60

Staff may also purchase a la carte items in the cafeteria for the designated price. These prices for 2026-27 are determined by the School Board by the start of the school year.

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 at 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 ensuring 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 from 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](#). Off-site staff development is also available with 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 into 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 hourly 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 hourly 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 weekday 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 workday 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 for ensuring 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 their 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 Community Ed
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 into 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 Classification 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 if 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, on 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 Time Off to view your leave balances.
 - Click on 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 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 to set you up for direct deposit.

- **Application for health and ancillary benefits:** This information must 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 lose 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 another qualifying event. Employees are allowed to continue 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 with the preparation of the buildings for the following school year. Please note: a person must be 15 years old by June 15th to work in a summer work study position.

Accidents & Injuries

An accident report must be completed and given to Human Resources/District Off 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 would 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 case of an emergency. Please call the office to request 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 buildings 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 always maintained. 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 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 damage to personal property. To minimize risk, we advise you not to 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 technological 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 experience.
- 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