



Goodhue County Education District
Employee Handbook
2021-2022

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gced.k12.mn.us

WELCOME TO GOODHUE COUNTY EDUCATION DISTRICT

Welcome and congratulations on being a member of the Goodhue County Education District employee. We are happy to have you as a member of our Education District staff. We hope that you will find your time with us pleasant, interesting, challenging, and rewarding.

This handbook will briefly clarify some common issues regarding personnel procedures within the GCED. These procedures are based primarily on administrative directive rather than a Board approved policy. All are consistent with your individual Goodhue County Education District Agreements and/or Terms and Conditions of Employment. This handbook is not designed to include all of the details of a topic but is intended to be a starting point. You are also encouraged to contact your supervisor or other appropriate employee members if the information you are seeking is not sufficiently addressed in the handbook.

The information in this handbook is a reference. Federal/state/local law, district policy, and negotiated labor agreements are summarized. Refer to legal documents for specifics. This summary of district procedures supersedes any earlier district handbook.

The term “Education District,” as used in this handbook, refers to Goodhue County Education District and services provided by this organization.

Cheryl L Johnson
Executive Director

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Goodhue County Education District

Goodhue County Education District was organized in 1990 under Minnesota Statute (M.S.) 125A.15 'for the purpose of increasing educational opportunities for learners by increasing cooperation and coordination among schools and family agencies in Goodhue County and post-secondary institutions.'

The Education District Board is composed of one representative from each member district who is a member of and appointed by the member district board. The Board receives advice from committees through the Principal's and Superintendent's Councils.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Goodhue County Education District is to optimize educational opportunities for students by increasing cooperation and coordination among the member districts.

Expectations for Employee

1. **Be a team player.** Bring a positive attitude to work every day. Communicate effectively with students and the members of your team. Get to know the responsibilities of all your team members. Attempt to resolve problems closest to the source of the issue.
2. **Serve as a role model in your dress, speech, and actions.** Dress and act appropriately for your role and personal safety. Always use respectful language. Avoid jokes, off-color remarks or attempts at humor that could be considered rude, inappropriate, disruptive or unprofessional. Do not talk about students or employee in a disrespectful or discourteous way.
3. **Teachers and their assistants are responsible for the education and supervision of students at all times.**
4. **Set high expectations for behavior. Know and enforce the requirements of the District's *Student Handbook*.**
5. **Maintain confidentiality at all times.** Employees, students, and their families have a right to confidentiality and data privacy. You are accountable for what you say and for information you release. Do not speak about a student in front of another student or talk about a student to employee or others in or outside school except on a need to know basis. Respect other employee members' confidentiality.
6. **You are a mandatory reporter of suspected maltreatment of minors and vulnerable adults.**
7. **Maintain your personal and professional boundaries at all times.** Personal information about your life outside of school is not appropriate and may not be appreciated by students. You are part of the school program and your job is to provide education, support, and guidance to students. Establishing "friendships" with students may create unrealistic expectations and interfere with sustaining appropriate boundaries.
8. **Maintain a respectful and safe workplace.** Inappropriate comments about race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, or other tasteless or improper remarks will not be tolerated. The Education District also has a Harassment and Violence Policy that is on the district website. An important aspect of this policy is to report to your supervisor if you receive an unwelcome comment or feel threatened in any way. To the extent possible, we want you to feel safe and secure at all times.
9. **Be dependable.** You are responsible for maintaining good attendance. You are expected to report to work on time, adhere to the time periods established by the District for any breaks, and remain at the assigned work station throughout the scheduled work period or until properly relieved. Report any absences on Teachers on Call, our time and attendance reporting system.

10. **In emergency situations, all employees are expected to follow the Crisis Plan.** Review the plan for your location and know your role and responsibilities in each situation. First and foremost, you are responsible for your student's and your personal safety.
11. **Only use Education District vehicles when it becomes necessary to transport students as part of your job assignment.**
12. **You are responsible for reading and following all Education District policies and procedures.**

If you are unclear about any of these expectations, contact your administrator as soon as possible for an explanation.

Best wishes for a successful school year!

Important Information for all Employees

Attendance/Reporting Absences via Teachers on Call (TOC)

It is the policy of GCED to make every effort to secure substitutes for employee absences especially employees providing day to day scheduled direct services to students of member school districts.

All employees are encouraged to maintain good personal health and attend to personal affairs during non-working hours whenever possible. It is an expectation that employees be at work and be on time to work. Regular attendance optimizes instruction for students and is essential to the operation of the school district.

Employees are provided with time off for personal illness, bereavement, family illness, jury duty, personal business, FMLA, etc. Employees must use leave for the purpose for which it is intended. Just as students are expected to maintain regular attendance, employees are expected to maintain regular attendance. Student achievement is negatively impacted by absenteeism. Administrators will meet with employees who exhibit excessive absences or an unusual pattern of absences.

If you are absent for any reason, your administrator will review the specific procedures for absences. Please refer to your employee contract for your leave eligibility.

It is the Education District's policy that you are required to enter your absence request on the TOC system for the following types of absences: child care leave, surgeries, medical leaves, jury duty, vacation, non-duty days, personal leave, funeral leave, floating holidays, workshops, meetings, time off without pay or other special situations. Absence requests must be taken as described in the individual employee's contract or agreement. Any adjustment to this or custom absence must have the prior written approval from the executive director. When possible, utilize our licensed substitute employee for teachers.

All staff will maintain substitute plans and will include a current copy of their teaching and supervision schedule along with these plans. These plans will be kept in the main office.

Employee must put absence in TOC by 6:00 AM of day of absence. If need for absence occurs after 6:00 AM on day of absence, employee must enter it in TOC and call their immediate supervisor.

Accident Reports/Worker's Compensation

Any employee sustaining an injury as part of fulfilling a job responsibility should immediately report the accident or injury to their immediate supervisor right away and call EMC On Call Nurse at 844-322-4668. The EMC On Call Nurse will complete the First Report of Injury Form and will let employee know if they need to seek medical attention. The ***First Report of Injury Form*** must be completed and filed **within 24 hours**.

Return To Work Program

It is the practice of the district, when possible, to modify work assignments for a limited period to assist employees who are temporarily restricted from performing their regularly assigned duties due to an on-the-job injury. GCED is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment for all employees. As part of this commitment, we shall make every reasonable effort to provide suitable temporary employment to any employee unable to perform his or her job duties as a result of a workplace injury or illness. This may include a modification to the employee's original position or providing an alternative position, depending on the employee's medical restrictions, providing that this does not create an undue hardship to GCED. This program applies to all employees with work-related injuries and/or illnesses.

Only work that is considered meaningful and productive shall be considered for use in the return to work program. Employees placed on a return to work plan will be expected to provide feedback in order to improve the program. All employees, regardless of injury or illness, will be considered for placement through the return to work program. 2/3 of lost time is paid by insurer and 1/3 is paid through the use of vacation or other paid time off. Employees must sign in and out in the office when leaving for a work comp appointment.

Benefits

Automatic Check Deposit: All employees must sign up for automatic deposit payroll program upon employment.

Exit Interview: In order to ensure proper handling of employee member terminations with respect to insurance continuation, unused sick leave, or other payroll matters, employees must meet with the Director on or before their final day unless a later time is prearranged.

Field Trip Overnight Pay: Employee, who as part of a field trip complete an overnight, will be compensated as follows: licensed employee will receive \$100 per night and paraprofessionals will receive \$75 per night. Overnights must be preapproved by the Executive Director to be eligible for the reimbursement. A timesheet must be filled out and turned in to payroll to receive payment.

Flex Benefit Plan: All employees are eligible to participate in the Flex Benefit Plan, Section 125 of the IRS Code. Eligible medical expenses, dependent care expenses, and other insurance premiums can qualify for valuable tax-free benefits. The Plan begins on July 1 of each year and ends June 30th. See Jackie Paradis for more information.

The employee must sign a form electing to reduce his/her pay in such amounts as those required by the Plan. This election cannot be modified unless certain requirements are met.

Health/Dental Insurance: Employees meeting minimum requirements as set out in their respective contracts and/or terms and conditions are eligible to enroll in employee, or family coverage for health and employee, employee+1 or family coverage for dental. The Education District monthly contributes a set contribution toward health and dental insurance premiums.

Life Insurance: See respective Goodhue County Education District contracts and/or terms and conditions for relevant provisions.

Long-Term Disability Insurance: See respective Goodhue County Education District contracts and/or terms and conditions for relevant provisions.

Pay Periods – Payroll Timeline: All employees are paid on the 15th and 30th of each month except in February when they are paid on the 15th and 28th.

Pension Plan: Teachers have a mandatory deduction from their paychecks for the Teachers Retirement Association. Other employees, unless excluded, are eligible to participate in the Public Employees Retirement Association Plan. The Education District contributes the required percentage to TRA and PERA for all enrolled employees.

Reimbursement of Expenses: Mileage claims will be paid within 2 weeks of receipt following the expense. **Mileage claims should be submitted monthly. Final claims must be in on or before July 31st of each year.**

Conferences Expenses: Conference expense claims will be paid within 2 weeks of receipt. Claims for reimbursement must be submitted for approval no later than the 1st of each month. Final claims must be in on or before June 30th of each year.

Salary/Leave Time/Emergency Closings: See respective Goodhue County Education District contracts and/or terms and conditions for relevant provisions.

Social Security: The Social Security Act provisions relate to retirement and disability. Medicare benefits cover employee members, and the appropriate paycheck deductions are made. For information about programs and benefits, contact the Social Security Office.

Cars

Mileage for employees using personal vehicles will be reimbursed at the current Federal rate. All mileage traveled will be logged to include the date, business purpose, and destination of each trip. All starts and stops at schools or other locations will be indicated on the form. Total mileage will be computed for that day and included on the appropriate location of the form. Mileage claim forms will be submitted to the office the last workday of each month.

1. Employees will be reimbursed for all business travel.
2. Employees will not be reimbursed for the number of miles equal to the mileage to and from home to the base of operations each day.
3. The director will determine the office/base of operations for each employee at the beginning of the school year.
4. **Each employee will advise the director of his/her home to base of operations/office mileage at the beginning of the school year.** Any change in the employee's residence must be reported to the director.

Cell Phones

GCED recognizes that with the advancements in technology the benefits of administrative and itinerant employee having access to cell phones for communication and safety reasons. Therefore, considerations have been defined to establish the need for cell phone supplemental compensation.

1. Consideration:

*Serve more than two buildings

- *Communicate with the greatest number of people and agencies
- *Tapped for student crisis
- *Cell phone usage would be useful in the areas served
- *Schedule is not fixed

2. District employees who meet eligibility requirements will be provided with monthly taxable supplemental compensation to defray some of the costs of either a cell phone. Principals/Administrators will determine if an employee meets the requirements for supplemental compensation.

Eligible employees will receive either \$30 in monthly supplemental compensation for cell phones, or \$50 in monthly supplemental compensation for PDAs with cellular capacity, or \$70 in monthly supplemental compensation for PDAs with cellular capacity and required mobile hotspot. These payments will be spread across pay periods.

The monthly supplemental compensation is taxable income. Appropriate payroll taxes will be withheld from the supplemental amount and the amount of the compensation will be included on the employee's year-end W-2. The compensation does not constitute an increase to an employee's base pay, and would not be included in a calculation of percentage increase in base pay due to a raise, job upgrade, etc.

Employees who receive the monthly supplemental compensation will not receive any additional reimbursement for cell phone or cellular PDA expenses even if the monthly charges to the employee exceed the supplemental amount.

Personal calls should be taken during breaks. Employee will not take a personal call while supervising students. If it is necessary to address a personal issue while on duty, contact your directing supervisor to find coverage for yourself during that time.

Care of Computer Equipment and Printers

The Education District furnishes employee with laptop and/or desktop computers as well as devices such as iPads. All employees with technology furnished by GCED shall keep in mind the following:

1. Do not leave the technology in an area where it can be exposed to extreme heat or cold, i.e. inside a car. If this should happen let the device warm up or cool down to room temperature before plugging it in and using it.
2. Keep liquids away from all components.
3. Take special care to avoid dropping the equipment.
4. Back up files on a regular basis.
5. Laptops, iPads, and other like devices, like cell phones, are considered "listed property" and as such they are subject to substantiation rules.

Advance Payment of Expenses Incurred

The policy on advance payment of expenses incurred when attending approved conventions or in-service training sessions shall be as follows:

When an employee is to attend an approved convention or in-service training session, an advance for expenses may be submitted to the Executive Director as follows:

1. When total anticipated cost of experience is in excess of \$25.00.
2. Goodhue County Education District may advance travel expenses at half the existing rate at the discretion of the Executive Director.
3. 80% of anticipated expenditures including food and lodging costs may be advanced according to established limits at the discretion of the Executive Director.
4. All employees will submit documented travel expense vouchers within five (5) days of return.
5. The Executive Director reserves the right to review and/or refuse requests which are not in accordance with the established policy.
6. Purchase orders will be utilized where possible.

Attendance at Workshops and In-services

All Education District employees shall make written application using the given request form for attendance at meetings or conferences. *For prepayment of conference costs, the request form must be submitted by the 5th day of the month preceding the month that pre-registration is due. The following conditions shall determine reimbursements and/or deductions as appropriate to the assignment or request. Any requests made after the 5th of the month may necessitate the employee paying the costs and claiming expenses post attendance.

Reimbursement:

1. \$51.00 per day shall be allowed for meals as per the following limits:

\$12.00 Breakfast \$14.00 Lunch \$25.00 Dinner

2. Lodging will be paid in full. However, no lodging shall be allowed when the setting is within 50 miles of the person's home, place of work, or the Education District offices, whichever is the shortest distance. Lodging will be shared when appropriate, when more than one person is in attendance. Exceptions to this policy will be approved by the Director.

3. Expenses incurred through travel shall be at the current Federal rate for the use of a personal car. When more than one person attends the same function, mileage will be paid for one car, unless the number of persons warrants mileage payment for another car. The actual transportation method shall determine the amount of reimbursement.

4. Registration fees shall be reimbursed but not expenses for college credit earned through the experience.

- **5. Employee is required to notify scheduled districts of their absence and indicate so by initializing the Request Form.

6. All requests will have completed registration forms and a copy of the conference agenda attached to them.

Verification for actual non prepaid expenses must be attached to an expense claim form and turned in to the Education District office before the 5th day of each month to assure reimbursement immediately following the regular monthly board meeting. When a person is assigned to attend a conference or meeting, all expenses shall be reimbursed except actual costs for college credit when earned.

Budget Supplies and Materials

Funds for assessment, instructional materials and supplies budgeted within all program areas, are available for use by all students in the specific disability area.

Material or equipment needed for programs or students will be requisitioned through the district office and the item will be coded to the special education budget, either by the supervisor or the district business manager. All requisitions and/or purchase orders will be reviewed by the Executive Director.

All materials and supplies ordered by GCED personnel need to be delivered to the GCED central office. The person making the requisition will be notified when it arrives and will be responsible to inventory the items against the packing slip and appropriate notations made, i.e. condition and count, sign the packing slip. In addition, serial numbers for all equipment will be included on the packing slip to be personally given to the GCED business manager. Large items can be shipped directly to another district building. The business manager of that district will be notified of this shipment and the procedure for inventory as indicated above will be followed.

Other supplies or materials needed for Education District use for individual employee such as pencils, paper, etc., will be requested through the GCED secretary.

Cash Flow

Districts shall be billed monthly for the budgeted district excess share, flow through, and cooperative expenditure costs for the current fiscal year.

Emergency Closings

In the event of inclement weather, education district employees will follow the closing of the school scheduled at for that day. Personnel not scheduled at a specific district, will report to the Education District offices as planned. Any deviations from this procedure will be approved by the Executive Director. Itinerant employees must use their best judgment or call the GCED office. Closing will be sent via Blackboard Connect and posted on WCCO, KARE, KMSP, and KTTC.

Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuation of Building

Fire drills are held periodically during the school year. Each instructor will inform their students of the exit or exits that are to be used in emergency situations. It is the responsibility of the instructor to become familiar with the evacuation routes and assist their students in safe evacuation procedures. Please see your administrator for the evacuation chart and proper route to exit if there is an emergency and/or drill. Everyone must evacuate the building when the alarm sounds.

Furniture

The furniture was carefully selected for each room with student needs and ages in mind. Please **do not** move furniture from room to room without the permission of the Executive Director. An inventory will be provided to you in the fall for your classroom. You will be responsible for items on the inventory during checkout in the spring.

Hotel Registration

Scheduling of hotels for conferences

Procedure for hotel registration:

- 1) Fill out a conference/meeting request form with complete hotel information
- 2) Submit form to your supervisor for approval
- 3) GCED Office will complete hotel reservation process

Indoor Air Quality

Indoor air quality includes but is not limited to temperature, ventilation and air pollutants in school buildings. The Education District has an Indoor Air Quality Management Plan. The purpose of the plan is to proactively manage indoor air and provide a healthy and safe indoor environment for students, employee, and community. Employees who have concerns about indoor air quality should direct them to their administrator. Employee will be given the opportunity to complete an Indoor Air Quality Complaint Form. The administrator, building custodian, IAQ Coordinator may be involved in an investigation of the concern. Requests for animals, plants, and nature related items in the classroom are available and must be completed.

Inventory

All items on the inventory record will be inventoried annually by the Executive Director and the fixed assets committee. (GASB 34)

1. A copy of the inventory computer file will be provided to the Executive Director and the fixed assets committee by May 15th of every year.
2. All fixed asset items will be inventoried by the Executive Director and the fixed assets committee and results noted on the inventory list/fixed assets on smart finance.

Legal Violations

Exceeding the speed limit in traveling between schools of assignment or while on cooperative business is prohibited. Every effort will be made to schedule your day accordingly, if you are late, call ahead and notify parties involved. Any fines as a result of exceeding the speed limit or due to a moving violation will be the responsibility of the individual. Any violations of law will be the responsibility of the individual. If you are a Type III driver, any convictions for a moving violation shall be reported in writing to the Executive Director within 10 days of such conviction.

Media and Materials

All materials, equipment, etc., will be requested through the Executive Director. These items, when received, will be coordinated with the secretary in charge of media who will catalogue all items for the borrowing list or control by the program disability person/s. Determination for control of the item will be an agreement between the Education District program person and the Executive Director.

All materials, available for checkout, taken out for loan by special education district employee or Education District employee will be checked out with the secretary in charge to assure accountability. Materials will be returned to the education district within four weeks of the checkout date. Extensions of this will be approved by the Education District office through the secretary in charge.

Photo ID and Key Fob

All school district personnel are required to have and to wear a photo ID when working at or visiting a school site during student-contact hours. Employees who have lost or damaged their ID cards or Key Fob should contact the director immediately. Employees are responsible for any costs incurred in replacing the lost item.

Request for Copies

Any request for copies of records or information compiled and collected by Education District shall be made available on a fee basis pursuant to federal and state restrictions. All requests shall be charged at .25 cents/page to cover costs of reproduction and labor. Authorized releases made by parents or other agencies requesting information for assessment, evaluation, or programming purposes will be charged for at the discretion of the Executive Director. Any requests for mailing all other transfer of documents will not be honored unless determined otherwise by the Executive Director and costs of transferring will be determined at that time. Prior to release of records, employees must consult with administration about the release.

Securing Offices

The last office employee person leaving the River Bluff Education Center each day will assure the following is accomplished:

1. All lights are turned off;
2. Copy machines and computers are turned off;
3. Phones are put on night ringer;
5. All electrical appliances are unplugged or turned off;

In addition, all doors to the River Bluff Education Center will be locked at all times. You should take your key fob with you to regain entrance to the building.

Employees with a need to enter the building during other than regular office hours will be issued security system code by the Office Personnel.

Also, during office time, all personnel will respect the privacy and quiet requirements of others.

Student Teacher

GCED loves the opportunity to have student teachers and we want to make the experience a positive one for all. We respectfully request that you submit the request for the opportunity to your building leadership.

Employee Evaluations

PURPOSE:

The process provides a basis for improving the effectiveness of each employee through identification of strengths and weaknesses and providing a basis for employee development.

COMPONENTS:

The process shall consist of walkthroughs, informal evaluations, formal evaluations, feedback conferences, and a formal write-up of the results. This shall be accomplished according to a fixed timeline and the process steps stated shall be understood to be minimums. This will continue to be true especially when a continuing contract

teacher assumes a new position because of changes such as: age grouping served, location of service, or area of licensure taught. Direct input will be given by local administrators working closely with GCED employee.

PROCESS:

Licensed Continuing Contract Employees and **Licensed Non-continuing Contract Employees** shall be formally evaluated according to the GCED Teacher Evaluation Process as approved.

Support Personnel shall be formally evaluated once during their probationary period and then a least once every three years following that initial evaluation.

Employee Handbook

GCED will develop, maintain and provide copies of a “Employee Handbook” for all employees upon initial hire and subsequently on the Education District website gced.k12.mn.us which will include procedures and policies.

District/Program Calendars can also be found online.

In addition a copy of the current Master Agreement and/or Terms and Conditions of Employment will be provided to new employees will also be maintained on the Education District website gced.k12.mn.us.

District Policies

The summary on the following pages is **NOT** exhaustive of all policies pertaining to education. This section is provided for general informational reference only. Full policies can be found at gced.k12.mn.us, under Policies. GCED reserves the right to change/modify/terminate these policies or the above procedures at any time with notice to employees.