

## Regular Board of Education Meeting

Monday, June 15, 2026 12:00 PM

Gering High School - Freshmen Academy Wing  
1500 U Street  
Gering, NE 69341



## Minutes

### 1. **GPS Board of Education Information**

**Absent:** Greg Trautman, **Present:** Bryan Barrett, Matt Kautz, Josh Lacy, John Maser, Tracy Wiese.

### 2. **Opening Procedures**

#### 2.1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Vice President, Tracy Wiese, at 12:00 p.m.

#### 2.2. Roll Call

#### 2.3. Pledge of Allegiance

#### 2.4. Open Meetings Act

### 3. **Consent Agenda**

#### 3.1. Minutes from the previous month's board meeting(s)

#### 3.2. Approval of Claims/Bills Fund Amount

01 General \$355,797.19  
03 Employee Benefit \$209.00  
05 Activity \$59,534.48  
06 School Nutrition \$82,436.14  
07 Bond \$39,323.55  
08 Special Building \$178,060.00  
09 QCPUF \$21,960.00  
Fund Totals: \$737,320.36

#### 3.3. Personnel Items

3.3.i. Certified Staff Contract(s) Aleshiea Schmer - Preschool Teacher, Lincoln Elementary  
Marley Tarr - Preschool Teacher, Northfield Elementary

3.3.ii. Early Graduation Request - Ximena Avitia

#### 4. **Reports & Discussions**

##### 4.1. Board Committee Report: Curriculum & Personnel

John Maser presented to the Board regarding the proposed minor revisions to the student handbooks for the 2026-27 school year. He also provided an update on several Continuous Improvement goals, including initiatives focused on reading achievement, Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction, and student attendance.

##### 4.2. Board Committee Report: Business & Facilities

Bryan Barrett presented to the Board and provided an update on the First Student transportation contract shared with Scottsbluff Public Schools. He noted that both districts are continuing to work through the remaining details of the agreement. Bryan also shared progress updates on the construction of the high school auditorium and the track project, both of which are expected to be completed this fall. In addition, he reported that INA Alert has begun installation of its safety and communication system and is anticipated to complete the project later this summer.

##### 4.3. Superintendent's Report

No report was given.

#### 5. **Public Comments: 204.12**

#### 6. **Action Items**

6.1. Discuss, consider, and take action regarding the approval of the 2026-2027 school year Elementary School, Middle School, and Activity Handbooks.

6.2. Discuss, consider, and take action regarding the approval of the 2026-2027 Classified and Certified Staff Handbooks.

#### 7. **Board Comments**

Bryan Barrett - Thanks to Dr. Regan for your time at Gering. Excited to see the progress of the track!

Matt Kautz - Thanks to the directors for having the conversation with First Student regarding our contract.

John Maser - Thanks to Dr. Regan for her years at Gering.

Josh Lacy - No comment

Tracy Wiese - Thanks to Dr. Regan for all she's done here at GPS! We wish her the best! Looking forward to Dr. Knight stepping into that role. Also, excited about the track!

##### 7.1. Tentative Upcoming Board Meeting/Event Dates

#### 8. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

**Special Board of Education Work  
Session**

Monday, June 1, 2026 12:00 PM

Gering Public Schools - Central Office  
1519 10th St  
Gering, NE 69341



**Minutes**

**1. GPS Board of Education Information**

**Absent:** Josh Lacy, Greg Trautman, **Present:** Bryan Barrett, Matt Kautz, John Maser, Tracy Wiese.

**2. Opening Procedures**

2.1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Vice President, Tracy Wiese, at 12:00 p.m.

2.2. Roll Call

2.3. Open Meetings Act

**3. Reports and Discussions**

3.1. District Strategic Plan Update: #4 Operational Excellence - Dr. Nicole Regan

Dr. Regan presented an overview of the work the district has undertaken over the past two years in preparation for the proposed middle school bond project. She highlighted the extensive planning process, which has included touring other school facilities, gathering feedback from staff and community members, and evaluating the district's long-term facility needs. Dr. Regan also shared that the district has partnered with Sampson as its Construction Manager at Risk (CM@R) to help guide the project through the planning and construction phases.

Jennifer Sibal then provided an update on lessons learned from the district's previous bond attempt. She discussed the ongoing efforts to "reimagine" Gering Middle School, including extensive feedback that has shaped the project's direction. Based on feedback and further analysis, adjustments have been made to reduce the building's square footage, resulting in a reduction in overall project costs.

Cody Wickham of D.A. Davidson presented information on the financial aspects of the proposed bond. He reviewed the projected impact of the bond over the next 25 years and explained a new option to take a portion of the bond and leverage existing funding which would be levy-neutral. Cody also discussed potential lease-purchase opportunities that could provide additional flexibility in funding future facility improvements.

**4. Action Items**

**5. Public Comment: Policy 204.12**

**6. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

## Regular Board of Education Meeting

Monday, May 11, 2026 6:00 PM

Gering High School - Freshmen Academy Wing  
1500 U Street  
Gering, NE 69341



## Minutes

### 1. GPS Board of Education Information

**Absent:** Tracy Wiese, **Present:** Bryan Barrett, Matt Kautz, Josh Lacy, John Maser, Greg Trautman.

### 2. Opening Procedures

#### 2.1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by board president, Greg Trautman, at 6:01 p.m.

#### 2.2. Roll Call

#### 2.3. Pledge of Allegiance

#### 2.4. Open Meetings Act

### 3. Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was presented by Josh Lacy, seconded by Matt Kautz. After voting, motion Passed.

Tracy Wiese: Absent, Bryan Barrett: **Yea**, Matt Kautz: **Yea**, Josh Lacy: **Yea**, John Maser: **Yea**, Greg Trautman: **Yea**

#### 3.1. Minutes from the previous month's board meeting(s)

#### 3.2. Approval of Claims/Bills

Fund Amount

01 General \$292,588.22

03 Employee \$209.00

05 Activity \$40,624.72

06 School Nutrition \$101,975.25

08 Special Building \$402,715.43

12 Student Fee \$4,006.46

Fund Totals: \$842,119.08

#### 3.3. Board Policy Adoption

##### 3.3.i. First Reading of Board Policies

##### 3.3.ii. Second Reading of Board Policies

#### 3.4. Personnel Items

##### 3.4.i. Certified Staff Contract(s)

Steve Land - GMS, Industrial Arts

Abigail Ankomah - GHS, Art Teacher

Stacy Baker - GHS, ELA Teacher  
Calvert Switzer - GHS, Band Instructor  
Crystal Palser - Interim Curriculum Director  
Kelly Tofflemire - Ed. Tech Specialist (260 days)

#### **4. Celebration of Excellence**

4.1. Student Success - Jennifer Sibal  
FFA  
DECA  
FCCLA Nationals - Mariella Myers  
HOSA  
Speech  
Presidential Scholar - Trinity Hedman

Jennifer Sibal honored several clubs and their achievements over the course of the school year.

#### **5. Reports & Discussions**

##### **5.1. Board Committee Report: Curriculum & Personnel**

Greg Trautman presented to the Board and shared that the district is currently in the process of reviewing building handbooks. He also discussed proposed salary increases for classified staff and administrators for the 2026-27 school year. He also announced that Crystal Palser will serve as the Interim Curriculum Director for the 2026-2027 school year, and that the district is currently advertising for an Interim Dean position at the high school. In addition, he noted that the district is exploring an increase in substitute pay rates.

##### **5.2. Board Committee Report: Business & Facilities**

Bryan Barrett presented to the Board and shared that the district has been in discussions with First Student regarding the transportation contract for the upcoming school year. He reported that construction on the auditorium is progressing very well and is expected to be completed this fall. Also, demolition of the track has begun, noting that this is an exciting project the district looks forward to completing. In addition, he reviewed several remaining projects at the middle school, including the replacement of the gym floor. The district is currently awaiting material samples and will continue to report updates. He also shared that the recent air quality testing conducted at the middle school returned with results that determined air quality is good and consistent with outdoor air.

##### **5.3. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Regan presented to the board. She stated how exciting it is to see all the student accomplishments tonight! She is so thankful to all staff and students for working hard till the end of the school year. She also wanted to say thanks to everyone involved in all the facilities updates over the course of the year. Looking forward to graduation on Saturday!

#### **6. Public Comments: 204.12**

#### **7. Action Items**

7.1. Discuss, consider, and take action to approve a salary increase of 3.78% for the 2026-27 school year for Classified Staff and Administrators.

A motion to approve a salary increase of 3.78% for the 2026-27 school year for Classified Staff and Administrators was presented by Bryan Barrett, seconded by John Maser. After

voting, motion Passed.

Tracy Wiese: Absent, Bryan Barrett: **Yea**, Matt Kautz: **Yea**, Josh Lacy: **Yea**, John Maser: **Yea**, Greg Trautman: **Yea**

7.2. Discuss, consider, and take action to approve the addendum to the Employee Handbook for Administrators for the 2026–28 school years.

A motion to approve the addendum to the Employee Handbook for Administrators for the 2026-28 school years was presented by Josh Lacy, seconded by John Maser. After voting, motion Passed.

Tracy Wiese: Absent, Bryan Barrett: **Yea**, Matt Kautz: **Yea**, Josh Lacy: **Yea**, John Maser: **Yea**, Greg Trautman: **Yea**

7.3. Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to approve a resolution authorizing the district to issue its Qualified Capital Undertaking Fund Pledge Bonds and related matters.

Andy Forney provided clarity to the board on our funding options for the track replacement project.

A motion to approve a resolution authorizing the district to issue its Qualified Capital Undertaking Fund Pledge Bonds and related matters was presented by Josh Lacy, seconded by John Maser. After voting, motion Passed.

Tracy Wiese: Absent, Bryan Barrett: **Yea**, Matt Kautz: **Yea**, Josh Lacy: **Yea**, John Maser: **Yea**, Greg Trautman: **Yea**

## **8. Board Comments**

Bryan Barrett - Love all the celebrations tonight. It's great to see a variety of clubs that our students can take part in. Lots of facility projects are happening throughout the district.

Looking forward to graduation on Saturday.

John Maser - No comment

Matt Kautz - Excited about the track project being started. Always good to see the kid's accomplishments. Shout out to all the sponsors who helped this year. Thanks to Andy for being here tonight.

Josh Lacy - Thanks to Andy and the kids for all their accomplishments. Excited about the track.

Greg Trautman - Lots of projects happening, but happy that we can use our existing funds. We have a great culture here at Gering. Freshman feel very included with the upper classman. Thanks to all our staff.

8.1. Tentative Upcoming Board Meeting/Event Dates

## **9. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

May Check Listing

Payee Name	Amount	Fund
Solution Tree	\$19,308.00	1
Reganis Auto Center	\$426.20	1
Hometown Leasing	\$6,642.59	1
Quadient Finance USA, Inc.	\$1,000.00	1
Shawn Seiler	\$870.00	1
Menards	\$888.66	1
Ace Hardware	\$40.40	1
Contractors Materials	\$33.55	1
Dennis Supply Company	\$10,799.44	1
Johnson Cashway _8920	\$110.34	1
Menards	\$44.94	1
AC Electric Motor Service, LLC	\$5,147.72	1
City Of Gering	\$47,636.94	1
Ace Hardware	\$119.55	1
Allo Communications	\$2,881.93	1
Cash-Wa Distributing of Kearney, Inc	\$1,852.20	1
CDW Government, LLC	\$113,323.50	1
City of Gering: LANDFILL	\$26.01	1
Column Software, PBC	\$60.00	1
Crossroads Music	\$200.00	1
D'Angelo Murillo	\$1,068.86	1
Domino'S Pizza	\$95.49	1
Eakes Office Solutions	\$5,685.48	1
Emily Rose	\$45.53	1
FBG Service Corporation	\$222.00	1
Fresh Foods Inc.	\$251.58	1
Hullinger Glass & Locks, Inc.	\$1,854.00	1
Kiana Baldwin	\$39.59	1
NCSA	\$750.00	1
Northwest Pipe Fittings, Inc.	\$643.82	1
O'Reilly Auto Parts	\$174.26	1
OneSource	\$132.00	1
Perry, Guthery, Haase & Gessford, P.C.,	\$180.00	1
Podiums Direct Corporation	\$4,055.00	1
Praise Windows, Inc.	\$180.00	1
PT Hose and Bearing	\$504.72	1
Pye-Barker	\$600.00	1
RAKA Rentals	\$658.23	1
Redbird Flight Simulations Inc.	\$4,000.00	1
Scottsbluff Public Schools	\$20,220.74	1

Steve Land	\$280.00	1
Danielle Nielsen	\$200.00	1
Stacy Rodriguez	\$852.60	1
INA Alert, Inc	\$42,970.26	1
Judith Amoo	\$2,123.00	1
Jim Sutfin LLC	\$3,500.00	1
Optimal Family Preservation, LLC	\$28,695.00	1
Visa	\$24,403.06	1
Regional Care, Inc.	\$209.00	3
Alliance Public Schools	\$100.00	5
City Of Gering	\$0.00	5
Comfort Inn - Lexington	\$529.75	5
Dirt Stix LLC	\$179.96	5
Domino'S Pizza	\$244.69	5
Eakes Office Solutions	\$83.37	5
Fresh Foods Inc.	\$35.54	5
Fundraising University	\$4,963.00	5
Gering Bakery-Ahlers Baking Inc.	\$94.95	5
Gothenburg High School	\$125.00	5
Legacy Cooperative	\$94.17	5
Monument Shadows Golf Course	\$2,120.00	5
Pepsi Cola Of Western Nebraska	\$262.70	5
Scottsbluff High School _15901	\$425.00	5
Scottsbluff Screenprinting,	\$756.00	5
Sidney High School	\$100.00	5
Suburban Studios Kearney	\$2,196.40	5
Weborg 21 Centre	\$3,060.00	5
AllTeam Sportswear	\$3,785.00	5
Bayard High School	\$439.67	5
Country Inn and Suites of Kearney	\$488.10	5
Fairfield Inn & Suites - North Platte	\$440.00	5
Mitchell Public Schools	\$300.00	5
The MT Pit	\$150.00	5
Alex Hammeke	\$100.00	5
Jason Kriger	\$140.00	5
Joel Ferebee	\$140.00	5
Von Alavi	\$140.00	5
City of Gering: LANDFILL	\$16.62	5
The DJ Music System	\$695.00	5
Austin Ayobamidele	\$80.00	5
Gering Middle School Booster Club	\$2,700.04	5
Gothenburg Public Schools	\$40.00	5
Alliance Public Schools	\$250.00	5

Awards Unlimited	\$359.31	5
Bsn Sports	\$649.90	5
Candi Johner	\$105.00	5
Chadron High School	\$100.00	5
Domino'S Pizza	\$207.38	5
Eakes Office Solutions	\$46.98	5
Embassy Suites Lincoln	\$5,642.00	5
Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott	\$110.00	5
Fresh Foods Inc.	\$284.65	5
Gering Bakery-Ahlers Baking Inc.	\$210.91	5
Goshen County School District #1	\$200.00	5
Hampton Inn & Suites - Scottsbluff	\$590.00	5
Josh Guerue	\$745.00	5
Jostens, Inc	\$615.25	5
Kearney Catholic	\$340.00	5
Legacy Cooperative	\$182.50	5
Lexington High School	\$75.00	5
Logoz Llc	\$623.00	5
Nebraska FFA Association	\$840.00	5
Norfolk Lodge & Suites, LLC	\$735.00	5
North Platte High School	\$100.00	5
Nsaa	\$41.10	5
Ogallala Public School	\$100.00	5
Print Broker	\$805.00	5
Treering Inc	\$53.90	5
Universal Dance Association	\$2,650.00	5
Yanda's Music & Pro Audio	\$2,375.00	5
Domino'S Pizza	\$29.74	5
Gering Wrestling Club	\$3,001.11	5
North Platte High School	\$125.00	5
Scottsbluff Screenprinting,	\$496.00	5
Visa	\$11,820.79	5
Culligan Of Scottsbluff	\$58.50	6
Winsupply Scottsbluff Ne Co	\$11.11	6
Culligan Of Scottsbluff	\$149.50	6
Office Products Professionals LLC	\$76,721.06	6
Amy Doll	\$43.85	6
Eakes Office Solutions	\$194.28	6
Gering Public Schools	\$5,152.69	6
Lindsay McCay	\$105.15	6
Computershare Trust Company, N.A.	\$39,323.55	7
Anderson-Shaw Construction, Inc.	\$114,220.00	8
Voss Lighting	\$63,840.00	8

Ground Solutions

\$21,960.00

9

**POLICY 204.12**  
**GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**GERING, NE**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS**

The board recognizes the importance of citizen participation in school district matters. In order to assure citizens are heard and board meetings are conducted efficiently and in an organized manner, the board shall set time aside for citizen participation, either at a specific time during the meeting or during the discussion of agenda items. The board has the discretion to limit the amount of time set aside for public participation.

Instructions for members of the public who wish to speak:

- Getting started: When you have been recognized, please stand and state your name.
- Time Limit: Tonight the board will allow a total of 30 minutes for the presentation of ALL public comments. Individuals may speak only one time, and must limit comments to around 5 minutes. If there are more than 6 individuals who wish to address the board, the 30 minutes will be divided equally between the number of speakers. These time limits may be changed by a majority vote of the board members in attendance to extend the time for a specific item or speaker. You may only speak ONCE.
- Personnel or Student Topic: If you are planning to speak about a personnel or student matter involving an individual, please understand that our policies may require you to follow the district's complaint procedure before addressing the board. Board members will generally not respond to any questions you ask or comments you make about individual staff members or students. Please remember that slanderous comments will not be tolerated.
- General Rules: This is a public meeting for the conduct of business. Comments from within the audience while others are speaking will not be tolerated. Lewd, obscene, profane, slanderous, threatening and hostile conduct or statements and fighting words (words whose mere utterance entails a call to violence) will not be tolerated.
- No action by the Board: The board will not act on any matter which is not on the agenda and will not take action upon the conclusion of public comment.

If the pressure of business or other circumstances dictate, the board president may decide to eliminate this practice at a particular meeting. The board president will recognize these individuals to make their comments at the appropriate time. The orderly process of the board meeting shall not be interfered with or disrupted. Only those speakers recognized by the board president shall be allowed to speak. Comments by others are out of order. If disruptive, the individual making the comments or another individual causing disruption may be asked to leave the board meeting.

Citizens wishing to address the board on a certain agenda item must notify the superintendent prior to the board meeting. Citizens wishing to present petitions to the board may do so at this time. However, the board will only receive the petitions and not act upon them or their contents.

Subjects for comment should involve areas within the board's proper responsibility. Discussion on unrelated matters is to be discouraged.

Individuals who have a complaint about employees may bring their complaint to the board only after they have followed board policy addressing citizens' complaints. Students who have a complaint may only bring their complaint to the board after they have followed board policy addressing students' complaints.

Any written or printed materials to be circulated for a meeting of the school board must be submitted to the superintendent by the Wednesday preceding a Monday night meeting.

This material will be transmitted to the members of the board for their consideration.

Legal Reference: Nebraska Statute 84-1408 to 1414

Cross Reference: 201.7 School Board Liability  
204.3 Public Hearings  
204.10 Agenda  
403.5 Public Complaints about Employees

Approved 01/20/2003

Reviewed 02/23/2015, 10/14/2021 6/9/22

Revised 09/14/2009, 7/20/22

# **Gering Middle School**



## **PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK**

### **Grades 6-8**

### **2026-2027**

**Gering Middle School**  
**800 Q Street**  
**Gering, NE 69341**  
**(308) 436-3123**

Gering Middle School, in partnership with the community, is committed to providing an educational program responsive to young adolescents' individual needs and characteristics. The focus of our transition is for young adolescents to **explore and enrich** their educational experiences while at the Middle School. Our goal is to help students be better equipped to understand their strengths and potential as they enter into their high school career and beyond.

We strive to prepare all Gering students to be college and/or career ready when they complete their education at Gering Public Schools and lead highly influential lives in the community in which they choose to live. Our exploration course offerings at Gering Middle School will provide students with hands-on learning and real-world opportunities to enhance their educational experiences and provide a seamless transition to great Career Academy Pathways offered at Gering High School.

Gering Middle School is organized into academic teams at each grade level (6-8) from the core areas: language arts, math, science and social studies. Exploratory courses include art, STEM, family and consumer science, careers, journalism, yearbook, introduction to agriculture, introduction to medical sciences, leadership, band, choir, business and technology, and industrial technology.

We strive to create an environment for all students that is safe, positive, encouraging and supportive.

As the "Home of the Bulldogs," our school serves approximately four hundred thirty students in grades six through eight. We are located between the old Oregon Trail and the North Platte River in historic Gering, Nebraska. Gering Middle School is home to over thirty teachers, two administrators and two counselors, who all work hard everyday to provide students with a safe, welcoming environment and the best school experience and education possible.

Extracurricular clubs and programs are available for student involvement. We strive to have something for everyone. District sports for grades 7-8 include: football, volleyball, wrestling, cross-country, basketball, and track. Students can also participate in a variety of extracurricular activities and clubs during their time at GMS.

**GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Greg Trautman, President

Bryan Barrett

Tracy Wiese

Josh Lacy

John Maser

Matt Kautz

**GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Kory Knight, Superintendent of Schools

Julie Siebke, Director of Student Services

Crystal Palser, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

Stacy Rodriguez, Director of Business and Finance

**John Wiedeman, Middle School Principal**

**Jon Hutchison, Middle School Assistant Principal**

Mario Chavez, High School Principal

**Crystal Palser**, High School Assistant Principal

Keaton Green, High School Assistant Principal

JJ Behrens, Director of Activities

Barb Harder, Middle School Director of Activities

Angela Morris, Geil Elementary Principal

Jesse Neugebauer, Lincoln Elementary Principal

Wendee Powell, Northfield Elementary Principal

D'Angelo Murillo, Director of Warehouse and Maintenance

**GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**“Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow”**

***Direction Statement:***

***Gering Public Schools exist to equip today's learners with the skills necessary to be tomorrow's leaders.***

***Vision:***

***Gering Public Schools provides a collaborative community, inspiring excellence and innovation in teaching and learning to empower student growth and leadership in school and life.***

***GRIT: Gratitude, Responsibility, Integrity, Trust***

# GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PreK A.M.: 8:05 a.m. -11:10 a.m.  
Full-Day PreK follows building schedule

## SCHOOL START/DISMISSAL

Geil | LCN | NF: 8:05a.m. to 3:20 p.m.  
GMS: 8:00a.m. to 3:15 p.m.  
GHS: 8:00a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

EARLY RELEASE  
EACH WED  
2:15 p.m.  
2:15 p.m.  
2:15 p.m.

NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION

NO SCHOOL STUDENTS  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT

NO SCHOOL STUDENTS & STAFF  
Holiday or Break

EARLY DISMISSAL

[ ] BEGIN/END NINE WEEKS

### AUGUST 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	2	3	4	5	6	7
	9	10	11	12	13	14
	16	17	18	19	20	21
	23	24	25	26	27	28
	30	31				

Aug 3-5 New Teacher Orientation  
Aug 7-12 Staff Development  
Aug 12 6th Grade Orientation  
10am to Noon  
Freshman Orientation  
3pm  
Aug 13 K-12 First Day of School  
1st Qtr Begins  
Aug 17 PreK First Day of School  
Students: 13 Staff: 17

### JANUARY 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8
	10	11	12	13	14	15
	17	18	19	20	21	22
	24	25	26	27	28	29

Jan 1 No School: Holiday  
Students & Staff  
Jan 4 No School Students  
Workday  
Jan 5 Students Return -3rd qtr begins  
Jan 15 No School  
Students & Staff  
Jan 22 No School Students  
Staff Development  
Students: 17 Staff: 19

### SEPTEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
	6	7	8	9	10	11
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	20	21	22	23	24	25
	27	28	29	30		

Sept 7 No School: Holiday  
Students & Staff  
Sept 8 No School Students  
Staff Development  
Students: 20 Staff: 21

### FEBRUARY 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	14	15	16	17	18	19
	21	22	23	24	25	26
	28					

Feb 12 No School  
Students & Staff  
Feb 15 No School Students  
(ESU Mid-Winter Conf.)  
Students: 18 Staff: 19

### OCTOBER 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9
	11	12	13	14	15	16
	18	19	20	21	22	23
	25	26	27	28	29	30

Oct 16 No School Students  
Workday  
Oct 19 2nd qtr begins  
Oct 19-20 PreK-5 P/T Conferences  
3:45-7:30pm  
Oct 21-22 6-12 P/T Conferences  
3:45-7:30pm  
Oct 23 No School  
Students & Staff  
Students: 20 Staff: 22

### MARCH 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	14	15	16	17	18	19
	21	22	23	24	25	26
	28	29	30	31		

Mar 12 No School Students  
Workday  
Mar 15 4th qtr begins  
Mar 15-16 K-5 P/T Conferences  
3:45-7:30pm  
Mar 17-18 No School PreK ONLY  
Home Visits  
Mar 17-18 6-12 P/T Conferences  
3:45-7:30pm  
Mar 19 No School  
Students & Staff  
Mar 26-30 No School  
Students & Staff  
Students: 18 Staff: 20

### NOVEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	8	9	10	11	12	13
	15	16	17	18	19	20
	22	23	24	25	26	27
	29	30				

Nov 9 No School Students  
Staff Development  
Nov 25-27 No School: Holiday  
Students & Staff  
Students: 17 Staff: 18

### APRIL 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9
	11	12	13	14	15	16
	18	19	20	21	22	23
	25	26	27	28	29	30

Apr 16 No School GMS ONLY  
Students: 22 Staff: 22

### DECEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
	6	7	8	9	10	11
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	20	21	22	23	24	25
	27	28	29	30	31	

Dec 18 2nd Qtr/1st Sem Ends  
\*Dec 21-31 No School: Holiday  
Students & Staff  
(\*continues into January)  
1st Sem: 84 Days  
Students: 14 Staff: 14

### MAY 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
	2	3	4	5	6	7
	9	10	11	12	13	14
	16	17	18	19	20	21
	23	24	25	26	27	28
	30	31				

May 15 Graduation  
May 17 Preschool Graduation  
3pm  
May 18 Last Day of School K-12  
Early Release 11:30am  
1/2 Staff Workday  
May 19 Staff Workday  
2nd Sem: 86.5 Days  
Students: 11.5 Staff: 13

# 2026-2027 G CALENDAR

308-436-3125

WWW.GERINGSCHOOLS.NET

ALL OTHER CALENDAR SCHEDULING CAN BE FOUND at [www.westernconferencene.org](http://www.westernconferencene.org)

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### **Intent of Handbook:**

This handbook is intended to be used by students, parents and staff as a guide to the rules, regulations, and general information about Gering Middle School. Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained in it. Parents are encouraged to use this handbook as a resource and to assist their child in following the rules contained in this handbook.

Although the information found in this handbook is detailed and specific on many topics, the handbook is not intended to be all encompassing so as to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise during any

school day, or school year. This handbook does not create a “contract.” The administration reserves the right to make decisions and make rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well being of all students. The administration will be responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. Should a situation or circumstance arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based upon all applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.

**Mutual Respect**

Gering Middle School expects every staff member and student to be treated with respect and dignity. A show of disrespect toward a staff member or insubordination on the part of students will not be tolerated.

**Complaint Procedure**

The proper procedure for a parent or student to make complaints or raise concerns is to begin with the school employee who is most immediately or directly involved in the matter, as illustrated in the complaint procedure set forth below. There are specific procedures to address certain complaints or concerns, such as discrimination, harassment, bullying, or disciplinary actions. Those procedures should be used where applicable.

- Step 1. Schedule a conference with the staff person most directly involved in the matter.
- Step 2. Address the concern to the Principal if the matter is not resolved at Step 1.
- Step 3. Address the concern to the Superintendent if the matter is not resolved at Step 2.
- Step 4. Address the concern to the Board of Education if the matter is not resolved at Step 3.

**Conditions Applicable to All Levels of Complaint Procedure**

All information to be considered at each step should be placed in writing in order to be most effective. Action or decisions will be expedited as quickly as possible, typically within ten (10) calendar days, depending on the nature of the complaint and the need for prompt resolution.

**Designation of Directors**

Any person having concerns or needing information about the District’s compliance with anti-discrimination laws or policies should contact the District’s designated Director for the applicable anti-discrimination law.

<b>Law, Policy or Program</b>	<b>Issue or Concern</b>	<b>District Designee</b>
Title VI	Discrimination or harassment based on race, color, or national origin; harassment	Superintendent
Title IX	Discrimination or harassment based on sex; gender equity	Superintendent
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)	Discrimination, harassment or reasonable accommodations of persons with disabilities	Director of Student Services
Homeless student laws	Children who are homeless	Superintendent
Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities	Safe and drug free schools	Superintendent

The Superintendent or Director of Student Services may be contacted at 1519 10th Street or (308) 436-3125.

### **Anti-Discrimination & Harassment Policy**

Gering Public Schools hereby gives this statement of compliance and intent to comply with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination or harassment and requiring accommodations. This school district intends to take necessary measures to assure compliance with such laws against any prohibited form of discrimination or harassment or which require accommodations.

Preventing Harassment and Discrimination of Students Purpose: GMS is committed to offering employment and educational opportunity to its employees and students in a climate free of discrimination. Accordingly, unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind by administrators, teachers, coworkers, students or other persons is prohibited. GMS will try to protect employees and students from reported discrimination or harassment by non-employees or others in the workplace and educational environment. For purposes of this, discrimination or harassment based on a person's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age is prohibited.

The following are general definitions of what might constitute prohibited harassment:

- In general, ethnic or racial slurs or other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's race, color, religion, disability or national origin constitute harassment when they unreasonably interfere with the person's work performance or create an intimidating work, instructional or educational environment.
- Age harassment (40 years of age and higher) has been defined by federal regulations as a form of age discrimination. It can consist of demeaning jokes, insults or intimidation based on a person's age.
- Sexual harassment is defined by federal and state regulations as a form of sex discrimination. It can consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature by supervisors or others in the workplace, classroom or educational environment.

### **Complaint and Grievance Procedures:**

Employees or students should initially report all instances of discrimination or harassment to their immediate supervisor or classroom teacher. However, if the employee or student is uncomfortable in presenting the problem to the supervisor or teacher, or if the supervisor or teacher is the problem, the employee or student is encouraged to go to the next level of supervision. In the case of a student, the Principal would be the next or alternative person to contact.

If the employee or student's complaint is not resolved to his or her satisfaction within five (5) to ten (10) calendar days, or if the discrimination or harassment continues, or if as a student you feel you need immediate help for any reason, please report your complaint to the Superintendent of Gering Public Schools. If a satisfactory arrangement cannot be obtained through the Superintendent, the complaint may be processed to the Board of Education.

### **Title IX Statement from the District:**

"The Gering Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity that it operates. The District is required by Title IX (20 U.S.C. § 1681) and 34 CFR Part 106 not to discriminate in such a manner. This requirement not to discriminate also applies to admission and employment. Any inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the District Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Civil Rights, or both."

Title IX Coordinator: Dr. Kory Knight, Superintendent and/or Designee  
Address: 1519 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Gering, NE 69341  
Email: [kknight@geringschools.net](mailto:kknight@geringschools.net)  
Phone: (308) 436-3125

For information regarding the Gering Public School District procedure for complaints of sexual harassment including the complaint process, how to file a report or a complaint of sexual harassment, how to file a formal complaint of sexual harassment, and how the District will respond to such complaints see Board Policy 504.24 located at Gering Public Schools website (<https://www.geringschools.net>).

### **Notice to Parents of Rights Afforded by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

The following is a description of the rights granted to qualifying students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning the decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions. You have the right to:

1. Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disability.
2. Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law.
3. Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation or placement of your child.
4. Have your child receive a free appropriate public education.
5. Have your child receive services and be educated in facilities which are comparable to those provided to every student.
6. Have evaluation, educational and placement decisions made based on a variety of information sources and by persons who know the student and who are knowledgeable about the evaluation data and placement options.
7. Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting (if the setting is a program not operated by the district) at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the district.
8. Have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the district.
9. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation and placement.
10. Request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program or placement. (You and your child may take part in the hearing. Hearing requests are to be made to the Superintendent).
11. File a local grievance.

### **Notification of Rights Under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies their record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school district to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); or a

parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility and effectively provide the function or service for which they are responsible. Contractors, consultants and volunteers are permitted to have access to education records where they are performing a function or service that would otherwise be done by a school employee. Their access is limited to education records in which they have a legitimate educational interest; which means records needed to effectively provide the function or service for which they are responsible.

In regards to education records requests; the district forwards education records (may include academic, health and discipline records) that have been requested in which the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student has already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

#### **Notice Concerning Directory Information**

The District may disclose directory information. The types of personally identifiable information that the district has designated as directory information are as follows: student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date of and place of birth, major fields of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (e.g., full-time or part-time), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and most recent previous school attended. A parent or eligible student has the right to refuse to let the District designate any or all of those types of information about the student as directory information. The period of time within which a parent or eligible student has to notify the District in writing that he or she does not want any or all of those types of information about the student designated as directory information is as follows: two weeks from the time this information is first received. The district may disclose information about former students without meeting the conditions in this section.

#### **Homeless Students Policy**

A homeless child or youth is defined as one who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes—

- (1) Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.
- (2) Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- (3) Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (4) Migratory children (as defined in section 1309 of the ESSA of 1965, as amended), who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in this definition.

This definition includes both youth who are unaccompanied by families and those who are homeless with their families. The district will comply with state and federal law as it relates to homeless children or youth.

### Assurances

1. The district adopts these policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and youths are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
2. The district will designate an appropriate staff person as the Local Educational Liaison (LEL) for homeless children and youths, to carry out the duties in compliance with state and federal law.
3. The district adopts these policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to and from the school of origin. The "school of origin" means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. This will be done in accordance with the following, as applicable:
  - a. If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the district in which the school of origin is located, the child's or youth's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by that district.
  - b. If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the district served by the school of origin terminate and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another district, the school of origin and the local district in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the two districts are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

### Comparable Services

Each homeless child or youth shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other students in the school in which the child is placed including transportation services, educational programs for children with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency, educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as Title I, school nutrition programs, programs in vocational and technical education, and programs for gifted and talented students.

### Local Educational Liaison

The Superintendent or designee shall serve as the district's Local Educational Liaison who will serve in tracking, monitoring and coordinating programs and activities for these children. The identity and duties of the LEL shall annually be provided to the NDE, school staff, providers and advocates of services to homeless persons, and to homeless students.

1. In general, the LEL shall coordinate:
  - a. The provision of services with local social services agencies, the NDE Homeless Education Liaison, community and school personnel, and other agencies or programs providing education, social and related services to homeless children and youths and their families; and
  - b. With other local educational agencies on inter-district issues, such as transportation or transfer of school records.
2. Coordination purpose - The coordination shall be designed to:
  - a. Ensure that homeless children and youths have access and reasonable proximity, to available education and related support services; and
  - b. Raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness.
3. The LEL shall receive appropriate time and training to carry out the duties required by law and this policy, and ensure that:
  - a. Homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
  - b. Homeless children and youths enroll in schools of the district, which includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities, and have a full and equal opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards as other children and youths;

- c. Homeless families, children, and youths receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services;
- d. The parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- e. Receive individualized counseling from counselors to prepare and improve their readiness for college, including college selection, application, financial aid, and on-campus supports;
- f. Unaccompanied youths are informed of their status as independent students under the Higher Education Act of 1965 and may obtain assistance from the LEL to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid;
- g. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is communicated where such children and youths receive services under the federal laws for homeless children, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
- h. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance state and federal law; and
- i. The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that is selected for the youth.

### Enrollment and Placement

The district will handle enrollment and placement of homeless children in compliance with state and federal law according to the child's or youth's best interest such that it shall:

1. Continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness—
  - a. In any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or
  - b. For the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
2. Enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
3. The choice regarding enrollment shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.
4. Issues of guardianship, proof of residency, and dress code requirements shall not be cause for delay or denial of enrollment. The district is not prohibited from requiring a parent or guardian of a homeless child to submit contact information.
5. If the school district is unable to determine the grade level of the student because of missing or incomplete records, the child will be placed in the appropriate grade level by the same procedures used for non-homeless children.

### School Stability

In determining the best interest of the child or youth the district shall:

1. Presume that keeping a homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest unless doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth.
2. The district must consider student-centered factors related to a child's or youth's best interest including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth.
3. If the district determines that it is not in a child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin, or the school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, it must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form that is understandable.

### Enrollment Disputes

The dispute procedure must be made available for resolving disputes over eligibility, as well as school selection or enrollment. If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school:

1. The district shall immediately provide the child's parent or guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, a written explanation of the decision made regarding the school selection including the right to appeal the decision. It shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth and include the LEL contact information. The child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. Unaccompanied youths shall be assisted by the LEL in enrolling immediately.
2. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the initial complaint, the LEL shall carry out the dispute resolution process in accordance with 92 NEC 19-005.002
3. The parent/guardian (or student, if applicable) may file a written appeal of the decision to the Nebraska Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner or designee may file a written response to the appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the appeal.
4. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Commissioner's decision, the parent/guardian (or student, if applicable) may file a written appeal of the decision with the State Board of Education and shall be governed by 92 NAC Rule 61.

### Records

Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, regarding each homeless child or youth shall be maintained:

1. So that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district;
2. The district will treat the student's homeless status as a Student Education Record, not deemed to be directory information; and
3. In a manner consistent with the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act.

The LEL shall document the number of homeless children and youths receiving services, and maintain financial records regarding any federal funds used for providing such services.

### Immunization Requirements

Homeless students will not be denied enrollment for lack of immunization records. The school district will make a reasonable effort to locate immunization records from the information provided or will assist the student in obtaining the necessary immunizations. Permanent exemptions for homeless students from the immunization requirement in this policy will be allowed only for reasons in accordance with the law.

### Review and Revision

The district shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youths in the district. In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship. Special attention shall be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school.

### Breakfast and Lunch Programs

The District has agreed to participate in the National School Lunch Program and accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced price meals to eligible children in the schools under its jurisdiction. The District provides the United States Department of Agriculture's required nondiscrimination statement:

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The school food authority assures the State Department of Education that the school system will uniformly implement the following policy to determine children's eligibility for free and reduced price meals in all National School Lunch Programs.

### **Acceptable Use of Computers, Technology and the Internet**

Gering Public Schools recognizes the value of computer and other electronic resources to improve student learning and enhance the administration and operation of its schools. To this end, Gering Public Schools encourage the responsible use of computers, computer networks (including the Internet), and other electronic resources in support of the mission and goals of the Gering District. It is the policy of Gering Public Schools to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)]. It is the policy of Gering Public Schools to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible conduct in all online network activities by staff and students. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee, student, or other individual to engage in any activity that does not conform to the established purpose and general rules and policies of the network. Within this general policy, Gering Public Schools recognizes its legal and ethical obligation to protect the wellbeing of students in its charge.

The following uses of school-provided electronic resources, including Internet and email, are not permitted:

- To access, upload, download, or distribute pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material
- To transmit obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, or threatening language;
- To violate any local, state, or federal statute;
- To vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization;
- To access another individual's materials, information, or files without permission; and,
- To violate copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual or organization without permission.
- To distribute or forward "chain letters" via email.

Any violation of District policy and rules may result in loss of District-provided access to the Internet. Additional disciplinary action may be determined in keeping with existing procedures and practices regarding inappropriate language or behavior. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

Students may:

- Design and post web pages and other material from school resources.
- Use direct communications such as email, online chat, or instant messaging with a teacher's permission.
- Use the resources for any educational purpose.

Violations of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privileges to use the school's information technology resources.

### **Supervision and Monitoring**

School and network administrators and their authorized employees monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that uses are secure and in conformity with this policy. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other person, or to protect property. They may also use this information in disciplinary actions and will furnish evidence of crime to law enforcement.

### **Enforcement of Policy**

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information.

Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors.

Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bonafide research or other lawful purposes.

A Gering Public School staff member may override the technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access for a student to access a site with legitimate educational value that is wrongly blocked by the technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access.

Gering Public School staff will monitor students' use of the Internet by either direct supervision or by monitoring Internet use history to ensure enforcement of policy.

#### Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of Gering Public Schools online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking", and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

#### Education, Supervision and Monitoring

It shall be the responsibility of all members of Gering Public Schools staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and Protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the Director of Technology or designated representatives.

The Building Principal or designated representatives will provide age appropriate training for students who use Gering Public Schools Internet services. The training provided will be designed to promote Gering Public School's commitment to the standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in the Gering Public Schools Network Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy;

Student safety with regard to:

1. safety on the Internet;
2. inappropriate behavior while on online, on social networking Web sites, and in chat rooms; and
3. cyberbullying awareness and response.

#### Compliance with the E-Rate Requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA")

Following receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the Gering Public Schools Network Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy. Curriculum materials and a Scope and Sequence can be found at Common Sense Media: <https://www.commonsense.org/education>.

#### Disclaimers

Gering Public Schools and its individual schools, administrators, faculty, and staff thereof, make no warranties of any kind for the service provided and will not be held responsible for any damage suffered by users. This includes the loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, and intrusion by computer virus or service interruption.

Use of any information obtained via network access is at the risk of the user, and Gering Public Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained.

Gering Public Schools cannot guarantee complete protection from inappropriate material. Furthermore, it is impossible for the district or content filter to reflect each individual or family's opinions of what constitutes "inappropriate material". If a student mistakenly accesses inappropriate information, he/she should immediately notify a district staff member.

Gering Public Schools is not liable for an individual's inappropriate use of the district's electronic communications systems, for violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, and for other costs incurred by users through use of Gering Public Schools electronic communication systems.

The district will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the district's electronic communication systems.

MINOR: The term "minor" means any individual who has not attained the age of 17 years.

TECHNOLOGY PROTECTION MEASURE: The term "technology protection measure" means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:

OBSCENE, as that term is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code;

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY, as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United State Code; or Harmful to minors.

HARMFUL TO MINORS: The term "harmful to minors" means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:

- Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
- Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
- Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

SEXUAL ACT; SEXUAL CONTACT: The terms "sexual act" and "sexual contact" have the meaning given such terms in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code.

### **Due Process: Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion, or Mandatory Reassignment**

If a principal makes a decision to discipline a student by long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment, the following procedures shall be followed: [ref. 79-4, 181]

- A. Written Charge and Summary of Evidence. [ref.79-4, 181(1)]
  - a. File with the Superintendent. On the date of the decision, a written charge and a summary of the evidence supporting such charge shall be filed with the superintendent.
  - b. Send Written Notice. The school shall, within two (2) days of the decision, send written notice by registered or certified mail to the student and his or her parent or guardian informing them of the rights established under the Student Discipline Act.
- B. Written Notice: Written notice must include:
  - a. Violation and Summary of Evidence. The rule or standard of conduct allegedly violated and the acts of the student alleged to constitute a cause for long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment, including a summary of the evidence to be presented against the student; [ref.79-4,181(2)(a)]
  - b. Recommended Penalty. The penalty, if any, which the principal has recommended in the charge and any other penalty to which the student may be subject; [ref. 79-4, 181(2)(b)]
  - c. Right To Hearing. A statement that, before long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment for disciplinary purposes can be invoked, the student shall have a right to a hearing, upon request, on the specified charges; [ref. 79-4, 181(2)(c)]

- d. Hearing Procedures. A description of the hearing procedures provided by the act, along with procedures for appealing any decision rendered at the hearing; [ref. 79-4,181(2)(d)]
  - e. Examine Evidence and Witnesses. A statement that the principal, legal counsel for the school, the student, the student's parent, or the student's representative or guardian shall have the right to:
    - i. Examine the student's academic and disciplinary records and any affidavits to be used at the hearing concerning the alleged misconduct and
    - ii. Know the identity of the witnesses to appear at the hearing and the substance of their testimony; [ref. 79-4, 181(2)(e)]
- B. Request for Hearing Form.** A form on which the student, the student's parent, or the student's guardian may request a hearing to be signed by such parties and delivered to the principal or superintendent in person or by registered or certified mail as prescribed in Sections 79-4,181 (outline II.J.4) and 79-4,185 (outline II.J.5.a)
- C. Suspension Until Hearing.** When a notice of intent to discipline a student by long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment is filed with the superintendent, the student may be suspended by the principal until: [ref. 79-4, 181(3)]
- a. The date the disciplinary action takes effect if no hearing is requested;
  - b. If a hearing is requested, the date the hearing examiner makes the report of his/her findings and a recommendation of the action to be taken to the superintendent, or
  - c. If the principal determines that the student must be suspended immediately to prevent or substantially reduce the risk of:
    - i. Interference with an educational function or school purpose or [ref. 79-4, 181(3)(a)]
    - ii. A personal injury to the student himself or herself, other students, school employees, or school volunteers. [ref. 79-4,181(3)(b)]
- D. Discussions Prior to Hearing.** Nothing in the Student Discipline Act shall preclude the student, parent, guardian, or representative from discussing and settling the matter with appropriate school personnel prior to the hearing stage. [ref. 4, 181]

Procedures if Hearing Is Not Requested

If a hearing is not requested by the student or the student's parent or guardian within five (5) school days following receipt of the written notice, the punishment recommended in the charge by the principal or his/her designee will automatically go into effect upon the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) school day following receipt of the written notice by the student or his/her parent or guardian as required above under Section 79-4, 181 [ref. 79-4,184].

Procedures If a Hearing Is Requested

- A. Request For Hearing.** A hearing must be requested within five (5) school days after receipt of the written notice. [ref. 79-4, 182(1)]
  - a. Request For Hearing Beyond Five Days. If a hearing is requested for more than five (5) school days but not more than thirty (30) calendar days following the actual receipt of written notice, the hearing shall be held but the imposed punishment shall continue in effect pending final determination. [ref. 79-4, 185]
- B. Appointment/Qualifications of Hearing Examiner.** If a hearing is requested, the superintendent must appoint a hearing examiner. [ref. 79-4, 182(1)]
  - a. Qualifications: The hearing examiner can be any person designated by the school district's superintendent, school board, or counsel, if such person:
    - i. Has not brought the charges against the student
    - ii. Is not a witness at the hearing, and
    - iii. Has no involvement in the charge [ref. 79-4,182(2)]
  - b. General Duties. [ref 79-4, 183]

- i. Impartiality - In addition to other duties, it is the duty of the hearing examiner to remain impartial throughout all deliberations.
  - ii. Availability - The hearing examiner must be available, prior to any hearing held pursuant to the act, to answer any questions the principal, the student, or the student's parent or guardian may have regarding the nature and conduct of the hearing.
- C. Notice of Time/Place For Hearing. Within two (2) school days after being appointed, the hearing examiner must give written notice to the principal, the student, and the student's parent or guardian of the time and place for the hearing. [ref. 79-4,182(1)]
  - a. The hearing shall be scheduled within a period of five (5) school days after it is requested, but such time may be changed by the hearing examiner for good cause. [ref. 79-4,182(3)]
  - b. No hearing shall be held upon less than two (2) school days' actual notice to the principal, the student, and the student's parent or guardian, except with the consent of all the parties. [ref. 79-4,182(3)]
- D. Right To Examine Records/Statements. The principal or legal counsel for the school, the student, and the student's parents or guardian, or representative shall have the right to examine the records and written statements referred to in the Student Discipline Act and the statement of any witness in the possession of the school board at a reasonable time prior to the hearing. [ref. 79-4,182(4)]

**Grounds for Short-Term Suspension, Long-Term Suspension, Expulsion or Mandatory Reassignment (Nebraska Student Discipline Act)**

The following conduct has been determined by the Board of Education to have the potential to seriously affect the health, safety or welfare of students, staff and other persons or to otherwise seriously interfere with the educational process. Such conduct constitutes grounds for long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment, and any other lesser forms of discipline. The conduct is subject to the consequence of long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment where it occurs on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by the school and being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or an employee's designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event.

1. Willfully disobeying any reasonable written or oral request of a school staff member, or the voicing of disrespect to those in authority.
2. Use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation, harassment, or similar conduct in a manner that constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes or making any communication that reasonable recipient would interpret as a serious expression of an intent to harm or cause injury to another;
3. Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to property, stealing or attempting to steal property of substantial value, repeated damage or theft involving property, or setting or attempting to set a fire of any magnitude;
4. Causing or attempting to cause personal injury to any person, including any school employee, school volunteer, or student. Personal injury caused by accident, self-defense, or other action undertaken on the reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person shall not constitute a violation of this subdivision;
5. Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of or with the intent of obtaining money or anything of value from such student or making a threat which causes or may be expected to cause a disruption to school operations;
6. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon or that has the appearance of a weapon or bringing or possessing any explosive device, including fireworks;
7. Selling, using, possessing or dispensing of alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, drugs, controlled substance, or an inhalant; being under the influence of any of the above; possession of drug paraphernalia, or the selling, using, possessing, or dispensing of an imitation controlled substance as defined in section 28-401 of the Nebraska statutes, or material represented to be alcohol, narcotics, drugs, a controlled substance or inhalant.
8. Use of a controlled substance in the manner prescribed for the student by the student's physician is not a violation. The term "under the influence" has a less strict meaning than it does under criminal law; for

school purposes, the term means any level of impairment and includes even the odor of alcohol or illegal substances on the breath or person of a student; also, it includes being impaired by reason of the abuse of any material used as a stimulant;

9. Public indecency or sexual conduct;
10. Engaging in bullying, which includes any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or a school employee's designee, or at school-sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events;
11. Sexually assaulting or attempting to sexually assault any person. This conduct may result in an expulsion regardless of the time or location of the offense if a complaint alleging such conduct is filed in a court of competent jurisdiction;
12. Engaging in any activity forbidden by law which constitutes a danger to other students or interferes with school purposes. This conduct may result in an expulsion regardless of the time or location of the offense if the conduct creates or has the potential to create a substantial interference with school purposes, such as the use of the telephone or internet off-school grounds to threaten.
13. Repeated violation of any rules established by the school district or school officials if such violations constitute a substantial interference with school purposes;
14. Truancy or failure to attend assigned classes or assigned activities; or tardiness to school, assigned classes or assigned activities;
15. The use of language, written or oral, or conduct, including gestures, which is profane or abusive to students or staff members. Profane or abusive language or conduct includes, but is not limited to, that which is commonly understood and intended to be derogatory toward a group or individual based upon race, gender, disability, national origin, or religion;
16. Dressing or grooming in a manner which is dangerous to the student's health and safety or a danger to the health and safety of others or repeated violations of the student dress and grooming standards; dressing, grooming, or engaging in speech that is lewd or indecent, vulgar or plainly offensive; dressing, grooming, or engaging in speech that school officials reasonably conclude will materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school; dressing, grooming, or engaging in speech that a reasonable observer would interpret as advocating illegal drug use.
17. Willfully violating the behavioral expectations for those students riding Gering Public Schools buses.
18. A student who engages in the following conduct shall be expelled for the remainder of the school year in which it took effect if the misconduct occurs during the first semester, and if the expulsion for such conduct takes place during the second semester, the expulsion shall remain in effect for the first semester of the following school year, with the condition that such action may be modified or terminated by the school district during the expulsion period on such terms as the administration may establish:
  - a. The knowing and intentional use of force in causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, school volunteer, or student, except if caused by accident, self-defense, or on the reasonable belief that the force used was necessary to protect some other person and the extent of force used was reasonably believed to be necessary, or
  - b. The knowing and intentional possession, use, or transmission of a dangerous weapon other than a firearm.
19. Knowingly and intentionally possessing, using, or transmitting a firearm on school grounds, in a school-owned or utilized vehicle, or during an educational function or event off school grounds, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event. This conduct shall result in an expulsion for one calendar year. "Firearm" means a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921, as that statute existed on January 1, 1995. That statute includes the following statement: "The term 'firearm' means (a) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (b) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (c) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (d) any destructive device." The Superintendent may modify such a one year expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis, provided that such modification is in writing.
20. Bringing a firearm or other dangerous weapon to school for any reason is discouraged; however, a student will not be subject to disciplinary action if the item is brought or possessed under the following conditions:

- a. Prior written permission to bring the firearm or other dangerous weapon to school is obtained from the student's teacher, building administrator and parent.
- b. The purpose of having the firearm or other dangerous weapon in school is for a legitimate educational function.
- c. A plan for its transportation into and from the school, its storage while in the school building and how it will be displayed must be developed with the prior written approval by the teacher and building administrator. Such a plan shall require that such item will be in the possession of an adult staff member at all times except for such limited time as is necessary to fulfill the educational function.
- d. The firearm or other dangerous weapon shall be in an inoperable condition while it is on school grounds.

### **Reporting Student Law Violations**

Cases of law violations or suspected law violations by students will be reported to the police and to the student's parents or guardian as soon as possible. When a Principal or other school official releases a minor student to a peace officer (e.g., police officer, sheriff, and all other persons with similar authority to make arrests) for the purpose of removing the minor from the school premises, the Principal or other school official will take immediate steps to notify the parent, guardian, or responsible relative of the minor regarding the release of the minor to the officer and regarding the place to which the minor is reportedly being taken. An exception applies when a minor has been taken into custody as a victim of suspected child abuse; in that event the Principal or other school official shall provide the peace officer with the address and telephone number of the minor's parents or guardian. In an effort to demonstrate that student behavior is always subject to possible legal sanctions regardless of where the behavior occurs, it shall be the policy of the Gering Public Schools to notify the proper legal authorities when a student engages in any of the following behaviors on school grounds or at a school sponsored event:

- Knowingly possessing illegal drugs or alcohol.
- Assault.
- Vandalism resulting in significant property damage.
- Theft of school or personal property of a significant nature.
- Automobile accident.
- Any other behavior which significantly threatens the health or safety of students, staff or other persons or which is required by law to be reported.

### **Restorative Practice Policy**

Our school district supports proactive and reactive evidence-based initiatives to manage student misbehavior. Restorative Practices are grounded in principles and values that are needs based, hold students accountable, are focused on repairing harms, and support meaningful outcomes. Restorative Practices will be integrated within existing discipline measures and utilized as deemed appropriate.

### **Restorative Practice Process**

Restorative Practices reflect the philosophy that when a misdeed occurs within a school, it affects those harmed, those causing the harm, and the wider school community. The goal of restorative practices is to address conflict using open and respectful dialogue that focuses on the harm caused and strategies to repair this harm and the relationships of those involved. Restorative practices can include group conferencing, peer mediation, victim-offender mediation, or classroom peace circles, and can be formal or informal. These processes may be handled by district personnel, school resource officers, or others that support the district, such as contractors, ESU's, volunteers, and those serving through Nebraska Supreme Court-approved mediation centers. In a Restorative Practice Conference, students and parents/guardians agree to the following:

- **Constructive Communication:** The goal of restorative practice is to foster new understanding through dialogue that results in a mutually-agreed resolution to the issues at hand. Students and parents agree to speak honestly and to listen respectfully without interruptions. The mediator/facilitator's role is to manage communication and help the parties work to discover solutions that meet the needs and interests of all parties to the fullest extent possible. The mediator/facilitator will not make judgments, give legal advice, or present parties with solutions to their problems.

- **Confidentiality, Privileged, and Voluntary Communications:** Pursuant to Neb. Reb. 43-247.03, parties agree not to record or create transcripts of sessions and acknowledge they are responsible to maintain confidentiality and agree that communications during preparation, process, and follow up will not be shared with others, excepting:
  - Agreements reached in the restorative process.
  - When written permission by all participants is given.
  - When statements regarding unreported allegations of child abuse or neglect or threats to harm self or another are revealed.
  - When process information must be shared with funding or referring agencies, such as Diversion, Probation, County Attorneys, or Courts.
- **Agreements:** No agreement can be forced upon any party. Parties agree to take responsibility for carrying out any agreements made during the restorative process.
- **Program Evaluation:** Participants may be asked to take part in evaluations of the process to comply with reporting requirements.

### **GENERAL STUDENT INFORMATION**

#### **Attendance Policy**

Regular and punctual student attendance is required. The Board's policies require such attendance. The administration is responsible for developing further attendance rules and regulations and staff is responsible for assisting in the enforcement of the rules and regulations. Students and parents are responsible for developing behaviors which will result in regular and punctual student attendance.

#### **Absence/Tardy Procedure**

Section 79-201 of the Nebraska School Law states that "every person residing in a school district within the State of Nebraska who has legal or actual charge or control of any child not less than seven, nor more than sixteen years of age, shall cause such child to attend regularly the public, private, denominational, or parochial day school each day that such school is open and in session..." Punctual and regular attendance is important since absence from school is the greatest single cause of lack of achievement in school.

- It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the school each time their child is absent or tardy. Normal School hours for students are **8:00 a.m. until 3:15 p.m.** Parents should call the school office (436-3123) starting at 7:30 AM and on through the day of your student's absence.
- Attendance will be tracked by counting periods missed.
- Attendance totals will be recounted at the end of each week.
- When the student reaches five (5) days of absence, the principal or her/his designee will contact the parent to inform them of their child's attendance record.
- When a student has missed ten (10) days, a letter will be sent home asking the parent or guardian to contact the school to set up a meeting. A copy of this letter may be sent to the County Attorney, who may set up a truancy hearing. A meeting may be held that will include the student, the parent/guardian, a school administrator and a school counselor. This meeting will serve to draw up a new attendance agreement.
- Tardies will be marked in Infinite Campus by classroom teachers. If a student is tardy to class, s/he will be expected to make up the time missed with that teacher in the form of make-up minutes through a "tardy detention". Students who do not serve make-up minutes will be subject to an office referral for excessive tardiness and/or skipping detention.
- If a student skips tardy detention three times, s/he will receive a 30-minute office detention and behavior referral. Office detentions can be required before or after school or during lunch/recess.
- **For excessive unexcused tardiness throughout the school year, the following actions and accompanying consequences will be utilized:**
  - **10 tardies: Parent phone call and attendance improvement plan**

- 15 tardies: Parent contact to review improvement plan + 1 day of in-school-suspension
  - 20 tardies: Parent contact to revise improvement plan + 1 day of out-of-school suspension
  - 25 tardies: Parent contact + 3 days of out-of-school suspension
  - 30 tardies: Parent contact + 5 days of out-of-school suspension
- If attendance is addressed in a 504 or an IEP plan, that plan will supersede this attendance policy.
  - A student shall be considered tardy up to 20 minutes into class and absent if s/he is more than 20 minutes late to any class.

We understand that there may be circumstances that prevent students from attending school. We will accept letters from providers seeing students on days a student is absent.

As a courtesy, once a student has reached 10, 15 or 20 days of absences, a computer-generated attendance letter will be mailed home to inform you of your child's attendance record.

## GMS ATTENDANCE CODES FOR 2025-2026

LOCAL CODE	STATE CODE	DESCRIPTION	STATUS	EXCUSE
ADM		ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION/WAIVED	ABSENT	EXEMPT
ACT		SCHOOL SUPERVISED ACTIVITY	PRESENT	EXEMPT
ISS		IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION	PRESENT	EXEMPT
OSS		OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION	ABSENT	EXEMPT
TRDY	04	TARDY	TARDY	EXCUSED
MED	07	MEDICAL WITH DOCTOR DOCUMENTATION	ABSENT	EXCUSED
BER	10	BEREAVEMENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
PAR	10	PARENT ACKNOWLEDGED ABSENCE	ABSENT	EXCUSED
ILL	07	ILLNESS	ABSENT	EXCUSED
UNV	12	UNVERIFIED	ABSENT	UNKNOWN
CUT	11	SKIPPED/CUT CLASS	ABSENT	UNEXCUSED

<b>STATUS OPTIONS:</b>	ABSENT RELEASE	TARDY	PRESENT	EARLY
<b>EXCUSE OPTIONS:</b>	EXEMPT	U: UNEXCUSED	E: EXCUSED	?: UNKNOWN

Local Codes Highlighted in RED will count toward attendance letters

## **Makeup Work**

Students are allowed 2 days to make up assignments for every day of excused absence.

## **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to abide by the standards of academic integrity established by their teachers and school administration. Standards of academic integrity are established in order for students to learn as much as possible from instruction, for students to be given grades which accurately reflect the student's level of learning and progress, to provide a level playing field for all students, and to develop appropriate values. Cheating and plagiarism violate the standards of academic integrity. Sanctions will be imposed against students who engage in such conduct. The following definitions provide a guide to the standards of academic integrity:

- **Cheating**: to intentionally misrepresent the source, nature, or other conditions of academic work so as to accrue undeserved credit, or to cooperate with someone else in such misrepresentation. Such misrepresentations may, but need not necessarily, involve the work of others. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:
  - **Assessments**: includes tests, quizzes and other examinations or academic performances
  - **Advance Information**: Obtaining, reviewing or sharing copies of tests or information about a test before these are distributed for student use by the instructor. For example, a student engages in cheating if, after having taken a test, the student informs other students in a later section of the questions that appear on the test.
  - **Use of Unauthorized Materials**: Using notes, textbooks, pre-programmed formulas in calculators, or other unauthorized material, devices or information while taking a test except as expressly permitted. For example, except for "open book" tests, a student engages in cheating if the student looks at personal notes or the textbook during the test.
  - **Use of Other Student Answers**: Copying or looking at another student's answers or work, or sharing answers or work with another student, when taking a test, except as expressly permitted. For example, a student engages in cheating if the student looks at another student's paper during a test. A student also engages in cheating if the student tells another student answers during a test or while exiting the testing room, or knowingly allows another student to look at the student's answers on the test paper.
  - **Use of Other Student to Take Test**: Having another person take one's place for a test, or taking a test for another student, without the specific knowledge and permission of the instructor.
  - **Misrepresenting Need to Delay Test**: Presenting false or incomplete information in order to postpone or avoid the taking of a test. For example, a student engages in cheating if the student misses class on the day of a test, claiming to be sick, when the student's real reason for missing class was because the student was not prepared for the test.
- **Papers** (includes papers, essays, lab projects, and other similar academic work):
  - **Use of Another's Paper**: Copying another student's paper, using a paper from an essay writing service, or allowing another student to copy a paper, without the specific knowledge and permission of the instructor.
  - **Re-use of One's Own Papers**: Using a substantial portion of a piece of work previously submitted for another course or program to meet the requirements of the present course or program without notifying the instructor to whom the work is presented.
  - **Assistance from Others**: Having another person assist with the paper to such an extent that the work does not truly reflect the student's work. For example, a student engages in cheating if the student has a draft essay reviewed by the student's parent or sibling, and the essay is substantially re-written by the student's parent or sibling. Assistance from home is encouraged, but the work must remain the student's.
  - **Failure to Contribute to Group Projects**: Accepting credit for a group project in which the student failed to contribute a fair share of the work.
  - **Misrepresenting Need to Delay Paper**: Presenting false or incomplete information in order to postpone or avoid turning in a paper when due. For example, a student engages in cheating if the student misses class on the day a paper is due, claiming to be sick, when the student's real reason for missing class was because the student had not finished the paper.

- Alteration of Assigned Grades. Any unauthorized alteration of assigned grades by a student in the teacher's grade book or the school records is a serious form of cheating.
- Plagiarism means to take and present as one's own a material portion of the ideas or words of another or to present as one's own an idea or work derived from an existing source without full and proper credit to the source of the ideas, words, or works. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:
  - Failure to Credit Sources: Copying work (words, sentences, and paragraphs or illustrations or models) directly from the work of another without proper credit. Academic work frequently involves use of outside sources. To avoid plagiarism, the student must place the work in quotations and give a citation to the outside source.
  - Falsely Presenting Work as One's Own: Presenting work prepared by another in final or draft form as one's own without citing the source, such as the use of purchased research papers or use of another student's paper.
  - Contributing to academic integrity violations means to participate or assist another in cheating or plagiarism. It includes but is not limited to allowing another student to look at your test answers, to copy your papers or lab projects, and to fail to report a known act of cheating or plagiarism to the instructor or administration.

The following sanctions will occur for academic integrity offenses:

1. Academic Sanction The instructor may refuse to accept the student's work in which the cheating or plagiarism took place, assign a grade of "F" or zero for the work, and/or require the student to complete a test or project in place of the work within such time and under such conditions as the instructor may determine appropriate. In the event the student completes the replacement test or project at a level meeting minimum performance standards, the instructor will assign a grade which the instructor determines to be appropriate for the work. Credit for the class may be withheld pending successful completion of the replacement test or project.
2. Report to Parents and Administration The instructor will notify the Principal of the offense and the instructor or Principal will notify the student's parent or guardian.
3. Student Discipline Sanctions Academic integrity offenses are a violation of school rules. The Principal may recommend sanctions in addition to those assigned by the instructor, up to and including suspension or expulsion. Such additional sanctions will be given strong consideration where a student has engaged in a serious or repeated academic integrity offense or other rule violations, and where the academic sanction is otherwise not a sufficient remedy, such as for offenses involving altering assigned grades or contributing to academic integrity violations.

### **Academic Progress**

At the teacher's discretion, parents may be informed as to the student's progress via a telephone call or email. Parents are encouraged to sign up for access to the Infinite Campus Portal. This tool is an excellent resource for parents to stay up to date on their student's academic progress, behavior and attendance. Contact the Gering Middle School Office for assistance with this process at 308-436-3123.

### **Accidents or Injuries**

Please report accidents or injuries to the classroom teacher or to an administrator. The teacher or administrator will file an accident report. An administrator will call the school nurse to examine the injury.

### **Arrival At School/Dismissal From School**

Students are expected to arrive at school no more than 20 minutes prior to the first class or school program in which they are participating. **Prior to that time, the school is not responsible for supervision of the students.** Students will be admitted to the school building 20 minutes prior to the first class. Students will not be permitted to enter earlier unless the Principal determines it to be necessary due to inclement weather or other factors. Students are to enter through their assigned entrance and proceed to designated areas.

Students will be dismissed at the end of the last period of the school day unless there are other circumstances (early dismissal, detention etc.). Upon dismissal, students must leave the school grounds and proceed home or

to a previously designated location unless participating in a school-sponsored activity. **The school is not responsible for supervision of students once the students are to have left school grounds.**

Certain days on the calendar are “shortened days,” meaning that the school day starts or ends other than on the normal schedule. Parents are strongly encouraged to be aware of those days so their children are not left in an unsupervised situation or without a means to get home upon dismissal.

**Asbestos Management Plan**

Gering Public Schools has conducted asbestos inspections in all of its facilities as required by Section 203 of Title 15, Chapter 53, subchapter II, of the Toxic Substance Control Act. 15 U.S.C. 2643, of 1986. Management plans requiring those inspections are available for your review in the Central Administration Office at 1800 Eighth Street, Gering, Nebraska during regular business hours.

**Positive Behavior Support**

In order to ensure a safe learning environment for all students, the school staff is committed to:

- Using a positive, preventative, and educational approach to student behavior
- Having a plan with clear direction for staff
- Explicitly teaching student behavior expectations
- Empowering all staff to implement the plan
- Students taking responsibility for their own behavior
- Using natural and logical consequences when behavior problems occur
- Seeking parent support for appropriate student conduct and disciplinary procedures

In order to carry out the philosophy and beliefs stated above, our school has chosen to implement the Positive Behavior Support (PBiS) model. PBiS is a program designed to build a more positive school-wide atmosphere. The ultimate goal is to teach students to be self-managers, who encourage and challenge each other to higher behavioral and academic standards. This is accomplished through the use of clear expectations which are explicitly taught, regularly acknowledged and fairly corrected. Students are set up for success in school. GMS theme for PBiS is GRIT, which stands for Gratitude, Responsibility, Integrity, and Trust.

**Bell Schedule**

The daily schedule will be devised to optimize time allotted for educational instruction and the full utilization of educational staff shared between buildings. The daily schedule may be subject to change in order to meet constraints imposed by additions to the curriculum or changes in personnel.

**DAILY BELL SCHEDULE (MTThF)**

	<b>Advisory</b>	<b>Period 1</b>	<b>Period 2</b>	<b>Period 3</b>	<b>Period 4</b>	<b>Period 5</b>	<b>Period 6</b>
<b>6th Grade</b>	8:00-8:20	8:23-9:36	9:39-10:52	10:55-11:25 (Lunch)	11:28-12:41	12:44-1:57	2:00-3:15
<b>7th Grade</b>	8:00-8:20	8:23-9:36	9:39-10:52	10:55-12:08	12:11-12:41 (Lunch)	12:44-1:57	2:00-3:15

	<b>Period 1</b>	<b>Period 2</b>	<b>Period 3</b>	<b>Period 4</b>	<b>Period 5</b>	<b>Period 6</b>	<b>Period 7</b>	<b>Period 8</b>
<b>8th Grade</b>	8:00-8:54	8:57-9:51	9:54-10:48	10:51-11:45	11:48-12:42	12:45-1:15 (Lunch)	1:18-2:22	2:25-3:15

### **WEDNESDAY BELL SCHEDULE (Early-Release)**

	<b>Advisory</b>	<b>Period 1</b>	<b>Period 2</b>	<b>Period 3</b>	<b>Period 4</b>	<b>Period 5</b>	<b>Period 6</b>
<b>6th Grade</b>	8:00-8:30	8:33-9:32	9:35-10:34	10:37-11:07 (Lunch)	11:10-12:10	12:13-1:13	1:16-2:15
<b>7th Grade</b>	8:00-8:30	8:33-9:32	9:35-10:34	10:37-11:37	11:40-12:10 (Lunch)	12:13-1:13	1:16-2:15

	<b>WIN</b>	<b>Period 1</b>	<b>Period 2</b>	<b>Period 3</b>	<b>Period 4</b>	<b>Period 5</b>	<b>Period 6</b>	<b>Period 7</b>	<b>Period 8</b>
<b>8th Grade</b>	8:00-8:30	8:33-9:14	9:17-9:58	10:01-10:41	10:44-11:24	11:27-12:07	12:10-12:40 (Lunch)	12:43-1:33	1:36-2:15

### **Bicycles/Scooters**

Bicycles and scooters must be parked in the racks provided and should be locked and licensed. The School District assumes no responsibility for the safety or security of these vehicles.

### **BIST (Behavior Intervention Support Team)**

An evidenced-based program adopted by the Gering School District to help staff implement the following systems.

- A communication system or regular meetings, checklists for student/administrator referral, informal feedback and check ups.
- A proactive, rather than reactive, behavior system which fits with the goals of Positive Behavior Support.
- A common language which builds skills and develops responsibility.
- Safe places where students who are in trouble can go to process and get help.
- Mentors who will support teachers of difficult students. (Mentors can be teachers, colleagues, volunteers and others).
- A behavior intervention team of school staff to give back-up for teachers and administration.

### **BIST Goals for Life**

1. I can be angry or upset and make good choices.
2. I can be okay when others are not okay.
3. I can do what I don't want to do. I can be productive and follow directions even when I don't want to.

### **BIST Placement Steps**

Classroom Seat, Safe Seat, Buddy Room, Team Focus or Recovery Room, Principal's Office, Home

Students must earn their way back into the previous step by processing with the teacher and/or meeting pre-established goals. After the Team has notified the parents, they may make the recommendation to the principal to place a student in Team Focus or the Recovery Room. The final decision for placement lies with the principal.

### **Bulletins and Announcements**

Bulletin boards and display cases are available for school-related and approved materials to be posted and displayed. Posters to be used in the halls or materials for distribution will need to be approved and initiated by the Principal. Posters are not to be attached to any painted wall surfaces. The person or organization responsible for distributing the posters is responsible to see that all posters are removed within 48 hours after the event. Personal messages and/or picture posters are NOT to be attached to student lockers without Administrative approval.

**Cafeteria**

Gering Public School uses an automated scanning system to record payments and charges to family accounts. Parents/guardians are expected to maintain a positive balance in their family lunch account.

At the start of the school year, a letter is sent home with students including an application for free or reduced lunches and breakfasts. We encourage you to complete the form and return it as soon as possible

Benefits from the prior year expire on **September 19** of the current school year and a new application must be submitted. Any charges incurred from that point until the new form is approved are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

**Guidelines for Collecting Delinquent Meal Charges**

The Gering Public School food service department utilizes a computerized point-of-sale system through Infinite Campus. Upon enrollment, all students are given a student account. Money deposited into this account can be used for the purchase of breakfast, lunch, milk and a la carte items. Parents can check their child’s account balance and make deposits in the Parent Portal at <http://www.geringschools.net/parents/>.

The food service department recommends that money is pre-paid into the account prior to the point-of-sale. The following payment options are available:

1. Major credit card through the Parent Portal.
2. Check:
  - i. Must be made to Gering Public Schools.
  - ii. Must have the student's full name in the memo.
  - iii. If more than one student is on a single check, the check must specify how much money is to be deposited into each account. If a check is returned due to non-sufficient funds (NSF), we will attempt to collect all money owed. In the event it cannot be collected, a third party collection agency will be utilized.
3. Cash: Must be submitted in a sealed envelope with students’ full name and amount on the envelope.
4. Account Balance Information: Gering Public Schools expects parents to be responsible for monitoring their student's cafeteria account and maintaining a positive balance. Free and reduced price meal assistance is available to all patrons at any time throughout the school year. Applications may be obtained from any of our school offices or on the Family Portal. The building Principal’s office will notify parents of negative account balances. In the event a student’s account reaches a negative balance, no extra meals or a la carte items can be charged.

Free and Reduced eligible students are entitled to one reimbursable meal. Extra meals and a la carte items will need to be purchased.

At the end of the school year, if a family no longer has children attending school, moves out of the district, or becomes eligible for free meals, the family may request reimbursement of any balance in the family account. Funds for families with students continuing the following school year will remain in the family account for the next school year. **The cafeteria will open for breakfast approximately 20 minutes prior to the start of each school day.**

**Care of School Property**

Students are responsible for the proper care of all books, equipment, supplies and furniture supplied by the school. Students who disfigure property, break windows or do other damage to school property or equipment will be required to pay for the damage done or replace the item. Fines are determined on books according to the following criteria:

Lost or Severely Damaged Book:	Replacement cost
Missing one or both covers:	Replacement cost

Missing Page:	50¢ per page (up to replacement cost)
Torn Page:	20¢ per page (up to replacement cost)
Marks that cannot be erased:	20¢ per mark (up to replacement cost)

School-issued items that are stolen or damaged from unlocked lockers are the responsibility of the student to whom they were issued. Students must pay all fines before they can receive school publications and final grades.

### **Band Fees**

Students participating in band and borrowing a school issued instrument will be responsible for paying a non-refundable \$20 cleaning fee for use of this instrument before the instrument will be issued and/or sent home with the student.

### **Chromebook Insurance Charge**

Gering Public Schools is assessing a \$20 insurance charge to cover incidental damage that may occur to a Chromebook. **This fee does not cover intentional or malicious damage to the Chromebook.** Lost or misplaced Chromebooks will result in the student being assessed the full cost of a replacement Chromebook.

### **Copyright and Fair Use Policy**

It is the school's policy to follow the federal copyright law. Students are reminded that, when using school equipment and when completing coursework, they also must follow the federal copyright laws. The federal copyright law governs the reproduction of works of authorship. Copyrighted works are protected regardless of the medium in which they are created or reproduced; thus, copyright extends to digital works and works transformed into a digital format. Copyrighted works are not limited to those that bear a copyright notice.

The "fair use" doctrine allows limited reproduction of copyrighted works for educational and research purposes. The relevant portion of the copyright statute provides that the "fair use" of a copyrighted work, including reproduction "for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research" is not an infringement of copyright. The law lists the following factors as the ones to be evaluated in determining whether a particular use of a copyrighted work is a permitted "fair use," rather than an infringement of the copyright:

- the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- the nature of the copyrighted work;
- the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and
- the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Although all of these factors will be considered, the last factor is the most important in determining whether a particular use is "fair." Students should seek assistance from a faculty member if there are any questions regarding what may be copied.

### **Dances**

Student dances are to be sponsored by school organizations. The following rules must be followed:

- There must be at least 10 adult chaperones provided by the organization, two of which must be school staff members.
- Dance hours may not last longer than 9:00 P.M.
- Students must show their student I.D. to enter.
- No students from other schools may enter.

- The doors to the dance close 30 minutes after the dance begins. Students may not enter the dance after that time unless accompanied by parent/guardian.
- Students are not allowed to leave the dance early unless a parent/guardian comes into the dance to get them.
- The sponsoring organization will be responsible for decorations and clean up.
- Sponsors have the final determination on selection of music and themes.
- Dances will be scheduled for Monday - Friday. Dances will NOT be held on weekends.

### **Deliveries**

Deliveries to students of outside items, gifts, or food must be made through the front office. Items will be delivered to students by school staff unless otherwise arranged with GMS administration.

### **Drug-Free Schools**

The District implements regulations and practices that will ensure compliance with the Federal Drug Free Schools and Communities Act and all regulations and rules promulgated pursuant thereto. The District's safe and drug-free schools program is established in accordance with principles of effectiveness as required by law to respond to such harmful effects. The consistent message of the program is that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of alcohol and drugs is wrong and harmful.

### **Electronic Resources**

Students will have many opportunities to use the Internet and other electronic resources as part of their educational opportunities in Gering Public Schools. Students using electronic resources must be careful to follow District Policy and Procedures. (See Acceptable Use Policy for Electronic Resources - page 14) **WARNING:** Students are reminded that anytime you share information electronically, it is **no longer private information**. Examples may include, but are not limited to: Tik Tok, Instagram (Insta), computers, cell phones (including text messages), personal blogs, and any/all other electronic devices. Students are thus notified that the school administration, while possibly not initially involved in securing information in the sharing process of electronic information, will follow normal investigative procedures if a possible school violation and/or activity suspension may be involved.

### **Emergency Contacts/Procedures**

Parents are requested to provide an emergency contact telephone number to have on file in the event of an emergency closing or any other general or individual situation that requires the immediate presence of a parent/guardian. In the event that parents do not have such a number or cannot be contacted, it will be assumed that the parent has instructed their children concerning the procedure they are to follow should school be dismissed early. Realizing that the school might be unable to reach all parents, it is suggested that all children be advised as to what they are to do should they ever be dismissed early. It is recommended that parents give their children an alternate destination and that the front office and/or building administration be made aware of this information.

If conditions allow and supervision is available in the event of an early dismissal, the child will be held in school until the normal dismissal time. If the parent or guardian has not arrived to pick up the child by the normal dismissal time, law enforcement or child protective services may be contacted to ensure the safety of the child.

### **Fire and Evacuation Drills**

Detailed instructions for building evacuation drills can be found on the bulletin board of each classroom. Students should study these instructions and be familiar with all exits. Fire drills will be held throughout the school year. Other drills relative to the evacuation or safe sheltering of students may be held as needed.

### **Gering Public Schools Grades 6-12 Grading and Reporting Guidelines**

#### **Philosophy**

At Gering Public Schools, we believe that grades should reflect the level of student achievement in the knowledge and skills specified by grade level or course objectives and outcomes. In other words, grades should

reflect student learning. We also believe that if we wish to maximize student learning, we as educators must provide timely feedback, track progress toward mastery, and use relevant data to guide instruction.

### Collective Commitments

1. We are committed to giving students multiple opportunities to master essential standards and supporting all students.
2. We are committed to collecting and evaluating data to improve educational outcomes for instruction and student learning.
3. We are committed to giving students specific and timely feedback.
4. We are committed to aligning like courses in structure and grading so that students have similar opportunities for success no matter the instructor assigned.
5. We are committed to ensuring that grades communicate student learning and mastery of essential standards.

### Key Terms

- **Essential Standard (Need to Know):** A carefully selected subset of the total list of grade or course-specific standards that students must know and be able to do in order to be prepared to enter the next grade level or course
- **Non-Essential Standard (Nice to Know):** The remaining standards from the list of grade or course-specific standards that students will have exposure to but will not be required to master during the course or grade level
- **Guided Practice:** An opportunity for students and teachers to work together on new concepts step-by-step to ensure understanding of the skill
- **Independent Practice:** Work assigned to students once skills have been taught and guided practice opportunities have been given; can be completed during class time or may be assigned as homework
- **Formative Assessment:** An assessment meant to *monitor student learning* in order to provide ongoing feedback to students regarding their strengths and weaknesses; formative assessments are low stakes, which mean they have low or no point value (Ex.- bell ringer, exit ticket, short quiz)
- **Summative Assessment:** An assessment meant to *evaluate student learning* at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it to some standard or benchmark; summative assessments are high stake assessments, which mean they have a high point value (Ex.- chapter test, final project, essay, semester final)
- **Learning Target:** Concrete goals written in student-friendly language that clearly describe what students will learn and be able to do

### Grading Scale/GPA

Gering Middle School and Gering High School will use the letter grading system as follows:

Percentage	Letter Grade	GPA Value (High School Only)
90-100%	A	4
80-89%	B	3
70-79%	C	2
60-69%	D	1
59% or Below	F	0

### Makeup Work

When a student is absent from school, it is the student's responsibility to check with each teacher for missing work. Each individual teacher will communicate the way by which makeup work should be obtained. Students will have 2 days for each excused absence to complete their makeup work. Teachers have the discretion to extend makeup work time for extenuating circumstances. A student may not be entitled to extra days for unexcused absences.

### Grading Categories

To provide consistency across grade levels and departments, 6-12 teachers will utilize the following grading categories. If a category is not relevant to the course taught, it may be omitted. (Ex.- PE)

<b>Grading Category</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>High School</b>
<b>Daily Work</b> bell ringers, exit tickets, checks for understanding, independent work, homework	60%	45%
<b>Assessments</b> tests, quizzes, major projects	40%	45%
<b>Semester Finals</b>	NA	10%

**\*\*Dual credit courses may dictate different grading standards and requirements.**

**Naming of Assignments in IC:** Gradebook entries should align with and reflect an understanding of the lesson/learning target (avoid using generic names for gradebook entries ex. p.12)

**Participation:** Participation may be assessed but must be tied to skills, learning targets, or essential standards. This connection should be documented in Infinite Campus.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit should not be assigned for things like participating in canned food drives, bringing additional school supplies, not using bathroom passes, etc. Any extra credit given should be an extended learning opportunity tied to skills or standards.

### Use of Infinite Campus

**Gradebook Entries:** Each teacher will enter a minimum of one grade per week in the daily work category. Students should have ample opportunities to demonstrate learning of the essential standards prior to summative assessments being given. Exceptions to this rule may include when a major project, essay, or test requires a more intensive grading process.

**Gradebook Updates:** Infinite Campus gradebooks should be updated on a weekly basis (By Tuesday of the following week that grades were taken; unless for a major project/test that requires more intensive grading processes).

**Infinite Campus Comments:** When using flags as shown, clear, individual comments should be used to communicate the reason for the flag.

### IC Gradebook Flags

<b>Flag</b>	<b>Assignment Definition</b>	<b>Usage</b>
Turned In (T)	Turned in, but not yet graded; no penalty assigned	Teacher discretion
Missing (M)	Not turned in;calculated as a zero until the assignment is turned in and graded	Use when assignment is past due, but can still be turned in for a grade; if attendance isn't a factor; remove flag if full credit is to be given; enter a "zero" if the assignment can no longer be submitted for a grade (See grading/attendance section for more details)
Late (L)	Turned in after the due date; no penalty assigned	Use to communicate timeliness/work habits; the grade is included in the overall average

Incomplete (I)	Turned in, but only partially finished; no penalty assigned	Use to indicate an assignment is not complete enough to score; the code should be removed when the assignment is revised, and then a new grade should be entered
Cheated (Ch)	Turned in, but calculated as a zero despite any score entered	Teacher discretion and in coordination/communication with administration
Exempt (X)	Removes assignment from grade calculation	Used to indicate an assignment is excused and does not need to be completed; teacher discretion
Dropped Lowest Score (Dr)	Assignment with lowest percentage will be removed from grade calculation	Teacher discretion

### **Guidance and Counseling Services**

The mission of Gering Middle School's guidance program is to provide a system designed to anticipate and facilitate the educational, career, and personal/social needs of students. A curriculum approach to providing services focuses on the prevention of problems by providing all students with appropriate age level skills and guidance information. Among the many responsibilities of school counselors, the following are primary: Counseling students, consulting with staff members, and integrating guidance services into the school's instructional program. Counselors will meet the developmental needs of all students as well as respond to the special needs and interests of individual students.

The guidance delivery system will ensure that the skills of the counselor are used to optimum advantage; that the work of the psychologists, nurses, and administrators support and enrich the guidance program; that the classroom teacher's already important guidance role is strengthened; and, that parents and community resources are kept informed and encouraged to participate in the development of students.

### **Hall Passes**

Teachers wishing to have unscheduled students in their rooms or elsewhere for special circumstances will make out a dated, timed, and signed hall pass and give it to the student before he/she is to use the pass. Teachers receiving the request must also sign and write the time before it is valid. Anytime you have a hall pass, you are to return to your room before the end of the period, and this pass is to be signed and timed by the teacher. We also use E-Hall Pass for electronic pass monitoring. Students are granted 2 passes per day.

### **Health Services**

As defined by the National Association of School Nurses, school nursing is a specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic success, and life-long achievement of students. School nurses facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety; intervene with actual and potential health problems; provide case management services; and actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self-management, self-advocacy, and learning.

The school nurse role:

- Ensures compliance with school entry health requirements
- Provides care and case management for children with chronic health problems
- Monitors security and safe administration of medications
- Assures the health and safety of the school students and staff
- Manages disaster preparedness and emergency service plans
- Provides health education and staff wellness programs
- Provides resources and guidance in the areas of disease and infection control practices at school
- Assures student compliance with state and local regulations related to health and safety (Immunizations; Health Screens)
- Identifies school health needs and advocates for necessary resources

Parents and/or Guardians are responsible for the health care of their child, while the school is available to assist, assess, and monitor that care during regular school hours. Parents and/or Guardians are responsible for notifying the school of their student's:

- Chronic or Acute health related diseases, conditions, and/or issues (Examples include severe allergies, diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, urinary or bowel issues, etc.);
- Recent physical, vision, and/or dental exams;
- Updated immunizations (Records are reviewed annually, and summary reports are sent to Nebraska State Health Department);
- Need for medication administration during the regular school day (Please refer to Medication Administration Policy);
- Absence from school due to illness. (Please inform school of type of illness so that the number and type of illness and symptoms can be monitored and reported to local health department as necessary);
- Updated emergency contact information and a plan/arrangement in place if parent/guardian is unable to pick up their ill child from school and/or when the child is ill and needs to stay home.

In addition, parents/and or guardians have the following notification responsibilities:

- Students from out of state must have a physical/vision exam which was done within the last (six) 6 months of entering school. Students must provide a current immunization report that is compliant with the State of Nebraska guidelines. All documents need to be turned in and approved by the health office prior to the student's first day of school.
- Inform the school of PE or recess restrictions. If a student requires restricted PE or recess due to a health condition for more than one (1) school day, then a healthcare provider note is required. If a student has a note limiting or restricting PE, this will include recess. If a student is out of school for five (5) consecutive days due to illness, a note from the student's health provider will need to be provided to the school's health office.
- Each school location has a First Responder Team and staff who are CPR/First Aid/AED certified, trained on Asthma & Anaphylaxis and Medication Administration to assist students. The schools are staffed with full-time nurses. Basic first aid will be administered to students; if more extensive care is needed, then the parent/guardian (or emergency contact) will be notified, or 911 will be contacted.

#### Medication Administration Policy:

It is recognized that for effective treatment of chronic and/or acute illnesses, medication might need to be administered during school hours. A student who is required to take medication during the regular school day must comply with medication administration policy. The policy has been developed for the safety of the student receiving the medication and for the safety of all students. Medication will be administered by the school nurse, a registered Medication Aide, or other school staff member meeting the minimum competency standards for the Medication Aide Act.

For school personnel to administer prescription medication to a student, it is necessary to have a doctor and/or health care provider's authorization and written order and a parent/guardian's authorization. Medication must be brought to school in the original labeled prescription bottle by parent/guardian with proper label including child's name, and an order from the health care providers with the student's name, medication name, instructions for use (time, dosage, duration) and the healthcare provider's signature. The authorization must be renewed on an annual basis and/or if the prescription changes. Loose capsules, tablets, unidentified or non-labeled medication will not be accepted for administration. Medication will not be administered without the above authorization and information.

A record of the medication administration will be kept for each student receiving medication including the student name, medication name, instructions for use, name and initials of personnel who administered medication, date, time and route of administration, drug count with signature of school personnel and parent/guardian to verify count, documentation of unusual circumstances, actions, or omissions. Administration of medication records shall be kept confidential. Records shall be available to the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the State Department of Education.

1. Over-the-counter medication (such as Tylenol, ibuprofen, Midol, cough drops, saline eye drops, hydrocortisone cream, triple antibiotic ointment, insect sting swab, topical cooling gel) may be given with parents/guardians permission by trained school personnel by signing the pertinent section on Student

Health Information form at the beginning of the school year. That permission releases Gering Public Schools and employees from liability in case of choking, allergic reaction, side effects and/or health risks related to the medication. Parents/guardians may also supply over-the-counter medication for their student to be kept at the school health office.

2. Prescription medications must be brought to school by an adult in a prescription container, properly labeled, including the child's name, physician's name, dosage including dates and times for administration. All medication must be accompanied by a signed permit from the parent and physician. The permit must be renewed annually or whenever the medication prescription changes or expires.
3. Medication will be kept in a secured area. Students may NOT carry medication on their person. The only medications allowed to be self carried will be asthma medications and an EPI pen or emergency diabetic medications and students must have the approval of the parents and building principal and the appropriate paperwork completed. Emergency protocol for medication-related reactions will be in place. Medications must be picked up by an adult on the last day of school, or they will be disposed of.
  - a. If emergency medication, such as an inhaler, needs to be carried by a student, written permission needs to be on file at the school from the parent and physician. This permit must be renewed annually. Otherwise, students may not carry medication on their person during the school day and medications must be kept in the office. No loose capsules, tablets, aspirin or unidentified non-labeled substance will be accepted for dispensing to students by school staff.
4. Schools are staffed with a full-time licensed nurse. The student has a responsibility to remember to report to the office at medication administration time.
5. The superintendent shall be responsible, in conjunction with the school nurse or medication aide, for developing rules and regulations governing the administration of medication, prescription and nonprescription, including emergency protocols, to students and for ensuring persons administering medication have met the requirement of state statutes. Annually, each student shall be provided with the requirements for administration of medication at school.
6. Parents/guardian shall be the responsible party to bring in meds. The nurse must verify pill/dose count and have parent/guardian sign form.

#### Health Screenings

Health Screenings will be performed as recommended by the Department of Health and Human Services. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing if medical, dental, vision, audiology, or other follow-up is recommended after the screening is completed.

#### Contagious and Infectious Diseases

As recommended by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, please refer to the list below for minimum isolation periods and control measures:

Please note: Susceptible=person with disease; Contacts=those who have been in contact with diseased person. Day of onset of specific symptom is counted as "day zero"; the day after onset is "day 1"

1. Chickenpox: Exclude for at least 5 days after the eruption first appears or until vesicles become dry; Avoid contact with susceptibles. No exclusion of contacts. Alert parents of immunosuppressed child(ren) of possible exposure.
2. Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): Exclude symptomatic cases. Urge medical care. May return when the eye is normal in appearance or with documentation from the physician that the child is no longer infectious. No exclusion of contacts.
3. Common Cold: Exclusion unnecessary. No exclusion of contacts.
4. Diphtheria: Exclude cases. Return with a documented physician approval. Exclude inadequately immunized close contacts as deemed appropriate by school officials following investigation by the local and/or Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Report immediately by telephone all cases to local and/or state health departments.
5. Enterobiasis (Pinworm, Threadworm, Seatworm): Excluded until treated as documented by physician. No exclusion of contacts. Careful hand washing is essential.
6. Fifth Disease: Exclude until fever and malaise are gone. May return with a rash with documented physician approval. No exclusion of contacts; however, alert any students or staff who are pregnant, have chronic hemolytic anemia or immunodeficiency to consult their physician.
7. Hepatitis A: Exclude for no less than 7 days after onset of jaundice. Return with documented physician approval. No exclusion of contacts. Immune globulin (IG) prevents disease if given within two weeks of exposure. IG to family contacts only. Careful hand washing is essential.

8. Herpes Simplex (Type 1): Exclusion unnecessary. No exclusion of contacts. Avoid contact with immunosuppressed or eczematous persons. Good hygiene avoids sharing toilet articles.
9. Impetigo: Excluded until brought under treatment as documented by physician. No exclusion of contacts. Good personal hygiene is essential. Avoid common use of toilet articles.
10. Influenza: Excluded for duration of illness. No exclusion of contacts.
11. Lice: The student is not sent home from school; however, it is acceptable for the parent/guardian to pick up the student. The parent/guardian is instructed that the student should be treated before returning to school and that nits should be removed.
12. Meningitis (Bacterial and Viral): Excluded for duration of illness. Return with documented physician approval. No exclusion of contacts. Chemoprophylaxis appropriate for family and intimate contacts.
13. Measles (Rubeola): Excluded for duration of illness and for no fewer than 4 days after onset of rash. Exclude unimmunized students on same campus from date of diagnosis of first case until 14 days after rash onset of last known case or until measles immunization received or laboratory proof of immunity is presented or until history of previous measles infection is verified as per records or the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Report immediately by telephone all cases to local and/or state health departments.
14. Mumps (Epidemic Parotitis): Exclude until swelling has subsided. No exclusion of contacts. Inform parents of unimmunized students on campus of possible exposure and encourage immunization.
15. Pediculosis (Head or body lice): Exclude until after appropriate treatment is started. No exclusion of contacts; however, they should be notified of exposure.
16. Pertussis (Whooping Cough): Return as per written documentation. Exclude adequately immunized close contacts as deemed appropriate by school officials following investigation by the local and/or state Department of Health and Human Services. Chemoprophylaxis may be considered for family and close contacts. Report immediately by telephone all cases to local and/or state health departments.
17. Poliomyelitis: Excluded until physician approves return.
18. Ringworm: Excluded until treatment started. No exclusion of contacts. Good sanitation practices and don't share toilet articles.
19. Rubella (German Measles): Exclude for duration of illness and for no less than 4 days after onset of rash. Exclude unimmunized students on the same campus from date of diagnosis of first case until 23 days after rash onset of the last known case or until rubella immunization received or laboratory proof of immunity is presented. Report immediately by telephone all cases to the local and/or state health department.
20. Scabies: Exclude until the day after treatment started. No exclusion of contacts.
21. Shingles/Herpes Zoster: Exclude children with shingles/zoster if the vesicles cannot be covered until after the vesicles have dried. Individuals with shingles /zoster should be instructed to wash their hands if they touch the potentially infectious vesicles.
22. Streptococcal Infection (Scarlet Fever, Scarletina, Strep Throat): Excluded until afebrile and under treatment for 24 hours. No exclusion of contacts. Early medical care is important and usually requires 10 days of antibiotic treatment. Screening for asymptomatic cases is not recommended.
23. Tuberculosis Pulmonary: Exclude. Physician treatment essential. May return with documented physician approval. No exclusion of contacts. Skin test contacts and chemoprophylaxis with INH if positive (in absence of disease). Exclusion of non-pulmonary tuberculosis unnecessary.

In addition, Gering Public Schools policy includes:

1. Elevated Body Temperature: A student with temperature over 100 degrees shall be sent home from school. The student can return to school once fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (Tylenol, Ibuprofen, etc). A fever is defined as 100-degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8-degrees Celsius. Students may return with documented physician approval.
2. Hepatitis B and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS): Determination of the school attendance status of a student with Hepatitis B or HIV/AIDS will be on a case by case basis.
3. Nausea and/or Vomiting: If a student has nausea and/or vomiting, then remaining out of school for 24-hours is strongly recommended.
4. MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus): May return with documented physician approval.

Missed school days from illness: If a student is absent for five consecutive school days due to illness, then doctor note is required to allow for his/her return to school.

Procedures for Students Who Become Injured or Ill at School

Any student who becomes ill or injured during the school day will report to the school nurse. An ill or injured student may not leave school until permission of the parent, or the person designated by the parent, has been received. Ill or injured students are not to leave the building without the knowledge of the health office staff and without signing out properly in the office. The Health Office is to be used for the purpose of receiving First Aid treatment for injuries or illness.

Requirements for Physicals, Vision Exams, and Immunizations:

● *Physical Examination*

Physical examination by a physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse within the six months prior to the entrance of a child into Early Childhood Education, beginner grade or Kindergarten, and 7th grade, or in the case of a transfer from out of state to any grade, is required. The parent/guardian has the right to submit a written statement refusing such examination.

● *Vision Exam*

Visual evaluation by a physician, a physician assistant, an advanced practice registered nurse, or an optometrist within six months prior to the entrance of a child into the beginner grade or Kindergarten, or in the case of transfer from out of state to any grade, is required. The visual evaluation must consist of testing for amblyopia, strabismus, and internal and external eye health, with testing to determine visual acuity. The parent/guardian has the right to submit a written statement refusing such an evaluation.

● *Immunization Requirements*

The State of Nebraska has immunization requirements for children entering school. Students will not be able to enter school until the school has written proof of their immunization status. To attend school, students in Nebraska are required to be immunized per current requirements from Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

All students K-12 must be immunized for D.P.T., polio, measles, rubella, varicella, mumps and Hepatitis B. The Tdap vaccination is required for incoming 7th graders. Dates of immunizations are required.

Students with a history of varicella disease (chicken pox) must provide evidence of immunity in form of signature of parent with date of illness, signature of health care provider with date of illness, laboratory evidence of varicella immunity or a clinical diagnosis of shingles.

Students who do not receive immunizations for health reasons must have a statement signed by a healthcare provider stating that, in their opinion, the specified immunization(s) required would be injurious to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student’s family or household.

Students who do not receive immunization due to religious reason must have a notarized affidavit signed by a legally authorized representative of the student, stating that the immunization conflicts with the tenets and practice of a recognized religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or member, or that immunization conflicts with the personally and sincerely followed religious beliefs of the student.

A student may be provisionally enrolled in school if he/she has begun the immunizations against the specified disease prior to enrollment and continues the necessary immunizations as rapidly as is medically feasible. In addition, a student may also be 18 provisionally enrolled if he/she is the child of an officer or enlisted person, or the child of the spouse of such officer or enlisted person on active duty in any branch of military services of the United States.

For further information on immunizations, contact school health staff or refer to Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Control of Communicable Disease regulations.

Summary of the School Immunization Rules and Regulations

Student Age Group	Required Vaccines
Ages 2 through 5 year enrolled in a school based program not licensed as a childcare provider	4 doses of DTaP, DTP, or DT vaccine, 3 doses of Polio vaccine, 3 doses of Hib vaccine or 1 dose of Hib given at or after 15 months of age, 3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine, 1 dose of MMR or MMRV given on or after 12

	<p>months of age,  1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age. Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted.  4 doses of pneumococcal or 1 dose of pneumococcal given on or after 15 months of age.</p>
<p>Students from Kindergarten through 12th Grade, including all transfer students from outside the State of Nebraska and any foreign students</p>	<p>3 doses of DTaP, DTP, DT, or Td vaccine, one given on or after the 4th birthday,  3 doses of Polio vaccine,  3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine or 2 doses of adolescent vaccine if the student is 11-15 years of age.  2 doses of MMR or MMRV vaccine, given on or after 12 months of age and separated by at least one month,  2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV if given on or after 12 months of age. Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted. If the child has had varicella disease, they do not need any varicella shots.</p>
<p>Additionally, for 7th Grade Only</p>	<p>1 dose of Tdap (must contain Pertussis booster)</p>

Source: Nebraska Immunization Program, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, 2011. For additional information, call 402-471-6423.

The School Rules & Regulations are available in Title 173: Control of Communicable Diseases - Chapter 3; revised and implemented 2011.

Emergency Response to Life-Threatening Asthma or Systemic Allergic Reactions (Anaphylaxis) Protocol (NDE- Title 92 NAC Chapter 59):

The Nebraska State Board of Education mandated that this protocol be adopted and implemented in all accredited public schools, approved nonpublic schools and early childhood education programs. Through Attack on Asthma Nebraska and the Nebraska Department of Education, the protocol steps are designed to provide quick, effective care in order to prevent death due to severe asthma attack or anaphylaxis. Staff members have been trained to recognize signs and symptoms of a life-threatening breathing emergency, certain staff members are trained to respond to anyone experiencing a life-threatening asthma or anaphylaxis emergency at school.

The Emergency Protocol includes:

1. *CALL 911*
2. *Summon school nurse if available. If not, summon designated trained, non-medical staff to implement emergency protocol*
3. *Check airway patency, breathing, respiratory rate, and pulse*
4. *Administer medications (EpiPen® and Albuterol) per standing order*
5. *Determine cause as quickly as possible*
6. *Monitor vital signs (pulse, respiration, etc)*
7. *Contact parents immediately and physician as soon as possible*
8. *Any individual treated for symptoms with epinephrine at school will be transferred to medical facility*

If you know that your student has asthma or a known allergy, it is critically important that you communicate this information to school health staff. For each student with a known allergic condition or asthma, you must provide the school with (1) written medical documentation (Asthma/Allergy Action Plan), (2) medications, as directed by a

healthcare professional. In the event that your student experiences a life-threatening asthma attack or systemic allergic reaction, we will defer to the specific documents and medication that you have provided. If you do not have medical documentation and instructions on file with the school for your student, we will defer to the regulatory protocol as described above.

This protocol is in effect for the school day hours (7:30 AM-3:30 PM) and after school programs. Emergency medication remains on school grounds. If your child has an EpiPen and/or inhaler in the health office, it will be sent with school staff on field trips. If your child participates in after school activities (sports, clubs, etc.), complete appropriate paperwork for him/her to carry and self-administer medication. In the event of an emergency, 911 will be called.

If you do not want your student to receive the above described emergency medication, contact school health staff.

The Gering School District employs nurses who cover the district's locations. Each school location has a First Responder Team and staff who are CPR/First Aid/AED certified, Attack on Asthma and Medication Administration trained. Basic first aid will be administered to a student. If more extensive care is needed, the parent/guardian (or emergency contact) will be notified, and/or the school will call 911.

### Concussions

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. If your student has a concussion, his or her brain needs time to heal. After a concussion, physical and cognitive activities should be carefully managed and monitored with limited and gradual return to learn and play. If your student is diagnosed with a concussion, then please contact the school nurse, counselor, principal, athletic director, and/or coach. The student will follow the Return to Learn protocols for academic work. If the student is involved in sports, s/he will need to have a clearance note from a healthcare provider to Return to Play.

### Head Lice Detection and Management at School

1. When a student is found to have live lice and/or nits:
  - a. The parent/guardian is notified, and information related to detection and elimination of head lice will be provided at that time or sent home with the student in a sealed envelope.
  - b. The student is not sent home from school, however it is acceptable if the parent/guardian picks up the student.
  - c. The parent/guardian is instructed that the student should be treated before returning to school and that nits should be removed.
  - d. When the student returns to school, the school health staff is to confirm that treatment has been completed. If live and/or nits are found, the parent is notified to keep nit-picking and combing.
  - e. Follow up head checks may be done by school staff to confirm lice management efforts. If future checks reveal an increased number of nits present or it is obvious to the screener that the student's hair has not been treated, the parent/guardian will be contacted for follow-up and support.
2. When to check beyond the identified student with live lice or nits:
  - a. If the student has siblings in the building and/or other buildings in the district, then the sibling(s) are to be checked.
  - b. Full classroom screenings for head lice or nits will not be done, unless otherwise determined by school nurse and/or building administrator.
3. Classroom Environment:
  - a. Notify the custodian to vacuum the affected classroom and all upholstered furniture within.
  - b. Stuffed animals and pillows can be bagged for two weeks.
  - c. No environmental pesticide treatments are to be used.
  - d. Encourage students to avoid sharing hats, combs, coats, pillows, or other personal items.
  - e. The school nurse and/or building administrator can use professional judgment to determine when unusual measures are necessary to respond to extraordinary cases.
4. Notification Procedures:
  - a. The customary notification for the presence of head lice is to be done on an individual/case by case basis to the parent/guardian of the infested student. Classroom notifications are not done with typical head lice cases.
  - b. In very unusual cases, it may be appropriate in the professional opinion of the school nurse and in consultation of the administrator to consider a general parent/guardian notification for a high number of identified cases of head lice.
5. Exclusion Procedure Support:

- a. In the rare case that a student has either:
- 1) chronic head lice infestation or
  - 2) severe head lice infestation that is disruptive to the learning environment, the school nurse will be consulted.
- b. If in the nurse's professional judgment, it is determined that exclusion needs to be considered, the nurse will consult with the administrator about implementing exclusion. This measure will be taken with careful consideration:
- 1) With chronic head lice infestation cases, the nurse will secure documentation of repeated and unsuccessful head lice management measures.
  - 2) The return of the student after exclusion will be predicated on a head check with evidence of progress in head lice management and progress toward eradication of the head lice. Evidence will look like elimination of live lice and a decrease in the number of nits.
  - 3) It may be appropriate in the judgment of the school nurse to monitor progress of lice management over a period of time. The goal is supporting the family in head lice eradication.

### General Control Measures in Schools

Recommendations	Rationale
Routine classroom or school-wide screening for head lice is not recommended	The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages head lice screenings, which have not been proven to have a significant effect over time on the incidence of head lice in the school setting and are not cost effective. Children should be checked only when demonstrating symptoms of head lice.
The American Association of Pediatrics, the National Association of School Nurses, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advocate that "no-nit" policies should be discontinued.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Egg cases farther from the scalp are easier to discover, but these tend to be empty (hatched) or nonviable and, thus, are of no consequence.</li> <li>2. Nits are cemented to hair shafts and are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people.</li> <li>3. The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.</li> <li>4. Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by nonmedical personnel.</li> <li>5. Research has shown that the survival of head lice when not on the head is usually less than one day and the eggs can only hatch when incubated by body heat found near the scalp.</li> </ol>
Provide a parent education program in the management of head lice in the school setting.	Head lice are not a medical or public health hazard as they are not known to spread disease. However, parents may have misconceptions and prejudices, which place pressure on school staff. Educating and supporting the child and parent with factual, nonjudgmental information is better than having policies and practices driven by misinformation.

School personnel involved in detection of head lice infestation should be properly trained.	The diagnosis of a head lice infestation is best made by finding a live nymph or adult louse on the scalp or hair of a person. Because nymphs and adult lice are very small, move quickly, and avoid light, they can be difficult to find. The diagnosis should be made by a health care provider or other person trained to identify live head lice
<b>Individual Case Management</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
A child with an active head lice infestation should remain in class but be discouraged from close direct head contact with others.	A child with an active head lice infestation has likely had the infestation for one month or more by the time it is discovered and poses little risk to others from the infestation. Transmission occurs primarily through head-to-head contact and infrequently through indirect contact with shared belongings. It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and The American Pediatric Association that the management of head lice in the school setting should not disrupt the educational process
Notify parent or guardian by telephone or by having a note sent home with the child at the end of the school day stating that prompt, proper treatment of this condition is in the best interest of the child and his or her classmates.	The school can be most helpful by making available accurate information about the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of head lice in an understandable form. Information sheets in different languages and visual aids for families with limited literacy skills should be made available by schools.
Maintain confidentiality when a child is diagnosed with head lice.	
<b>Criteria for Return to School</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Students diagnosed with live lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun	Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice. Do not check for nits (dead or alive) or enforce a no-nit policy for those who have been treated. It is not productive.

Head Lice: Guiding Principles for School Policy. Rhode Island Department of Health. Divisions of Infectious Disease and Epidemiology, November 18, 2014.

### **LICE 101: MYTHS and REALITIES ABOUT HEAD LICE**

<b>Definitions</b>	
<b>Lice:</b> more than one louse.	<b>Nit:</b> Eggs, dead or alive, of a louse
<b>Louse:</b> Small insect that lives on the scalp.	<b>Parasite:</b> Lives off another, in this case the blood of humans

<b>Pediculosis:</b> Having an infestation of lice	<b>Infestation:</b> Having an insect present, in this case, in your hair.
<b>MYTHS</b>	<b>TRUTHS</b>
Head lice are easy to get.	Lice are spread only mainly by head-to-head contact. They are much harder to get than a cold, flu, ear infection, pink eye, strep throat, food poisoning, or impetigo
You can get lice from your dog, guinea pig, or other animal	Lice are species-specific. You can only get human lice from another human. You cannot get another animal's lice
You can get head lice from hats and helmets.	Rarely, but possible. Hairbrushes, pillows, and sheets are also uncommon modes of transmission
School is a common place for lice transmission	School is an unlikely source of transmission. Much more common are family members, overnight guests, and playmates who spend a large amount of time together
Poor hygiene contributes to lice.	Hygiene makes absolutely no difference. You get lice by close personal contact with someone else that has lice, not by being dirty.
Lice can jump or fly from one person to another.	Lice can only crawl. They can neither fly nor jump. They must crawl from one person to another
Any nits left in the hair can cause lice to come back.	Any nits farther away than one quarter to one half on the hair shaft are ALREADY HATCHED and pose no risk to others
Eggs or nits can fall out of the hair, hatch, and cause lice in another person.	Nits are cemented on the hair and very hard to remove. They cannot fall off. Newly hatched lice must find a head quickly or will die.
Lice can live a long time.	Lice live only 1-2 days off the head. Each louse only lives about 30 days on the head.
All members of a family should be treated if one person has lice.	Only the person with lice should be treated. Lice shampoos are INSECTICIDES and can be dangerous if used incorrectly or too frequently. Household members and close contacts should be checked, but only treat those who actually have lice. The house should NOT be sprayed with insecticide, nor used on clothing or other items.
Checking a classroom when one student has lice can prevent lice from spreading.	Classroom transmission is EXCEEDINGLY RARE and checking students is a waste of valuable teaching time. Checking family members and close playmates is much more appropriate.

Avoiding lice is important as they spread disease	Head lice do not spread any known disease. They are annoying and irritating, but not dangerous.
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Pontius, Deborah J. (2014). Demystifying Pediculosis: School Nurses Taking the Lead. *Pediatric Nursing* 40(5), 226-235.

### **Birth Certificate Requirements**

State law requires that a certified copy of a student's birth certificate be provided within 30 days of enrollment of a student in school for the first time. You may obtain a certified copy from the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state in which your child was born. Assistance in obtaining birth certificates may be obtained from Health Records Management, P.O. Box 95065, Lincoln, NE 68509-5065. There is a fee per certificate.

A certified copy has the raised seal of the state of Nebraska on it and is signed by the director of vital statistics. If a birth certificate is unavailable, other reliable proof of a student's identity may be used. These documents would include naturalization or immigration documents showing date of birth or official hospital birth records, a passport, or a translation of a birth certificate from another country. The documents must be accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate.

### **Homework**

Students may be required to do homework for several classes. This work is to be ready when class starts. All homework will be completed and turned in according to that grade level team's policy. If a student fails to complete homework or make-up homework on their own time, they may be assigned a specified time to do so.

### **Honor Roll**

Each nine weeks, the honor roll is announced. This is done in recognition of the pupils who have achieved high scholastic ratings in their class work. To be placed on the Honor Roll, students must maintain an average of **3.00** or above for the grading period. All elective and core subjects are used in the computation of grade point for honor roll.

### **Identification Badges**

Students will be issued identification badges at the beginning of the school year. These I.D. badges will be used for various computerized electronic accounting, security and procurement purposes. Students are expected to keep their badges on their person at all times during school hours or at school functions or activities, and be willing to produce their badges upon request by school officials. Lost or damaged I.D. badges must be replaced at a \$5.00 cost to the student.

### **Incompletes**

A grade of "Incomplete" will be given when a student's work for a nine-week period or semester is not finished. Unfinished work, causing the incomplete, must be finished within a two-week period of time. Exceptions to this policy may be made upon recommendation from the Student Assistance Team, due to a 504 Plan, or an IEP.

### **Infinite Campus**

Gering Public Schools utilizes Infinite Campus, a student information system that allows parents/guardians to access their child's records online. By filling out a brief form and getting a password from the Gering Middle School front office, parents will be able to access information about their GMS student and any other of their children in other GPS buildings. Due to privacy concerns, parents must present a photo ID when requesting any student records.

### **Injuries at School/Insurance**

The Gering Public Schools does not pay medical bills for students injured at school or while participating in extracurricular activities. The school provides information and enrollment forms for parents wishing to purchase medical insurance through an independent insurance company, which is not affiliated with the Gering Public

Schools. Parents are encouraged to review the insurance material especially if their son or daughter will be participating in athletics.

Every accident in the school building, on the school grounds, at practice sessions, or at any athletic event sponsored by the school must be reported immediately to the Principal.

### **Lockers**

Each student is assigned a locker with a combination lock to be used for coats, backpacks, school materials, and other necessary supplies. If a locker does not lock securely, students shall inform the office so that better security arrangements may be made. Students will be held responsible for the content and appearance of their lockers. A damage fee may be assessed for destruction of lockers. Lockers are the property of Gering Public Schools and are subject to search without notice if school administrators feel there is reasonable cause for the search. Students are encouraged to leave valuables at home and minimize the amount of money they bring to school. Please have your child mark their personal items for easy identification. The school assumes no responsibility for articles lost or stolen.

### **Loitering**

Students are reminded that unless they are in organized sports, activities, or under the direct supervision of school personnel, they must vacate the premises by 3:45 PM or one-half hour after dismissal. On early-release Wednesdays, students participating in athletics should not return to school grounds until 3:45 PM, when there will be coach supervision.

### **Lost and Found**

Students who find lost articles are asked to take them to the office, where the articles may be claimed by the owner. If articles are lost at school, report that loss to office personnel. The lost and found area will be cleaned out at the end of each nine week period. Items not claimed will be given to local charities.

### **Media Center**

The GMS Media Center will be open Monday through Friday from 7:45 AM – 3:45 PM. If students wish to work in the media center before or after this time, they may make arrangements with media center staff. Teachers may request an extension of hours in order to accommodate student schedules. Students who borrow media center materials are fully responsible for returning them on time and for their care. Fines will be assessed for overdue and damaged materials. Lost materials will be assessed at full purchase.

### **Media Notification**

Representatives of the media, (newspaper, radio, and television), frequently visit our school to gather information, pictures and stories about various topics. Occasionally, due to family, religious, legal or other reasons, parents/guardians do not want their children to receive this publicity. If, as a parent/guardian, this is your wish, forms are available at the school which, when completed, will be kept on hand and referred to when members of the media visit our school. Media personnel will be asked to avoid featuring any child for whom this form is on file. Please note that this procedure cannot apply to public events or to extracurricular programs or activities.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences:**

Parent-teacher conferences will be held one time per semester for parents and teachers to discuss the progress of their child. Other conferences may be scheduled as needed by contacting individual teachers or the school office.

### **Personal Learning Plan & Career Exploration**

To spark interest in possible pursuits beyond high school, GMS Career Exploration courses expose students to the Nebraska Career Clusters via the Nebraska Middle School Career Education and Engage! curricula. Throughout the year, students also complete a variety of interest inventories to promote self-awareness related to personal interests, knowledge, and skills.

### **Pre-Arranged Absences**

Please contact the front office to report any pre-arranged absences for your child. If possible, teachers will provide school work ahead of time that is expected to be completed prior to or during the absence. All work missed during the absence will be expected to be completed upon return to school.

### **Promotion/Retention**

Students will be promoted to the next grade level at the end of each school year based on the student's achievement and attendance. Students who cannot demonstrate proficiency at their grade level will be considered for retention. Acceptable student proficiency will be based on successful completion of core content courses. Students who are unable to meet the proficiency requirements will have additional opportunities to demonstrate proficiency. Such opportunities may include, but shall not be limited to, a mandatory summer school program focused on areas of deficiency or other such alternatives conducted by the district outside of the regular school day. Students must also meet the school attendance policy to be considered for promotion.

When a student is not successful in completing core subject courses successfully (with a passing grade) for a quarter, both the student and parent(s)/guardian will be informed. A conference will be held immediately after that quarter with the student, parent(s)/guardian, teacher(s), counselor, psychologist, and administrator to determine the interventions necessary to support the student's success.

### **Report Cards**

Report cards are issued at the end of each quarter. Letter grades are used to designate a student's progress. A grade of "I" (incomplete) received at the end of a grading period must be made up within two weeks or missing assignments will receive grades of "0" and those grades will be averaged into the final grade. No incompletes will be given at the end of the fourth quarter, as all coursework must be completed by the end of the fourth quarter.

(Response to Intervention)

### **Multi-Tiered Student Support Team (MTSS) Team**

MTSS is a system of service delivery designed to provide effective instruction for all students using a comprehensive and preventive problem-solving approach. It employs a tiered method of instructional delivery, in which the core curriculum addresses and meets the needs of most students (Tier 1), additional instruction is provided for those needing supplementary support (Tier 2), and intensive and individualized services are provided for the students who continue to demonstrate more intensive needs (Tier 3). At its foundation, MTSS includes measuring the performance of all students, and basing educational decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and intervention on student response to each tier of instruction.

Gering Middle School recognizes that students can have experiences that may affect their academic and social life. The primary goal of the MTSS is preventative in nature designed to help students in preventative and responsive manners.

Students in need of information or help may be referred by various individuals, including self, peers, family, or school staff. Referral forms can be obtained from any staff member. Completed forms can be returned to any staff member. After the referral, information will be gathered to help identify the problem(s) the student is experiencing. The MTSS team will then meet to formulate an appropriate plan of action.

Once a problem has been identified and the extent of the problem is known, the student will be encouraged to accept the needed help. Team members will help students consider possible options and encourage them to make decisions that will resolve their problem in a positive way. At some level, parents may be involved in the process.

The next step involves providing help for the student. The assistance recommended will vary with the type and severity of the problem. Finally, student assistance programs will provide support for students as they make adjustments in their lifestyles and seek to make appropriate life decisions.

In cases of extreme physical, mental, or family circumstances, the MTSS team may elect to allow students to have a schedule that deviates from the listed requirements.

### **Safety Glasses**

As required by law, approved safety glasses will be required of every student and teacher while participating in or observing vocational, technical, industrial technology, science, and art classes where applicable. All visitors to these areas must check out and wear a pair of safety glasses when entering any of these areas.

### **Searches**

Student lockers, desks, computer equipment, and other such property are owned by the school. The school exercises exclusive control over school property. Students should not expect privacy regarding usage of or items placed in or on school property, including student vehicles parked on school property, because school property is subject to search at any time by school officials. Periodic, random searches of lockers, desks, computers and other such property may be conducted at the discretion of the administration.

The following rules apply to searches of students and of a student's personal property and to the seizure of items in a student's possession or control:

1. School officials may conduct a search if there is a reasonable basis to believe that the search will uncover evidence of a crime or a school rule violation. The search is to be conducted in a reasonable manner under the circumstances.
2. Illegal items or other items reasonably determined to be a threat to the safety of others or a threat to educational purposes may be taken and kept by school officials. Any firearm or other weapon will be confiscated and delivered to law enforcement officials as soon as practicable.
3. Items which have been or are reasonably expected to be used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process (that is, "nuisance items") may be removed from student possession. These items may not be returned to the student, depending on the circumstances surrounding the situation.

### **Severe Weather and School Cancellations**

The Superintendent of Schools is authorized by the Board of Education to close public schools in the event of severe weather. Representatives of the Superintendent's staff will notify local news media when inclement weather warrants such action. The information is broadcast regularly by radio and television stations.

### **Decision to Close Schools.**

A decision to close school is made when forecasts by the weather service, law enforcement advisories or civil defense officials indicate that it would be unwise to hold school. If possible, a decision about the next school day will be made the night before. However, an early decision is not always possible because of uncertain weather conditions. If necessary, school officials will make periodic assessments of conditions during the night and will make any school closure decisions by 6:00 AM, if possible. In any case, an announcement will be made via school social media sites and to the news media when schools will be closed. In some instances, schools will be open, but certain services may be canceled (bus transportation, kindergarten, student activities).

### **School Closure After School Starts**

Every attempt will be made to avoid closing school once classes are in session. In some instances closing school during the day is inevitable if children are to safely return home before the brunt of a major storm hits. In these cases, as much advance notice as possible will be given to parents. If school is closed during the day the notice will be broadcast via social media and through local media outlets. Parents should have a plan in place to accommodate these circumstances.

### **Parental Decisions**

Parents may decide to keep their children at home in inclement weather because of personal circumstances. Students absent because of severe weather when school is in session will be marked absent. The absence will be treated like any other absence for legitimate causes provided parents properly notify the school of their decision. Parents may pick up their children in inclement weather during the school day.

Parents should not attempt to come to school during a tornado warning, as school officials are not permitted to release students from the school building during a tornado warning. Tornado safety procedures are practiced regularly by students and staff members.

#### Emergency Conditions

The school has a signal which, when activated, includes the necessity to either evacuate the building or to move to safer areas of the building. Regular drills are held as required by law through the school year. There are plans for an Emergency Exit system, Tornado Warning System, and Critical Incident Response.

#### **Signing A Child In And Out Of School**

Parents or guardians are required to sign their children in and/or out of school if they are arriving after their first class or leaving prior to their final class. The parent or guardian must report to the main office for this purpose. The sheet for signing a child in and/or out of school is located on the front counter at the main office. If a child is being signed out, the school secretary will call the appropriate classroom and indicate to the teacher that the child is leaving. Parents are not to go directly to the classrooms. The school will only release children to adults designated on Infinite Campus.

If there is a special circumstance, such as a court order limiting access to a student by a parent or guardian, affecting who a student can be released to, the parent must inform the Principal and provide the front office with a copy of that order to maintain on file at the school.

Students are to stay on or within the boundary of the sidewalk. When students leave the campus without authorization, the school will:

1. Notify parents or person(s) designated by parents immediately
2. Communicate with parents or designee that
  - a. Parent or designee should begin to search for the student, and
  - b. School will notify the police department
  - c. If parents or designee cannot be reached, verification and search procedures will still be implemented by school and/or police officials. The police will be informed if the student is potentially dangerous to self or others.

#### **Tobacco-Free Environment**

Gering Public Schools declares all of our schools buildings and grounds to be smoke-free. We would appreciate your help in meeting the goal of a smoke free, vape free, and tobacco-free environment for our children. When you attend school events, including athletic events, please remember that our grounds are smoke, vape, and tobacco-free and abide by our District's policy.

#### **Special Education Services**

##### What Does Special Education Mean?

Special education means specially designed instruction and related services adapted as appropriate to the needs of an eligible student with a disability. Special education is provided at no cost to the parent to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

##### Students Who May Benefit

A student verified as having autism, behavior disorders, deaf or blindness, developmental delay, hearing impairments, mental handicaps, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, specific learning disabilities, speech-language impairments, traumatic brain injury or visual impairments, who because of these impairments need special education and related services.

##### How are Students With Disabilities Identified?

Referrals are made by teachers or parents to a Student Assistance Team. If the student assistance team or comparable problem solving team feels that all viable alternatives have been explored, a referral for multidisciplinary evaluation is completed. An evaluation is conducted to assist in the determination of whether a

student has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services the student needs. The evaluation is conducted only with written consent of a parent or guardian. A multidisciplinary evaluation team (MDT) will then meet to determine whether the student is eligible for special education.

#### Independent Evaluation

If a parent disagrees with an evaluation completed by the school district, the parent has a right to request an independent educational evaluation at public expense. Parents should direct inquiries to school officials to determine if the school district will arrange for further evaluation at public expense. If school district officials feel the original evaluation was appropriate and the parents disagree, a due process hearing may be initiated. If it is determined that the original evaluation was appropriate, parents still have the right to an independent educational evaluation at their own expense.

#### Reevaluation

Students identified for special education will be reevaluated at least every three years by the IEP team. The IEP team will review existing evaluation data on the student and will identify what additional data, if any, are needed. The school district will obtain parental consent prior to conducting any reevaluation of a student with a disability.

#### Individual Education Program (IEP)

Upon a student being verified as having a disability, a conference will be held with parents. At the conference, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed specifying programs and services which will be provided by the schools. Parent consent will be obtained prior to a student being placed for the first time in a program providing special education and related services or early intervention services to infants and toddlers. Once in place, the IEP is reviewed on an annual basis, or more frequently as needed. Parents are given a copy of the IEP.

#### Special Education Placement

The student's placement in a special education program is dependent on the student's educational needs as outlined in the Individual Education Program (IEP). To the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with students who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Determination of a student's educational placement will be made by the IEP team.

Written notice shall be given to parents a reasonable time before the school district: 1. Proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, verification or educational placement of a child or the provision of a free appropriate public education; or 2. Refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child.

#### More Information

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the District's special education policy, the Parental Rights in Special Education brochure, or a copy of the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 51 (special education regulations and complaint procedures) or Rule 55 (special education appeal procedures) may contact the Superintendent. A notice of parental rights, Rules 51 and 55 and more information about special education are also available at the Nebraska Department of Education's website: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/SPED/sped.html>.

#### **Students with Disabilities: Section 504**

Accommodations and related services are made available to students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under Section 504, parents have the following rights:

1. Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of your child's disability.
2. Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law.
3. Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation or placement of your child.

4. Have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school district make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities.
5. Have your child receive services and be educated in facilities which are comparable to those provided to students without disabilities.
6. Have your child receive an individualized evaluation and receive special education and related services if your child is found eligible under Section 504.
7. Have evaluation, eligibility, educational and placement decisions made based on a variety of information sources and by persons who know your child and who are knowledgeable about the evaluation data and placement options.
8. Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if your child were placed in a program operated by the school district.
9. Have your child be given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the school district.
10. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation and placement. Obtained copies of educational records at a reasonable cost on the same terms as records are provided to students without a disability unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.
11. Receive a response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records.
12. Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school district refuses this request, it shall notify you within a reasonable time, and advise you of the right to a hearing.
13. File a local grievance in accordance with school policy.
14. Request an impartial hearing related to decisions regarding your child's identification, eligibility, and educational program or placement with opportunity for participation by the person's parents or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure. This is provided in the local grievance procedure.

### **Student Council**

The Gering Middle School Student Council is an organization representing the student body. Representatives to the student council are elected in the fall. To be elected, students must be of good character, have leadership ability, and maintain at least average citizenship and scholastic grades. Students may be requested to resign their position if their citizenship or scholastic average falls below minimum acceptable standards as established by the student council.

### **Student Directory Information**

The Gering Public Schools will on occasion release routine directory information (84-712.05) to the general public which includes:

*Student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degree and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information."*

The information released may be to military recruiters, newspapers, colleges & universities, athletic and activity programs, etc. Parents may have their student's name and information withheld from dissemination upon written request to the office of the principal.

### **Surveys**

Surveys of students are occasionally administered by school personnel. In the event that an external survey is conducted, the Principal or designee shall notify parents/legal guardians of students to be surveyed, the nature of the survey, the date and time when the survey shall be administered, and the purposes or uses of the survey

results. School officials shall honor any parent/legal guardian's request to have his/her student exempt from participation in the survey.

### **Telephones**

The office will not be responsible for personal messages for students during the school day, nor will students be called from class for a telephone call or message except in an emergency. If a student receives a phone call, a message will be taken and delivered at the earliest possible convenience.

### **Textbooks/Chromebooks**

Textbooks and Chromebooks are assigned to your personal care. You are held accountable for them and will be required to pay for loss or excessive damage. Students may be asked to place their name in ink on the inside front cover of each book when they are issued.

### **Title I Information**

Students who receive a good education have a better chance for being successful in life. Title I is a federally funded program that helps students achieve academic standards and improve their scholastic performance. Schools that meet income requirements can use Title I money to improve the whole school through school-wide programming, meaning all students can benefit from Title I. The program currently focuses on the areas of reading/language arts, math, and behavior. Parents are encouraged to be involved with the school and their children's education. This can be done by reading newsletters and notes, attending meetings and parent-teacher conferences, volunteering some time to the school, reviewing and updating the parent policy, pledging to support learning at home by signing the compact, and participating in activities sponsored by the school.

### **Title I Parent and Family Engagement**

Gering Public Elementary Schools intend to follow the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy guidelines in accordance with federal law, Section 1116(a-f) ESSA, (Every Student Succeeds Act) of 2015. In general, each school served under this part shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy, agreed on by such parents, that shall describe the means for carrying out the requirements. Parents shall be notified of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. The policy shall be made available to the local community and updated to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

- Schools shall provide opportunities for the participation of parents and family members including those with migratory children, limited English proficiency, or have disabilities. Parents shall be notified of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities in an understandable and uniform format and to the extent practicable provided in a language the parents can understand;
- Convene an annual parent meeting scheduled at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under this part and to explain the requirements of this part, and the right of the parents involved;
- Involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the school Parent and Family Engagement Policy;
- Provide opportunities for parents and family members to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children. The school shall provide other reasonable support for parental involvement activities;
- Provide parents of participating children timely information about programs under this part, a description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards. The school will provide assistance, opportunities, and/or materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement in a format, and when feasible, in a language the parents and family members can understand.
- Educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, with the assistance of parents in the value and utility of contributions of parents, how to reach out to, communicate with and work with parents as equal partners;

- Coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State and local programs, including preschool programs that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children

### **Transcripts**

Students requesting transcripts must provide the office with a 24-hour notice. Students are responsible for making sure they have the necessary courses and credits to meet graduation requirements.

### **Transferring from Gering Public Schools**

If a student should find it necessary to withdraw from school, it is very important that s/he secure a clearance slip from the principal's office and have it signed by all of his/her teachers and parent/guardian. The slip is to be returned to the office after it has been signed by all individuals. Failure to check out of school in this manner will cause records to remain incomplete, making it impossible to send credits to another school.

### **Transportation Services**

Transportation to and from school is provided to students in accordance with law and Board policy. Students may also be transported on field trips and when participating in school activities. Students are expected to follow the behavioral expectations for riding school buses. All buses are equipped with audio and video recorders.

### **Behavior on School Buses**

While riding school buses you are expected to follow the same student conduct rules which apply when you are on school property or attending school activities, functions or events. There are also special conduct rules for riding school buses. These rules also apply to riding other school vehicles.

#### 1. Rules for Getting On and Off the Bus

- Be on time to be picked up. As a general rule, get to your bus stop five minutes before your scheduled pickup time. If you miss the bus, immediately return to your home and tell your parents so they can get you to school.
- While waiting for the bus, stay at least 5 feet away from the street, road or highway. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before approaching the bus.
- You may exit the bus only at your approved destination (your school or your approved bus stop). Exit the bus as directed by the driver. Do not run.
- If you must cross the street after exiting the bus, always cross in front of the bus where the driver can see you. Wait for the driver to signal to you before crossing the street.

#### 2. Rules on the Bus

- Be respectful of the bus driver. Immediately follow all directions of the driver and any paraeducator or adult on the bus.
- Sit in your seat facing forward. Use seat belts in vehicles in which they are available.
- Talk quietly and use appropriate language.
- Keep all parts of your body inside the bus.
- Keep your arms, legs and belongings to yourself.
- No fighting, harassment, bullying, intimidation or horseplay.
- Do not throw any object.
- No eating, drinking, use of tobacco, vaping, alcohol, drugs or flammables.
- Do not bring any weapon (real or imitation) or dangerous objects on the school bus.
- Do not damage the school bus.

#### 3. Getting the Driver's Assistance

If you need assistance from the driver, wait until the bus is at a full stop. If you are close enough, tell the driver what you need. If you are too far away for the driver to hear you, ask a student in front of you to get the driver's attention. If necessary, walk up to the driver, while the bus is at a full stop. If you need immediate assistance for an emergency, take all action needed to safely get the help of the driver.

#### 4. Consequences for Rule Violations

Consequences for school bus misconduct may include restriction or suspension of bus privileges and other disciplinary measures, up to and including expulsion from school.

#### Video Surveillance

The Board of Education has authorized the use of video cameras on school district property and district vehicles to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all staff, students and visitors to district property, and to safeguard district facilities, school buses and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent. Notice is hereby given that video surveillance may occur on district property or in district vehicles. In the event a video surveillance recording captures a student or other building user violating school policies or rules or local, state or federal laws, the video surveillance recording may be used in appropriate disciplinary proceedings against the student or other building user and may also be provided to law enforcement agencies.

#### Visitors to the Building

Visitations by individuals wishing to observe the instructional program at Gering Public Schools are welcomed, so long as such visits have the purpose of gaining an insight into the educational or instructional dynamics within the school setting. Individuals wishing to observe in the school must submit a request in writing to the building principal **24 hours prior** to the visitation.

Student age visitors are NOT permitted in Gering Middle School without the accompaniment of a parent or guardian during school hours without prior approval from GMS administration.

#### EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

##### General Requirements for Activity Participation

Any student participating in a school activity must exhibit good citizenship in the school and in the community. Activities in the school shall be organized and administered to contribute to the health, worthy use of leisure time, citizenship, and character objectives of education.

A student must be in attendance the **ENTIRE** school day in order to participate in a practice, game or activity. If, however, she/he secures the administration's permission prior to the absence, participation may be acceptable. Online Registration via Arbiter, including "In Case of Emergency" and "Consent to Drug Test" forms, must be completed prior to student participation in activities.

When activities occur during regular school hours, only eligible participants or those students with prior administrative approval will be excused for the event. While at the event/activity, any non-participating student must remain under the direct supervision of a parent/guardian.

##### Activity Participation - Extra-Curricular Guidelines

The following procedures are designed to put into practice the following philosophies:

1. Extracurricular Program: Students who participate in Gering Public Schools' extracurricular program receive benefits not accorded the student who does not participate in extracurricular activities; therefore, students have an additional responsibility to represent the school and its programs in a manner symbolic of the goals, objectives, mission, and philosophy of the Gering Public Schools.
2. Student Misconduct: A policy that has significant consequences for inappropriate student behavior sends a strong message to students that they need to reflect upon their behavior at all times and to make appropriate decisions. This policy may also provide students with a rationale to resist negative peer pressure.

Extracurricular Activities governed by this policy include but is not limited to football, volleyball, softball, cross country, soccer, tennis, basketball, wrestling, swimming, track, golf, speech & debate, Harmony, treble choir, mixed chorus, instrumental band, jazz band, National Honor Society (Middle School and High School), all school play, musical, Mock Trial, cheerleading, Student Council, and other clubs and organizations. This listing is not

intended to be all-inclusive and at times may apply to additional activities that exhibit similar characteristics to those listed.

The following student conduct shall constitute grounds for suspension of the privilege to participate in extracurricular activities.

1. Possessing, chewing, vaping or smoking tobacco during the season
2. Engaging in the unlawful possession, selling, dispensing, or use of a controlled substance as defined in section 28-401, or alcohol as defined in section 53-1-3 or being under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol.
3. Student misconduct that may result in in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension.
4. Serious student misconduct as defined in section 79-267 of the State of Nebraska School Laws and the Student Parent Handbook (“...grounds for long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment...”)

Affected students are those who participate in extracurricular activities and have been cited by law enforcement officers or are determined to have committed one of the above-mentioned conducts.

Affected students, Item 1, will be handled in the following manner:

1. First offense: Suspension from all activities pending enrollment in a tobacco/vaping cessation class/online course and subject to consequences in the Discipline Policy.
2. Second and subsequent offenses: Suspension from all activities pending completion of a tobacco/vaping cessation class/online course cessation and subject to consequences in the Discipline Policy.

Affected students, Items 2-3, will be handled in the following manner:

1. First offense: Suspension from all public events, not to exceed three events or a period of two weeks.
  - a. Students shall practice with the team.
  - b. An event is a scheduled day.
  - c. Students must complete a sport or an activity in good standing for events to be considered.
2. Second offense: A second such infraction will result in the student being suspended from all activities for a period of 9 weeks. Students may be reinstated after complying with the following: E-1 and successful completion of an 8-hour drug/alcohol education class or counseling.
3. Subsequent Offenses: Suspension from all activities for one calendar year and successful completion of an 8-hour drug/alcohol education class or counseling.

The policy governs infractions that occur throughout the school year, inclusive of extracurricular activities that extend into August and June. Violations that occur out of season will take effect at the start of the student’s participation in an activity. Decisions affecting students will be made by the School Principal or designee. Appeals to the decision may be made to the Superintendent of Schools according to the District’s Public Complaint Procedure (District Policy 1312).

### **GERING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The Board believes that any unit of society must have rules and regulations designed to establish order and to protect all members of the community in the exercise of their rights and responsibilities. The Superintendent of Schools is directed to establish rules and regulations of conduct which are fundamentally fair, justly applied, and consistent with the laws and constitution of the State of Nebraska and the United States. The Board of Education also authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to delegate to other school officials the authority and responsibility to administer these rules and regulations and develop additional rules and regulations within the limits of Nebraska Statutes, Board of Education Policy and administrative regulations.

These rules and regulations should prohibit any misconduct during the school day:

- A. on school grounds
- B. by a participant in school activities
- C. as a spectator at school activities involving Gering participants

- D. off school grounds, if there is a substantial interference with school purposes that causes or creates a reasonable likelihood that it will cause a substantial disruption in, or material interference with, any school function, activity or purpose, or that interferes with the health, safety, wellbeing, or the rights of self or others.

Students shall be expected to regard staff members as individuals, employed to provide direct or indirect contributions to learning. While students are to have considerable latitude in making choices for them, they shall be required to respect the rights of staff members (and other students as well) and interference with those rights shall not be condoned. No student shall have the right to interfere with the efforts of instructional staff to coordinate or assist in learning, to disseminate information for purposes of learning, or to otherwise implement a learning program. Nor shall a student have a right to interfere with the motivation to learn or the learning activities and efforts of other students. The Gering Middle School administration expects every staff member and student to be treated with respect and dignity. A show of disrespect toward a staff member or insubordination on the part of the student will not be tolerated.

Violations of school rules and procedures will be handled to aid in maintaining and promoting an orderly environment within which students can learn and grow. The administration of discipline is designed to maintain order and be uniform, fair and unbiased. Application of specific disciplinary measures can be found in the section entitled "Progressive Discipline Procedures" and will serve as a guide toward holding students accountable for their actions in a fair and consistent manner. The administration of the progressive discipline procedures cannot be absolute for all students in all situations; therefore, the administration will consider mitigating circumstances when assigning discipline to individual students. In the event that a student's offense does not fall within a defined category, the administration will assign discipline at a level consistent with like offenses. In all cases the staff and administration at Gering Middle School will adhere to the student's due process rights.

Discipline procedures will be handled case by case. Consequences may vary from student to student and situation to situation. When students are assigned to the office, actions taken are solely at the discretion of the administrator. Students who have been suspended or expelled from school may NOT be on any school grounds or at school activities without permission from an administrator.

### **Definition of Discipline**

Discipline shall be regarded as a process designed to teach, model, and use appropriate strategies to reinforce the behaviors necessary to ensure a safe and productive learning environment by changing unacceptable behavior to acceptable behavior, and to hold students accountable for inappropriate behaviors.

### **Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs)**

It is of critical importance that Gering Middle School maintains a safe, predictable learning environment conducive to the learning of all students. By maintaining and adhering to the schoolwide expectations related to the use of personal electronic devices (PEDs), we will work to ensure that every student is provided the opportunity to access high levels of learning and feel safe at school.

We believe that PEDs (e.g., cell phones, earbuds, smartwatches), do not serve an academic purpose and have the potential to lead to the following negative outcomes for students:

- Disengagement from class activities
- Disengagement from positive personal relationships with staff and students
- Cyberbullying
- Elopement from class and other attendance-related activities
- Verbal or physical altercations or other safety-related activities

As such, GMS will be a PED-free campus. This means that students will be asked to store all PEDs in their backpacks/lockers between the hours of 8:00 AM-3:15 PM. Any requests for temporary access to a PED must be made directly to school administration. A final decision on any exception will be made by GMS administration to ensure the policy is being implemented in a consistent, equitable manner.

In the event a student is in violation of the stated expectations, the PED will be confiscated and stored in the main office. The following consequences will be utilized for repeat offenses.

### Consequences

- 1st Offense - Student may pick up PED in main office after 3:20 PM
- 2nd Offense - Parent/guardian will be notified to pick up PED between 3:20-4:00 PM
- 3rd Offense - Parent/guardian must conference with an administrator prior to picking up the PED.
- 4th Offense - Student will be removed from instructional space and receive a 1 day in-school suspension (ISS). Parent/guardian must conference with an administrator prior to picking up the PED.
- 5th Offense - Student will be removed from instructional space and receive a 1 day out-of-school suspension (OSS). Parent/guardian must conference with an administrator prior to picking up the PED. An individual student/parent plan will be created.

Students may use PEDs when authorized pursuant to an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, or a Health Care Plan, or pursuant to a plan developed with the student's parent when the student has a compelling need to have the device (e.g., a student whose parent is in the hospital could be allowed limited use of the cell phone for family contacts, so the family can give the student updates on the parent's condition).

### Definitions

1. "Personal electronic devices" include, but are not limited to, cell phones, portable game consoles, cameras, personal laptop computers, earbuds, smartwatches, smart glasses, and other electronic or battery powered instruments which transmit voice, text, or data from one person to another.
2. "Sexting" means generating, sending or receiving, encouraging others to send or receive, or showing others, through an electronic device, a text message, photograph, video or other medium that:
  - a. Displays sexual content, including erotic nudity, any display of genitalia, unclothed female breasts, or unclothed buttocks, or any sexually explicit conduct as defined at Neb. Rev. Stat. § 28-1463.02; or
  - b. Sexually exploits a person, whether or not such person has given consent to creation or distribution of the message, photograph or video by permitting, allowing, encouraging, disseminating, distributing, or forcing such student or other person to engage in sexually explicit, obscene or pornographic photography, films, or depictions; or,
  - c. Displays a sexually explicit message for sexual gratification, flirtation or provocation, or to request or arrange a sexual encounter.

### Prohibited Use of Electronic Devices

Students shall not use electronic devices for any of the following: (a) activities which disrupt the educational environment; (b) illegal activities in violation of state or federal laws or regulations; (c) unethical activities, such as cheating on assignments or tests; (d) immoral or pornographic activities; (e) activities in violation of Board or school policies and procedures relating to student conduct and harassment; (f) recording others (photographs, videotaping, sound recording, etc.) without direct administrative approval and consent of the person(s) being recorded, other than recording of persons participating in school activities that are open to the public; (g) "sexting;" or (h) activities which invade the privacy of others. Such student misuses will be dealt with as serious school violations, and immediate and appropriate disciplinary action will be imposed, including, but not limited to, suspension and expulsion from school.

### Disposition of Confiscated Electronic Devices

Electronic devices possessed or used in violation of this policy will be confiscated by school personnel and returned to the student or parent/guardian at an appropriate time. If an electronic device is confiscated, the electronic device shall be taken to the school's main office to be identified, placed in a secure area, and returned to the student or student's parent/guardian between 3:20-4:00 PM.

Inappropriate cell phone use during non-school hours or off school grounds but related to school activity or having a nexus to the learning environment, may result in consequences up to recommendation for expulsion. Inappropriate cell phone use during school hours may result in consequences up to recommendation for expulsion. Examples are but not limited to; possession of and/or photos taken of exposed individuals, threats against another person and those uses considered illegal by law. Student cell phones, including, but not limited to, text messages and digital photos, may be searched by the District, under limited circumstances. Specifically, school officials may not search students' cell phones, including the accessing and reading of their text messages and digital photos, unless those officials (1) have a reasonable suspicion, based on objective and articulable facts, that the search will provide evidence that the particular student was violating either the law or a school rule; and (2) the scope of the search is reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the nature of the infraction.

#### Penalties for Prohibited Use of Electronic Devices

Students who receive a "sexting" message are to report the matter to a school administrator and then delete such message from their electronic device. Students shall not participate in sexting or have any "sexting" message on their electronic devices regardless of when the message was received while on school grounds or at a school activity. Students who violate the prohibitions of this policy shall be subject to the imposition of appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, provided that at a minimum the following penalties shall be imposed:

1. Students found in possession of a "sexting" message shall be subject to a one (1) day suspension from school.
2. Students who send or encourage another to send a "sexting" message shall be subject to a five (5) day suspension from school.

#### Chromebooks

Students who do not follow guidelines for the appropriate use of school-issued Chromebooks will face school consequences as follows:

- 1st offense: Parent Contact; formal warning.
- 2nd offense: Loss of Chromebook privileges for 5 school days and a formal office referral.
- 3rd offense: Loss of Chromebook privileges the length to be determined by GMS administration; formal office referral. GMS administration reserves the right to take away Chromebook privileges at any point.

#### School Email

Students who use school email for personal use and/or in an inappropriate way may be subject to losing their email privileges.

#### Transmitting or Distributing Inappropriate Material

Students who create or distribute information via cell phone, e-mail, or through a web site that results in or is likely to result in the disruption of the educational process, advocates a violation of the Gering Middle School Code of Conduct (i.e. recording a fight), or is sexually explicit (commonly called "sexting") may face additional disciplinary actions such as in-school suspension and/or out of school suspension as deemed appropriate by administration.

#### Reporting to Law Enforcement

Violations of this policy regarding the prohibited use of electronic devices that may constitute a violation of federal or state laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the Nebraska Child Protection Act or the Nebraska Child Pornography Prevention Act shall be reported to appropriate legal authorities and law enforcement.

#### Responsibility for Electronic Devices

Students or their parents/guardians are expected to claim a confiscated electronic device within ten (10) days of the date it was relinquished. The school shall not be responsible, financially or otherwise, for any unclaimed electronic devices. By bringing such devices to school, students and parents authorize the school to dispose of

unclaimed devices at the end of each semester. The District is not responsible for the security and safekeeping of students' electronic devices and is not financially responsible for any damage, destruction, or loss of electronic devices.

### **Fighting**

Fighting, either physical or verbal, is prohibited on school property or at school-sponsored events. A student shall not threaten, cause or attempt to cause physical injury to any student or to a school employee. The school insists that students seek the assistance of teachers, counselors, and administrators to resolve conflicts. Students who engage in fighting will be disciplined, a conference involving the student, parent, and administrator will be held prior to the student's return to school and the police will be notified. Multiple instances of fighting, or whenever a staff member is injured, will result in mandatory reassignment or expulsion. (Nebraska School Law Section 79-4, 170-9-4, 205)

### **Possession of Firearms on School Grounds**

Any person who possesses a firearm in a school, on school grounds, in a school owned vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event shall be guilty of the offense of unlawful possession of a firearm on school grounds. (LB 988)

1. Unlawful possession of a firearm on school grounds is a Class IV misdemeanor. Any firearm possessed in violation of this offense shall be confiscated without warrant by a police officer or may be confiscated without warrant by school administrative or teaching personnel.
2. After the firearm is no longer needed as evidence, it shall be destroyed in such manner as the court may direct.
3. Students possessing firearms on school grounds will be disciplined according to category VI "Possession of Firearms" of the progressive discipline policy.

### **Gang Activity or Association**

For the purpose of these policies, a gang is a group of three or more people who:

1. Interact together to the exclusion of others;
2. Claim a territory or area;
3. Have a name;
4. Have rivals/enemies;
5. Exhibit antisocial behavior and are often associated with crime or a threat to the community. The type of dress, apparel, activities, acts, behavior or manner, or grooming displayed, reflected, or participated in by the student shall not:
  - a. Lead school officials to believe that such behavior, apparel, activities, acts, or other attributes are gang related or would disrupt or interfere with the school environment or activity and/or educational objectives;
  - b. Present a physical safety hazard to self, students, staff members, or other employees;
  - c. Create an atmosphere in which the well-being of a student, staff member, or other person is hindered by undue pressure, behavior, intimidation, overt gesture, or threat of violence, or
  - d. Imply gang membership or affiliation by written communication, marks, drawing, painting, design, or emblem upon any school or personal property or on one's person.

If the student's dress or behavior is in violation of these regulations, the principal or designee will ask the student to make the appropriate correction. If the student refuses, the parent/guardian will be notified and asked to make the necessary correction. The principal or designee will make the final decision and take appropriate corrective or disciplinary action.

### **Bullying and Harassment Policy**

A top priority of Gering Public Schools is to provide safe and secure environments for all students and staff. Positive behaviors (non-violence, cooperation, teamwork, understanding, and acceptance of others) are encouraged in the educational program and required of all students and staff. Inappropriate behaviors (bullying,

intimidation, and harassment) are to be identified and corrected. Students and staff are to avoid such behaviors. Strategies and practices are implemented to reinforce positive behaviors and to discourage and protect others from inappropriate behaviors.

Students are expected to conduct themselves as good citizens at all times, free of any bullying or harassing behavior toward others. Harassment of another student, school employee, agent or official on the basis of the person's gender, race, color, age, religion, national origin, marital status or disability is strictly prohibited. Students are prohibited from using electronic devices (e.g., computers, cell phones, tablets, iPods, etc.) and mediums (e.g., social media, internet, apps, etc.) to bully, harass or threaten any student or staff member. If a student violates this requirement and the violation results in a material and substantial disruption of the educational process, the offending student may face disciplinary actions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Students should be advised that this form of disruption of the educational process may subject them to disciplinary actions, even if the student originally accesses the computer device or Internet site while off-campus or after school hours.

Bullying is defined to mean any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or his or her designee, or at school-sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events, subject to the general rule regarding prohibited use of electronic devices stated above. Bullying is further defined to include any intentional, hostile or offensive verbal, written, graphic, demonstrative, or physical act that has the purpose of exerting domination over another student through the act of intimidating, frightening, oppressing, or adversely controlling the student and that is disruptive of the educational process.

Bullying is behavior during which one person or group engages in harmful action towards another person or group acting on a real or perceived imbalance of power or view of superiority. The behavior typically includes verbal (e.g. teasing or name-calling) and physical aggression (e.g., hitting, pushing), threatening, excluding or ignoring, spreading rumors, or taking, defacing or destroying the others' property. Harassment includes the same actions, though not necessarily from a standpoint of perceived power. Bullying and harassment is a violation of student conduct rules and appropriate disciplinary measures, up to expulsion, will be enforced. When bullying or harassment is done on the basis of gender, disability, race, or other protected status, it is considered a very serious offense for which expulsion may be a likely consequence, depending on the severity of the conduct.

Students who are the victims of bullying or harassment or who observe such occurrences are to promptly report the problem to their teacher or to the principal so the problem can be addressed.

Behavior is considered **bullying** when the following four elements are present

1. Unwanted aggressive behavior
2. Intended to hurt someone physically, verbally, emotionally, or electronically
3. Imbalance of power socially, physically, or emotionally
4. Repeated or likely to be repeated over time

In student-friendly language, when someone says or does something intentionally to be hurtful and they keep doing it even when you tell them to stop or show them you're upset, that behavior would be considered **bullying**.

Gering Public Schools encourages parents to play an active role in monitoring and managing bullying behavior. Please consider utilizing the following parent actions when bullying behavior is present:

Step 1: Schools are mandated to have a bullying policy. Ask the school for a copy of their bullying policy. If the bullying is unlawful, the police can be contacted.

Step 2: Keep record of the incidents: date, location, all who were involved, and what happened. Save emails, texts, and screenshots of electronic incidents. Identify the part(s) of the policy not being enforced.

Step 3: Ask for help to solve the bullying rather than lying blame. First, discuss with the teacher and principal the part(s) of the policy not being followed. If necessary, discuss with the superintendent the part(s) of the policy not being followed.

Harassment is further defined as any intentionally harmful, demeaning, or disparaging acts, words, symbolic representations, or behaviors used by a student or students against others that is disruptive of the educational process. This includes, but is not limited to, bullying, verbal, physical, visual, or graphic actions such as name-calling, taunting, mocking, slandering, humiliating, defaming, teasing, pestering, and making derogatory remarks, demeaning jokes, disparaging drawings, or notes. Harassment is defined as behavior which is: severe, pervasive, or persistent; creates a hostile environment at school; is sufficiently serious that it interferes with or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from school services, activities, or opportunities; and is based on a student's race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or religion. Bullying and harassment based on protected class is unique and may require additional investigation. The appropriate district staff member or coordinator will promptly investigate bullying complaints that violate the district's antidiscrimination policies pursuant to the district's complaint policies.

### **Pop and Candy**

Consumption of pop, candy or other snack items shall be confined to designated areas.

### **Profanity**

Profanity is not an acceptable manner of expressing oneself. Use of profanity will result in disciplinary action from the principal or the assistant principal's office.

### **Skateboards, Hoverboards, Scooters, Skate Shoes**

Skateboards, scooters, hoverboards, or skate shoes are not allowed in the hall or school lockers. These are not to be ridden in or around the school. Please leave these items at home.

### **Smoking, Tobacco and Vaping**

Students who are found to be in possession of tobacco or vaping products, tobacco or vaping paraphernalia/contraband, or any smoking object/device, including but not limited to electronic cigarettes, advanced personal vaporizers, vape pens, vape mods, and all similar devices on school property (including school vans, trucks, and/or buses) during the school day, as well as after school hours, will be subjected to the following discipline procedures.

Students with smoking, tobacco and vaping violations will be assigned consequences as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: 3-5 days of OSS
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: 5-10 days OSS
- Additional offenses: 10 days OSS up to possible expulsion

### **Solicitations**

In consideration of the large number of youth organizations that use raffles or some other types of solicitation as fund raising activities, and in the interest of fairness, fund raising activities will be restricted solely to school sponsored organizations. Any fundraising activity that takes place on school property must have administrative approval.

### **Standards of Student Conduct Pertaining to Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco and Vaping Products**

These standards are in addition to standards of student conduct elsewhere adopted by board policy or administrative regulation. The District's standards prohibit the possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol on school premises, in school vehicles, or as a part of any of the school's activities on or off school premises. Conduct prohibited at places and activities as hereinabove described shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Possession, use, distribution or being under the influence of any controlled substance, including vaping, but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, any hallucinogen, any stimulant, or any depressant.
2. Possession of any prescription drug in an unlawful fashion.
3. Possession, use, distribution or being under the influence of alcohol.
4. Possession, use, distribution, or being under the influence of any abusable glue or aerosol paint or any other chemical substance for inhalation, including but not limited to lighter fluid, whiteout, and reproduction fluid, when such activity constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes.
5. Possession, use, or distribution of any look-alike drug or look-alike controlled substance when such activity constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes.
6. Possession, use or distribution of any tobacco or vaping product.

### Disciplinary Sanctions

Violation of any of the above prohibited acts will result in disciplinary sanction being taken within the bounds of applicable law, up to and including expulsion and referral to appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution. In particular, students should be aware that:

1. Violation of these standards may result in suspension or expulsion.
2. Prohibited substances will be confiscated and unlawful substances will be turned over to law enforcement authorities.
3. The student may be referred for counseling or treatment.
4. Parents or legal guardians will be notified.
5. Law enforcement will be notified.
6. If it appears there is imminent danger to the student, other students, school personnel, or students involved, emergency medical services will be contacted.

### Intervention

The District does not have the authority or responsibility to make medical or health determinations regarding chemical dependency. However, when observed behavior indicates that a problem exists which may affect the student's ability to learn or function in the educational environment, the school has the right and responsibility to refer the student for a formal chemical dependency diagnosis based on behavior observed by school staff.

### Administration

The administration is authorized to adopt such administrative rules, regulations or practices necessary to properly implement this policy. Such regulations, rules or practices may vary the procedures set forth herein to the extent necessary to fit the circumstances of an individual situation. Such rules, regulations and practices may include administrative forms, such as checklists to be used by staff to record observed behavior and to determine the proper plan of action.

Pursuant to school statutory authority to adopt policies, rules and regulations necessary to protect the government and health of students in the School District, the Board of Education of Gering Public Schools has determined that the possession or use by students of tobacco, vaping or tobacco products, alcohol, narcotics, or other dangerous and/or illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia shall be prohibited:

1. during the school day
2. on school grounds
3. by a participant in school activities
4. as a spectator at school activities involving Gering participants.

Students who possess or use vaping products, tobacco products, alcohol, narcotics, or other dangerous drugs or drug paraphernalia except as directed by a physician during the school day, on school grounds, or while participating in or attending school activities shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions, including, but not limited, to, expulsion or suspension. Students involved in extracurricular activities shall be subject to additional disciplinary actions. Enforcement of disciplinary sanctions shall be in accordance with the procedures established by the Gering Public Schools Comprehensive Substance Abuse Policy and Guidelines for Students

Participating in Extracurricular Activities. This information will be provided to each student at the beginning of the school year.

### **Student Appearance/Dress Code**

Students at Gering Public Schools are expected to dress in a way that is appropriate for the school setting. Students should not dress in a manner that is dangerous to the health and safety of anyone or interferes with the learning environment or teaching process in our school. Following is a list of examples of attire that will not be considered appropriate, such list is not exclusive and other forms of attire deemed inappropriate by the administration may be deemed inappropriate for the school setting:

- A. Clothing that shows an inappropriate amount of bare skin or underwear (midriffs, spaghetti straps, sagging pants) or clothing that is too tight, revealing or baggy, or tops and bottoms that do not overlap or any material that is sheer or lightweight enough to be seen through, or otherwise of an appropriate size and fit so as to be revealing.
- B. Shorts, skirts, or similar items that do not reach mid-thigh or longer, approximately to the bottom of the fingers when arms are held to one's sides.
- C. Clothing or jewelry that advertises or promotes beer, alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.
- D. Clothing or jewelry that could be used as a weapon (chains, spiked apparel) or that would encourage "horse-play" or that would damage property (e.g. cleats).
- E. Headwear including hats, caps, bandanas, hoods, and scarves;
- F. Clothing or jewelry which exhibits nudity, makes sexual references or carries lewd, indecent, or vulgar double entendre.
- G. Clothing or jewelry that is gang-related.

Consideration will be made for students who wear special clothing as required by religious beliefs, disability, or to convey a particularized message protected by law. The final decision regarding attire and grooming will be made by the Principal or Superintendent. In the event a student is uncertain as to whether a particular item or method of grooming is consistent with the school's guidelines, the student should contact the Principal for approval, and may also review such additional posting of prohibited items or grooming which may be available in the Principal's office.

Coaches, sponsors or teachers may have additional requirements for students who are in special lab classes, students who are participants in performing groups or students who are representing the school as part of an extracurricular activity program.

On a first offense of the dress code, the student may call home for proper apparel. If clothes cannot be brought to school, the student will be allowed to change into another clothing item provided by the school. If the student refuses to change, s/he may be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day. Students will not be allowed to leave campus to change clothes. Continual violations of the dress code will result in more stringent disciplinary actions, up to expulsion. Further, in the event the dress code violation is determined to also violate other student conduct rules (e.g., public indecency, insubordination, expression of profanity, and the like), a first offense of the dress code may result in more stringent discipline, up to expulsion.

### **Student Conduct at School Events**

Gering Middle School students, who attend activities at school, or at another location, are reminded that they are representatives of the entire student body. They should conduct themselves in a manner that will bring credit to our school. Students are expected to observe rules and regulations established by Gering Middle School as expressed through this handbook. The administration and staff will work cooperatively with other schools if student conduct becomes a problem. Violation of these rules and regulations could lead to suspension or expulsion from school and/or activities.

### **Substitute Teachers**

Substitutes play a unique role in continuing the educational mission of Gering Public Schools while a teacher is absent from the class. It is critically important to ensure that the substitute's experience at the Gering Middle School will be positive, so that they will continue to feel welcome and serve in our school. Consequences may be doubled for offenses incurred under the direction or supervision of a substitute teacher.

### **Student Conduct**

These student conduct rules are established to maintain a school atmosphere that is conducive to learning, to aid student development, to further school purposes, and to prevent interference with the educational process. Violations of the rules will result in disciplinary action.

The [Nebraska Student Discipline Act](#) will be used to guide the investigation, recommendation, and enforcement of any student discipline procedures. The purpose of the Student Discipline Act is to assure the protection of all elementary and secondary school students' constitutional right to due process and fundamental fairness within the context of an orderly and effective educational process. The sanctions defined in the act shall be interpreted at all times in the light of the principles of free speech and assembly protected under the Constitution of Nebraska and the United States Constitution and in recognition of the right of every student to public education. [Ref. § 79-255]

The school board or board of education may authorize the emergency exclusion, short-term or long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment of any pupil from school for conduct prohibited by the board's rules or standards established pursuant to the Student Discipline Act if such sanction complies with the procedures required by the Act. [Ref. § 79-257]

### **Delegation of Authority**

The school board or board of education may authorize the delegation to other school officials of responsibilities directed to the principal or superintendent by the act. [Ref. § 79-261(3)]

### **Authorized Actions by Administrators and Teachers**

Administrative and teaching personnel may take actions regarding student behavior, other than those specifically provided in the Student Discipline Act, which are reasonably necessary to aid the student, further school purposes, or prevent interference with the educational process.

### **Gering Middle School School Progressive Discipline Procedure:**

Gering's discipline plan is designed to be progressive in nature. Students who are repeatedly referred to the principal's office for additional disciplinary measures will be disciplined according to the charts listed below. The initial responsibility for the disciplining of a student, who is disobedient or disrespectful in class, is the classroom teacher. Gering Middle School will make an effort to provide counseling for all students who demonstrate need. School administration reserves the right to accept personal and/or family counseling as an alternative to expulsion, so long as the student and/or parent(s) continue with counseling until dismissed by the counselor. Each time a student receives an office referral by a teacher or an administrator, s/he will receive a specific number of demerit points based on the type and severity of behavior exhibited. Any points received shall be cumulative throughout the school year. Accumulation of demerit points will result in the following consequences:

- 60 demerit points: 1 day of in-school-suspension
- 90 demerit points: 1 day of out-of-school suspension
- 120 demerit points: 3 days of out-of-school suspension
- 150 demerit points: 10 days of out-of-school suspension
- 180 or more demerit points: may result in recommendation to the Board of Education for expulsion from the Gering Public Schools.

The following definitions of terms are provided in order to help clarify inappropriate behaviors at Gering Middle School:

<u>Behavior Type</u>	<u>Definition(s)</u>
Arson	The burning of, or attempting to burn, any buildings, or part of any building, structure, or property of the school district.
Bomb Threat	Raising or creating any false alarm of bomb in and to any buildings, or part of any building, structure, or property of the school district by any means or manner whatsoever.
Bullying (including, but not limited to, bullying behavior related to disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender)	<p>Behavior is considered <b>bullying</b> when the following four elements are present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unwanted aggressive behavior</li> <li>● Intended to hurt someone physically, verbally, emotionally, or electronically</li> <li>● Imbalance of power socially, physically, or emotionally</li> <li>● Repeated or likely to be repeated over time</li> </ul> <p>In student-friendly language, when someone says or does something intentionally to be hurtful and they keep doing it even when you tell them to stop or show them you're upset, that behavior would be considered bullying.</p>
Confiscation of Cell Phones and Electronic Devices (PEDs)	PEDs include, but are not limited to, cell phones, portable game consoles, cameras, personal laptop computers, earbuds, smart watches, smart glasses, and other electronic or battery powered instruments which transmit voice, text, or data from one person to another.
Cheating/Plagiarism	To violate rules dishonestly (as on daily work or an examination) or to present work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement or citation.
Discrimination	The act of making unjustified distinctions between people based on the groups, classes, or other categories to which they belong or are perceived to belong.
Disorderly Conduct	Also referred to as "disturbing the peace." It encompasses actions that are disruptive and interrupt public activity or spaces.
Disrespect to Faculty Members	Lack of respect to any staff member at Gering Middle School.
Disruption of School/Class/Assembly	Conduct that materially and substantially interferes with or obstructs the teaching or learning process in the context of a classroom or educational setting. Examples include yelling, running in the halls, persistent talking in class, horseplay, throwing items, disruptive objects, etc.
Dress Code Violation	Any clothing item/behavior that does not meet criteria as outlined on pages 59-60 of the GMS Student Handbook.
Extortion/Blackmail	The practice of obtaining something, especially money, through force or threats.
Failure to Attend Detention(s)	Intentionally choosing not to attend detention as determined by a GMS staff member.
False Call/Forgery of Notes	The act of claiming the name of another person to excuse a student from class or school.

False Fire Alarm	Raising or creating any false alarm of fire in and to any building, or part of any building, structure or property of the school district.
Fighting	The act of quarreling (physical and/or verbal) which could or does result in bodily injury in or on school property, including any activity under school sponsorship (e.g. dance, athletic event, bus, etc.)
Gross Misbehavior	Misbehaving that is totally beyond simple appropriate behavior, i.e. overt behavior that threatens property or the safety and well-being of others including the promotion of fighting.
Harassment/Intimidation	Harassment consists of actions or language that demeans, intimidates, or threatens an individual. Behavior is considered intimidating or threatening if it involves implied threats, words, or deeds that lead to a justifiable fear for the safety or health of any individual or property. Such conduct is unwelcome, uninvited, and unwanted, resulting in significant emotional distress, alarm, or nuisance without a valid reason.
Illegal Entry	Forced entry or entry without administrative authorization into a building, room or school property.
Inappropriate Behavior/Gestures	Behavior on school grounds that is not acceptable as measured by the general standards of the school and community including words, gestures, pictures, spitting, unauthorized games, littering, loitering, etc.
Inappropriate Public Displays of Affection (PDA)	Any inappropriate public display of affection on school property or at school activities. Such conduct includes kissing, touching, fondling, or other displays of affection that would be reasonably considered to be embarrassing or a distraction to others.
Indecent Behavior	Behavior that is indecent, offensive or insulting includes exposing, to any extent, a person's anal or genital region.
Indecent Material	The act of portraying obscenity or vulgarity in pictures or caricatures in assignments, on any personal property visible to others at school, or on any school property.
Insubordination	Disregard for the authority of or refusal to follow orders given by a Gering Middle School staff member.
Jeopardizing the Safety of Oneself or Others	Any act of putting something or someone at risk of harm or danger.
Leaving School Grounds Without Permission	Failure to remain on school grounds or the property of any school-sponsored activity, at any point after arrival, without permission.
Lying/Dishonesty	Any act of not telling the truth.
Misuse of School Materials/Equipment	Misusing and/or using school materials in an unauthorized manner short of major destruction, e.g. writing on or marking desks, books, lockers, etc., using shop materials, home ec. food products, etc., misuse of computer accounts or materials.
Physical or Verbal Assault	The act of initiating a violent physical or verbal attack against another student on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored event.

Physical or Verbal Assault (School Employee)	The act of initiating a violent physical or verbal attack against a school employee on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored event.
Possession of a Firearm	The act of possessing any firearm on school property or school-sponsored event or transportation.
Possession of a Weapon Other than a Firearm	The act of possession or threatening to use any weapon or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury.
Possession or Use of Alcohol	The act of possessing and/or using any alcohol product on school property or school-sponsored event or transportation.
Possession or Use of Drugs/Drug Paraphernalia	The act of possessing and/or using any drug or drug paraphernalia on school property or school-sponsored event or transportation.
Possession or Use of Explosives	Possessing, using, or threatening to use any article containing an explosive or combustible substance, including fireworks.
Possession or Use of Firecracker	Possessing, using, or threatening to use a firecracker on school property or school-sponsored event or transportation.
Possession or Use of Tobacco/Nicotine Products	The act of possessing and/or using any tobacco or nicotine product on school property or school-sponsored event or transportation.
Profanity/Vulgarity	The use of language that is unacceptable to school/community standards, including offensive, lewd, and/or obscene language.
Selling, Giving, or Exchanging of Alcohol/Drugs	The act of distributing alcohol or drug products to others on school property or school-sponsored events or transportation.
Skipping/Cutting Class	The act of intentionally missing an assigned class period.
Sleeping in Class	The act of sleeping during any assigned class period.
Terroristic Threat	Any verbal, physical or written threat intended to execute a violent crime for the purpose of terrorizing another individual; force the evacuation of any building or public assembly area, or result in significant public alarm or inconvenience, or intentionally incite terror with reckless disregard for the resulting public distress.
Theft 1 - Value less than \$50	Unlawfully taking of any object belonging to another individual with a value of less than \$50.
Theft 2 - Value greater than \$50	Unlawfully taking of any object belonging to another individual with a value of greater than \$50.
Trespassing	Entering upon the lands or premises of the school district without authority after having been forbidden to do so by school staff; or upon being notified to depart by members of the school staff, refusing or neglecting to depart as directed.
Under the Influence of Alcohol	Attending any school-sponsored event or activity under the influence of alcohol.
Use of Any Instrument as a Weapon	The act of using or threatening to use any weapon or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury.

Verbal/Written Threat	Any verbal or written statement indicating a wish or desire to cause someone physical harm.
Vandalism 1 - Value less than \$100	The act of deliberate destruction of or damage to school or individual property valued at less than \$100.
Vandalism 2 - Value greater than \$100	The act of deliberate destruction of or damage to school or individual property valued at greater than \$100.

**Key Discipline Terms:**

Detention: Time during the day (before or after school) when a student is required to report to a specified area to make up time. Examples of reasons would be misbehavior, tardies, lack of effort in class or classes, etc.

Suspension: Any disciplinary action whereby a student is separated from school attendance for a period of ten or fewer days and which does not constitute an expulsion. The term does not include situations in which a student is assigned a special course of study, enrolled in special classes or given homebound instruction as authorized or required by law, or removed from athletic activities, non-credit school activities, or school provided transportation.

In-School Suspension: Any disciplinary action whereby a student is separated from class attendance, but is required to be at school. In-school suspension generally lasts from one to three days.

Short-Term Suspension: Up to and including five school days.

Long-Term Suspension: More than five school days, but less than twenty school days.

Expulsion: The term “expulsion” means disciplinary action whereby a student:

1. is separated by the Board of Education from school attendance for a period in excess of ten (10) days.
2. is separated from school attendance for the balance of the then current semester or current year; or
3. suffers a penalty which automatically prevents his or her completing within normal time his or her overall course of study in any school in the school district.

The term does not apply to situations in which a student is assigned a special course of study, enrolled in special classes or given homebound instruction as authorized or required by law, or removed from athletic activities, non-credit school activities or school-provided transportation.

In the case of an expelled student, an alternative education plan will be provided to the student according to provisions outlined in Board Policy 505.04 and pertinent regulations and procedures.

Mandatory Reassignment: Assignment to another educational setting.

Member of the Administrative Staff/Designee: A school district employee who is certificated under the statutes relating to the licensing of teachers and administrators and who has supervisory authority.

Other School Personnel/Staff Members: All school district employees and functionaries except teachers. The term includes, but is not limited to, student teachers, teacher’s aides, cafeteria personnel, custodians, maintenance personnel, bus drivers, etc.

School Property: Any building, buildings, part of any building, structure, land or property of the school district.

Truancy: The act of unauthorized absence from school for any period of time. Chronic tardiness may be considered truancy.

**PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE LEVELS**

<b>OFFENSE</b>	<b>CAT</b>	<b>PTS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
1. Inappropriate public display of affection		I	0	A	B	B	C	
2. Dress code violations	I	0	A	B	B	C		
3. Failure to attend detention (teacher)	I	0	A	B	B	C		
4. Sleeping in Class	I	8	A	B	B	C		
5. Disruption of class/school/assembly	I	8	A	B	B	C		
6. Inappropriate behavior/gestures	I	8	A	B	B	C		
7. Profanity/vulgarity	I	8	A	B	B	C		
8. Cell phone (confiscation)	II	8	<b>SEE PROCEDURE ON PG. 51-52</b>					
9. Cheating/Plagiarism	II	10	B	B	C	C	D	
10. Skipping/Cutting class	II	10	B	B	C	C	D	
11. Disorderly conduct	II	10	B	B	C	C	D	
12. Dress code violation	II	10	B	B	C	C	D	
13. Indecent material	III	10	B	B	C	C	D	
14. Jeopard. the safety of oneself or others	III	10	B	B	C	C	D	
15. Leave school grounds w/o permission	III	10	B	B	C	C	D	
16. Lying/dishonesty	III	10	B	B	C	C	D	
17. Misuse of school material & equipment	III	10	B	B	C	C	D	
18. Not following request of school official	III	10	B	B	C	C	D	
19. Trespassing	III	10	B	B	C	C	E	
20. Failure to attend detention(s)	III	10	B	B	C	C	D	
21. False call/Forgery of notes	IV	14	C	C	D	D	E	
22. Vandalism 1	IV	14	C	C	D	D	E	
23. Theft 1	IV	14	C	C	D	D	E	
24. Disrespect to faculty members	IV	14	C	C	D	D	E	
25. Gross Misbehavior	V	21	C	D	D	E	F	
26. Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying	V	21	C	D	D	E	F	
27. Discrimination	V	21	D	D	E	F	G	
28. Vandalism 2	V	21	E	E	F	F	G	
29. Theft 2	V	21	E	E	F	F	G	
30. Insubordination	V	21	E	E	F	F	G	
31. Fighting	V	21	E	E	F	F	G	
32. Use/poss. of tobacco/vaping products	V	21	F	F	G	G	H	
33. Indecent behavior	VI	28	E	E	F	F	G	
34. Verbal or written threat	VI	28	E	E	F	F	G	
35. Physical assault	VI	28	E	E	F	G	G	
36. Under the influence of alcohol/drugs	VI	28	E	E	F	G	G	
37. Possess alcohol/drugs/paraphernalia	VI	28	E	E	F	G	G	
38. Extortion	VII	42	F	F	G	H		
39. False fire alarm	VII	42	F	F	G	H		
40. Sell, give, or exchange alcohol/drugs	VII	42	F	F	G	H		
41. Possess of weapon other than firearm	VII	42	F	F	G	H		
42. Possession or use of firecrackers	VII	42	F	F	G	H		
43. Terroristic Threats	VII	42	F	F	G	H		
44. Arson	VIII	180	G	H	H	H		
45. Bomb threat	VIII	180	H	H	H	H		
46. Physical assault (school employee)	VIII	180	H	H	H	H		
47. Possession and/or use of explosives	VIII	180	H	H	H	H		
48. Use of any instrument as a weapon	VIII	180	H	H	H	H		
49. Possession of firearm	VIII	180	(One calendar year)					

**PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCES**

- A. Detention
- B. Detention(s)
- C. Detention(s) or In-School Suspension
- D. In-School Suspension
- E. In or Out-of-School Suspension (police may be notified)
- F. Out of School Suspension (police may be notified)
- G. Out of School Suspension/Expulsion (police will be notified)
- H. Expulsion (police will be notified)

**STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE  
PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO GERING MIDDLE SCHOOL  
WITHIN FIRST WEEK OF THE 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR**

My signature below indicates that I have received and read the policies contained in the Gering Middle School Handbook. I understand that violations of the district and school's rules and policies, and directions of Gering Middle School staff members, may result in school disciplinary action being taken.

Parent/Guardian's Name (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## TITLE 92 CHAPTER 27

### Preamble:

The educator shall believe in the worth and dignity of human beings. Recognizing the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, the devotion to excellence and the nurture of democratic citizenship, the educator shall regard as essential to these goals the protection of the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator shall accept the responsibility to practice the profession to these ethical standards. The educator shall recognize the magnitude of the responsibility he or she has accepted in choosing a career in education, and engages, individually and collectively with other educators, to judge his or her colleagues, and to be judged by them, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. The standards listed in this section are held to be generally accepted minimal standards for public school certificate holders in Nebraska with respect to ethical and professional conduct and are, therefore, declared to be the criteria of ethical and professional performance adopted pursuant to the provisions of Section 79-866 R.R.S. for holders of public school certificates. If the certificate holder is employed in a nonpublic school, that context shall be taken into account in the application of these standards.

### Principle I

#### Commitment as a Professional Educator

Fundamental to the pursuit of high educational standards is the maintenance of a profession possessed of individuals with high skills, intellect, integrity, wisdom, and compassion. The educator shall exhibit good moral character, maintain high standards of performance and promote equality of opportunity.

### Principle II

#### Commitment to the Student

Mindful that a profession exists for the purpose of serving the best interests of the client, the educator shall practice the profession with genuine interest, concern, and consideration for the student. The educator shall work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

### Principle III

#### Commitment to the Public

The magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the education process requires dedication to the principles of our democratic heritage. The educator bears particular responsibility for instilling an understanding of and confidence in the rule of law, a respect for individual freedom, and a responsibility to promote respect by the public for the integrity of the profession.

### Principle IV

#### Commitment to the Profession

In the belief that the quality of the services to the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to improve service, to promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged, and to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education. The educator shall believe that sound professional relationships with colleagues are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.



**ELEMENTARY STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2026-2027**

**GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
DISTRICT NO. 16  
GERING, NEBRASKA**

**Introduction**

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**Intent of Handbook**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information concerning the policies, regulations, and services that relate to the successful operation of the Gering Elementary Schools. This handbook does not form a contract, and the school reserves the right to change or modify the handbook as needed.

Communication and cooperation between the home and the school are essential in providing quality education to each child. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular contact with the school and to attend scheduled parent-teacher conferences. If a problem should arise or if clarification is needed, please contact your child's teacher or principal.

**Members of the Board of Education**

Greg Trautman, Board President

Tracy Wiese, Board Vice President

Matt Kautz, Member at Large

John Maser, Member at Large

Bryan Barrett, Member at Large

Josh Lacy, Member at Large

**Administrative Staff**

**Dr. Kory Knight, Interim Superintendent of Schools – 436-3125**

Stacy Rodriguez, Director of Business & Finance – 436-3125

Juile Siebke, Director of Student Services – 436-3125

**Crystal Palsler, Interim Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment – 436-3125**

Jennifer Sibal, Community Engagement Director, Gering Public Schools Foundation – 436-3125

Jesse Neugebauer, Principal of Lincoln Elementary – 436-2350

Angela Morris, Principal of Geil Elementary - 436-2545

Wendee Powell, Principal of Northfield Elementary – 436-5555

# GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PreK A.M.: 8:05 a.m. -11:10 a.m.  
Full-Day PreK follows building schedule

## SCHOOL START/DISMISSAL

Geil | LCN | NF: 8:05a.m. to 3:20 p.m.  
GMS: 8:00a.m. to 3:15 p.m.  
GHS: 8:00a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

EARLY RELEASE  
EACH WED  
2:15 p.m.  
2:15 p.m.  
2:15 p.m.

NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION

NO SCHOOL STUDENTS  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT

NO SCHOOL STUDENTS & STAFF  
Holiday or Break

EARLY DISMISSAL

[ ] BEGIN/END NINE WEEKS

### AUGUST 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1/8
2	3	4	5	6	7	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Aug 3-6 New Teacher Orientation  
Aug 7-12 Staff Development  
Aug 12 6th Grade Orientation  
10am to Noon  
Freshman Orientation  
3pm  
Aug 13 K-12 First Day of School  
1st Qtr Begins  
Aug 17 PreK First Day of School  
Students: 13 Staff: 17

### JANUARY 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

Jan 1 No School: Holiday  
Students & Staff  
Jan 4 No School Students  
Workday  
Jan 5 Students Return -3rd qtr begins  
Jan 15 No School  
Students & Staff  
Jan 22 No School Students  
Staff Development  
Students: 17 Staff: 19

### SEPTEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Sept 7 No School: Holiday  
Students & Staff  
Sept 8 No School Students  
Staff Development  
Students: 20 Staff: 21

### FEBRUARY 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Feb 12 No School  
Students & Staff  
Feb 15 No School Students  
(ESU Mid-Winter Conf.)  
Students: 18 Staff: 19

### OCTOBER 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Oct 16 No School Students  
Workday  
Oct 19 2nd qtr begins  
Oct 19-20 PreK-5 P/T Conferences  
3:45-7:30pm  
Oct 21-22 6-12 P/T Conferences  
3:45-7:30pm  
Oct 23 No School  
Students & Staff  
Students: 20 Staff: 22

### MARCH 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Mar 12 No School Students  
Workday  
Mar 15 4th qtr begins  
Mar 15-16 K-5 P/T Conferences  
3:45-7:30pm  
Mar 17-18 No School PreK ONLY  
Home Visits  
Mar 17-18 6-12 P/T Conferences  
3:45-7:30pm  
Mar 19 No School  
Students & Staff  
Mar 26-30 No School  
Students & Staff  
Students: 18 Staff: 20

### NOVEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Nov 9 No School Students  
Staff Development  
Nov 25-27 No School: Holiday  
Students & Staff  
Students: 17 Staff: 18

### APRIL 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Apr 16 No School GMS ONLY  
GHS Future Focus Day  
Students: 22 Staff: 22

### DECEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Dec 18 2nd Qtr/1st Sem Ends  
\*Dec 21-31 No School: Holiday  
Students & Staff  
(\*continues into January)  
1st Sem: 84 Days  
Students: 14 Staff: 14

### MAY 2027

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

May 15 Graduation  
May 17 Preschool Graduation  
3pm  
May 18 Last Day of School K-12  
Early Release 11:30am  
1/2 Staff Workday  
May 18 Staff Workday  
2nd Sem: 88.5 Days  
Students: 11.5 Staff: 13

308-436-3125

WWW.GERINGSCHOOLS.NET

2026-2027 G CALENDAR



**CLICK HERE**



[geringschools.net](http://geringschools.net)

**Important Phone Numbers**

**Gering Public Schools - District Office**  
308.436.3125

**Student Lunch Accounts**  
308.633.4385

**Transportation (First Student)**  
308.635.6214

**Geil Elementary**  
308.436.2545

**Lincoln Elementary**  
308.436.2350

**Northfield Elementary**  
308.436.5555

**Gering Middle School**  
308.436.3123

**Gering High School**  
308.436.3121

**Important Dates**

**First & Last Days for  
K-12 Students**

**\*August 16, 2026 (Thursday)  
May 18, 2027 (Tuesday)**

*\*PreK students begin August 17, 2026\*  
5/18 will be the last day of school unless there are  
days to be made up. Inclement weather may alter  
the school calendar.*

**Parent/Teacher Conferences**

**October 19-22, 2026  
March 15-18, 2027**

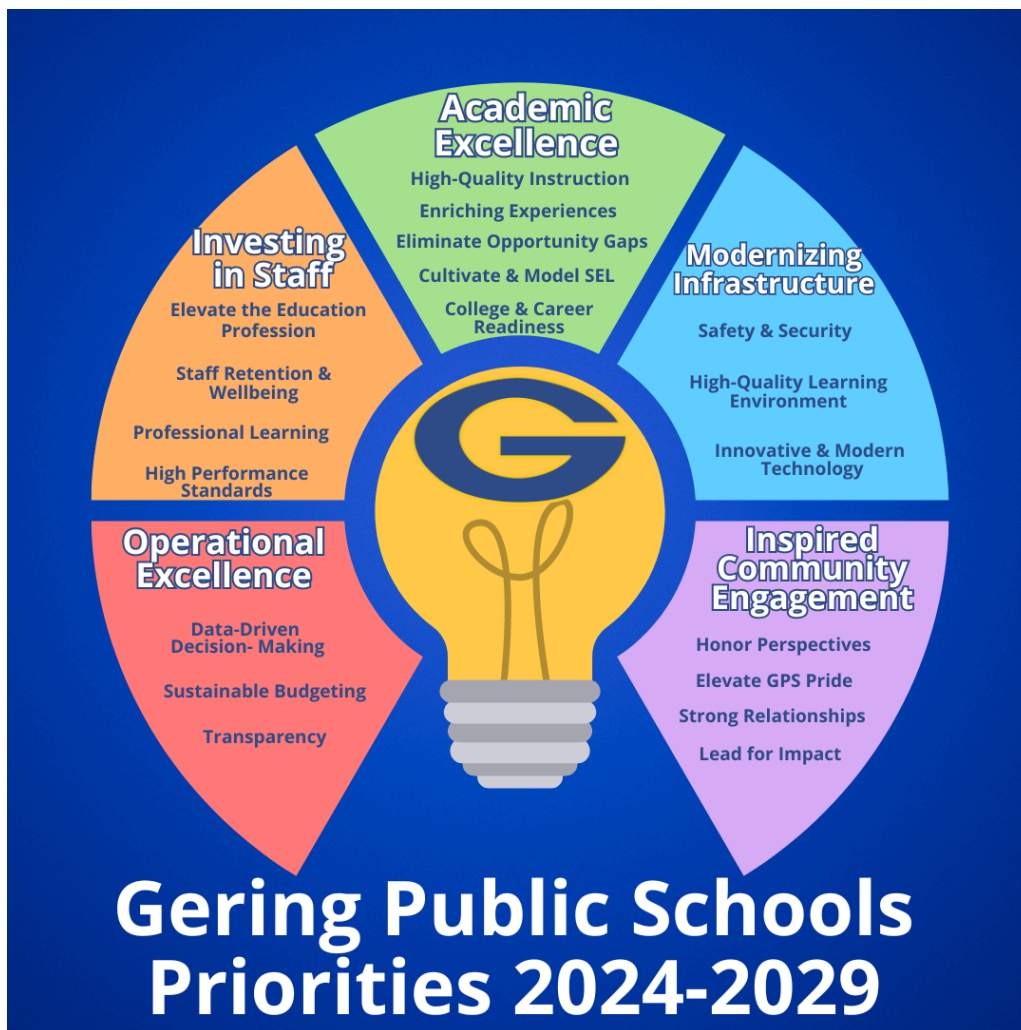
## GPS district mission, vision, mantra and district goals

### School Mission and Vision Statements

**District Mission:** Gering Public School exists to equip today's learners with the skills necessary to be tomorrow's leaders.

**District Vision:** Gering Public Schools is a community where all students feel valued, respected, and inspired to develop to their fullest potential.

### District Goals:



### Notice of Nondiscrimination

The Gering School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, marital status, disability, or age in admission or access to, or treatment of employment, in its programs

and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding complaints, grievance procedures or the application of these policies or non-discrimination.

**Dr. Kory Knight, Interim Superintendent**

**1519 10th Street, Gering, NE 69341**

**(308) 436-3125**

If parents, employees and students do not feel that their complaints regarding Title IX, Title VI, section 504 have met with resolution at the local level, they can appeal their grievances to the regional Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. This would be their final opportunity for resolution. This address needs to be readily available to parents, employees and students for their appeals.

**Office for Civil Rights**

**8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037**

**Kansas City, MO 64114**

**(816) 268-0550**

**FAX: (816) 823-1404; TDD 800-437-0833**

**If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Rebecca Hasty, Nontraditional/Equity Programs Specialist, Career & Technical Education, Nebraska Department of Education, PO Box 94987, Lincoln, NE 68509-4987, (402) 471-4823, FAX (402) 471-4565, e-mail - [rhasty@nde.state.ne.us](mailto:rhasty@nde.state.ne.us).**

**Title IX**

The Gering Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity that it operates. The district is required by Title IX (20 U.S.C. § 1681) and 34 CFR Part 106 not to discriminate in such a manner. This requirement not to discriminate also applies to admission and employment. Any inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the District Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Civil Rights, or both.

- Title IX Coordinator: Superintendent and/or Designee
- Address: 1519 10th Street, Gering, NE 69341
- Email: [knight@geringschools.net](mailto:knight@geringschools.net)
- Phone: (308) 436-3125

For information regarding the Gering Public School District procedure for complaints of sexual harassment including the complaint process, how to file a report or a complaint of sexual harassment, how to file a formal complaint of sexual harassment, and how the District will respond to such complaints see Board Policy 504.24 located at Gering Public Schools website (<https://www.geringschools.net>).

**Mutual Respect**

The Gering Public Schools expects every staff member and student to be treated with respect and dignity. A show of disrespect toward a staff member or insubordination on the part of the student will not be tolerated.

**Multicultural Policy**

The philosophy of the District's multicultural education program is that students will have improved ability to function as productive members of society when provided with: (a) an understanding of diverse cultures and races, the manner in which the existence of diverse cultures and races have affected the history of our Nation and the world, and of the construction made by diverse cultures and races (including but not

limited to African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and European Americans) and (b) with the ability and skills to be sensitive toward and to study, work and live successively with persons of diverse cultures and races. The mission shall also include preparing students to eliminate stereotypes and discrimination or harassment of others based on ethnicity, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, age or disability.

Multicultural education is the identification, selection and infusion of specific knowledge, skills and attitudes for the following purposes:

- Affirming the culture, history and contributions that shall include but not be limited to African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans;
- Challenging and eliminating racism, prejudice, bigotry, discrimination and stereotyping based on race;
- Valuing multiple cultural perspectives; and
- Providing all students with opportunities to "see themselves" in the educational environment in positive ways and on a continuing basis.

To promote and support multicultural education within Gering Public Schools, it shall be the policy and practice of this district to create opportunities for all students to achieve academically and socially in an educational environment in which all students and staff understand and respect the racial and cultural diversity and interdependence of members of our society.

## **Complaint Procedures**

The proper procedures for a parent or student to make complaints or raise concerns about school staff or the school programs or activities are set forth below.

### **1. Complaint Procedures:**

Step 1. Have a scheduled conference with the staff person involved in the complaint matter.

Step 2. Appeal to the Principal if the matter is not resolved at Step 1.

Step 3. Appeal to the Superintendent if the matter is still unresolved at Step 2.

Step 4. Appeal to the Board of Education if the matter is still unresolved at Step 3. Written appeal should be made within five (5) days of the Superintendent's decision.

Step 5. If the complaint is regarding a federal program, and has not been resolved at the district level, the initiating party should contact the Director of Student Services. The Director of Student Services will provide the initiating party information on how to forward the complaint to the Nebraska Department of Education.

Using these procedures, the needs and desires of all parents can be met. It is the desire of all administrators and teachers to solve all problems at the building level whenever possible. Please remember that we stand ready to visit with you. We are more than willing to explain our position on a problem, and we will listen to your concerns.

All complaints shall be in writing, and no anonymous correspondence will be considered by the Board of Education.

### **2. Conditions Applicable to All Levels of Complaint Procedure:**

All information to be considered at each appeal step should be placed in writing in order to be most effective. Appeal decisions shall be expedited as quickly as possible. A decision at any level should be rendered within ten (10) calendar days, unless a legal hearing is requested or required.

## Daily Schedule (Kindergarten through 5th grade)

Building Time		Early Dismissal (Wednesdays)
• Northfield Elementary	8:05 am to 3:20 pm	2:15 pm
• Lincoln Elementary	8:05 am to 3:20 pm	2:15 pm
• Geil Elementary	8:05 am to 3:20 pm	2:15 pm

### **These times are tentative and are subject to change.**

Breakfast will be served starting at 7:40 each day.

Supervision for all children will be provided at the school building approximately 10 minutes prior to the start of each school day. For safety purposes, we are, therefore, requesting that children not arrive any earlier than 10 minutes before the start time of their particular building and leave school grounds immediately unless attending after-school programs or requested to stay by the principal or classroom teacher.

### **Severe Weather and School Cancellations**

The Superintendent of schools is authorized by the Board of Education to close public schools in case of severe weather. Representatives of the Superintendent's staff will notify local news media when inclement weather warrants such action. The information is broadcast regularly by local radio and television stations.

Decisions to close schools. A decision to close school is made when forecasts by the weather service and civil defense officials indicate that it would be unwise for students to go to school. If possible, a decision about the next school day will be made by 9 p.m. for announcement during the 10 p.m. news. An early decision is not always possible because of uncertain weather conditions. School officials will make periodic assessments of conditions during the night and will decide early in the morning (by 6 a.m. if possible). In any case, **an announcement will be made to the news media when schools will be closed.** In some instances, schools will be open, but certain services may be canceled (bus transportation, kindergarten, student activities). Students and parents will want to pay special attention to which public school district and/or building is being closed.

After School Starts. Every attempt will be made to avoid closing school once classes are in session. In some instances closing school during the day is inevitable if children are to safely return home before the brunt of a major storm hits. In these cases as much advance notice as possible will be given to parents. If school is closed during the day, the notice will be broadcast by the media and **parents should have a plan in place to accommodate these circumstances. At the beginning of each school year, you will be asked to provide the school with a plan for your child to follow in the event that this should occur.**

Parental Decisions. Parents may decide to keep their children at home in inclement weather because of personal circumstances. Students absent because of severe weather when school is in session will be marked absent. The absence will be treated like any other absences for legitimate causes, provided parents properly notify the school of their decision. Parents may pick up their children in inclement weather at any time during the school day. Students will not normally be dismissed from school during severe weather on the basis of a telephone request.

What Not To Do. Parents should not attempt to come to school during a tornado warning. **School officials are not permitted to release students from the school building during a tornado warning.** Tornado safety procedures are practiced regularly by students and staff members. Also, parents are urged not to call radio and television stations and school buildings during severe weather. Every effort will be made to provide accurate and timely information through the media.

Emergency Conditions. Gering Public Schools has a signal which, when activated, includes the necessity to either evacuate the building or to move to safe areas in the building. All regular drills are held as required by law through the school year. There are plans for an Emergency Exit System, Tornado Warning System, and Critical Incident Response.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In case of an emergency, it is absolutely necessary for school personnel to be able to contact the parents of a child or someone who knows the child. Therefore, it is very important that telephone numbers and addresses be kept up to date. If possible, an emergency phone number where a parent or guardian can be contacted at all times should be listed with the school. Unlisted numbers are becoming more frequent, and they handicap the school in contacting parents.

The school will not release an unlisted number to any individual, so please list a telephone number with the school. If the situation warrants, a Messenger call may go out explaining the emergency situation to parents.

At the beginning of the school year, you will be asked to provide the school with emergency contact information.

## **Change of Address and Telephone Numbers**

**It is CRITICAL THAT EVERY PARENT report a change of address and/or phone number to the elementary office as soon as possible.**

## **Live Broadcast or Videotaping**

Individuals may broadcast or videotape public school district events, including open Board meetings, as long as it does not interfere with or disrupt the school district event and it does not create an undue burden in adapting the buildings and sites to accommodate the request.

It shall be within the discretion of the Superintendent to determine whether the request is unduly burdensome and whether the broadcast or videotaping will interfere with or disrupt the school district event.

Videotaping of classroom activities will be allowed at the discretion of the administration.

News media coverage of sports and other special events is encouraged. Radio broadcasts of events will be arranged through the communications Director.

## **Video Surveillance**

The Board of Education has authorized the use of video cameras on School District property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all staff, students and visitors to District property, and to safeguard District facilities and equipment. Video cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent.

Notice is hereby given that video surveillance may occur on District property. In the event a video surveillance recording captures a student or other building user violating school policies or rules or local, state or federal laws, the video surveillance recording may be used in appropriate disciplinary proceedings against the student or other building user and may also be provided to law enforcement agencies.

Notice is further given that students and members of the public may photograph, video or otherwise record students and others at events open to members of the public. The School District may take action to prohibit or limit such recording when determined to be appropriate. However, the School District cannot give assurance that such recording will not occur. As such, those who attend events open to members of the public are deemed to consent to such recording.

## **Visitors**

Parents are encouraged to participate in the many school-based activities offered throughout the year. Other visits in classrooms should be coordinated with the front office and the classroom teacher 24 hours in advance and generally not to exceed 30 minutes in length. The visitor should be an observer and not a participant in the learning process. Visitation just prior to or after a holiday is not very beneficial to parents or the classroom teacher and is discouraged.

Parents are always welcome to come enjoy lunch with their students. However, we ask that parents refrain from going to recess with their children due to concerns of liability.

Visitation by students from outside the District and pre-school children visitations are discouraged. To assist teachers with beginning school in the fall and in closing school in late spring, the school asks that no visitations be made during the first two (2) weeks and the last two (2) weeks of a school year.

All visitors must report to the principal's office, sign in, and receive a visitor's badge before entering a classroom and upon leaving the building.

## **Outside Lunch**

Students are welcome to bring lunch from home. Due to federal and state regulations and guidance and the district's food service agreement, we ask that families respect the following guidelines. Students who have food from an outside vendor will be asked to eat in an alternative location outside the cafeteria. Sodas and caffeinated beverages are not allowed in sack lunches. Doordash and other food delivery services are not allowed for students.

## **Smoke-Free Environment**

Gering Public Schools declares all of our school buildings and grounds to be smoke-free. We would appreciate your help in meeting the goal of a smoke- and tobacco- free environment for our children. When you attend school events, including athletic events, please remember that our grounds are smoke and tobacco-free and abide by our District's policy.

## **Care of School Property**

Students are responsible for the proper care of all books, equipment, supplies and furniture supplied by the school.

Students, who disfigure property, break windows or do other damage to school property or equipment will be required to pay for the damage done or replace the item. The administration reserves the right to determine the amount of all fines.

Fines on Chromebooks will be based on the damage incurred.

Fines on books are determined according to the following criteria:

Lost Book:	Replacement cost
Missing one or both covers:	Same as lost book
Loose Cover/Broken Binding:	\$1.00
Missing Page:	50 cents per page (up to replacement cost)
Torn Page:	20 cents per page (up to replacement cost)
Marks that cannot be erased:	20 cents per mark (up to replacement cost)

Students must pay all fines before they can receive school publications and final grades.

### **Searches**

Searches within the school building or on school grounds will be authorized by the principal when there are circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to believe that the search of a particular person, place, or thing will lead to the discovery of the following:

1. Evidence of a violation of the student conduct standards contained in the policies of the Board of Education or a violation of federal, state or local laws.
2. Anything which, because of its presence, presents an immediate danger of physical harm or illness to any person.

### **Locker/Desk/Storage Area**

All lockers and other storage areas on school premises remain the property of the issuing agency and are provided for the use of the students and are subject to inspection, access for maintenance, and search pursuant to this policy.

No student shall lock or otherwise impede access to any locker or storage area except with a lock provided by or approved by the principal of the school in which the locker or storage area is located. Unapproved locks will be removed.

The principal, or a member of the administrative staff and a faculty witness, will search a locker and its contents when the person conducting the search has reasonable cause to conduct the search.

1. Personal Searches

The principal, or another member of the administrative staff designated in writing by the principal and acting at the direction of the principal, will search the person of a student while on the school premises and/or during a school activity if the principal has reasonable cause to conduct a search of that student for a violation of the policy herein. Searches of the person of a student shall be limited to the following:

- a. Searches of the pockets of the student
- b. Searches of the shoes and socks of the student
- c. Any object in the possession of the student, such as a purse or backpack
- d. A “pat down” of the exterior of the student’s clothing

More extensive searches of the person of a student than those enumerated above shall be conducted in a private room by a person of the same sex as the student being searched and witnessed by one other person of the same sex as the person being searched. Searches of the person of a student which requires removal of clothing other than coat or jacket and shoes and socks shall be conducted only upon grounds of probable cause.

2. Custody of Evidence

Anything found in the course of a search conducted in accordance with this section, which is evidence of a violation of the student conduct standard, may be:

- a. Seized and admitted as evidence in any suspension or expulsion proceeding if it is tagged for identification at the time it is seized and kept in a secure place by the principal or the principal’s designee until it is presented at the hearing.
- b. Turned over to a law enforcement officer in accordance with the subsection of this regulation entitled “Involvement of Law Enforcement Officers.”

3. Involvement of Law Enforcement Officers

Except in cases of extreme danger to life or property, or when notification is not possible through reasonably diligent efforts, the parent of any student shall be notified prior to requesting police to conduct a search of the person. In those instances when notification is not possible prior to requesting police to conduct the search, the student’s parents shall be notified as soon as is reasonably possible thereafter. Upon finding probable cause for a search, the principal, or a member of the administrative staff designated in writing by the principal, may request the assistance of a law enforcement officer to conduct the following:

- a. Search any area of the school premises, any student or any motor vehicle on the school premises.
- b. Identify, retain, or dispose of contraband found in the course of a search conducted in accordance with this section.

## **Bicycles/Scooters**

Children riding bicycles or scooters to school should park them in the bicycle rack or area designated by the principal. Bicycle racks are not supervised at all times during the day, therefore, for protection against theft, a method of locking the bicycle or scooter to the bicycle rack is a necessity.

Although school administrators and teachers are interested in protecting the property of students, they cannot assume responsibility for items such as bicycles or scooters for which they cannot provide supervision throughout the day.

Bicycles and scooters are to be ridden directly from home to the bicycle rack and vice versa when the school day ends. No bicycles or scooters are to be ridden on the playground or other school property, except when going to and from the bicycle rack.

## **Student Valuables**

Students, not the school, are responsible for their personal property. Students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or items of value to school. If it is necessary to bring valuable items or more money than is needed to pay for lunch, leave the money or valuables with a staff member in the school office for temporary and safe keeping. Even then, the school is not in a position to guarantee that the student's property will not be subject to loss, theft, or damage. Administration has final authority on all items brought to school. **It is not the responsibility of the school to investigate when personal items are lost, stolen, or missing.**

## **Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**

Students are asked to NOT bring cell phones, smart watches, and other personal electronic devices to school. If the students bring a personal electronic device to school, it should be kept in their backpack, cubby, or location designated by school staff during the school day. The school is not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen devices.

**We would like to remind families that students' personal cell phone use and/or social media use on or off of campus may result in disciplinary action in the event that the students activities cause a substantial disruption in the student learning environment.**

## **Lost and Found**

Students who find lost articles are asked to take them to the office where the articles can be claimed by the owner. If the articles are lost at school, report that loss to office personnel.

## **Accidents**

Every accident in the school building and/or on the school grounds must be reported immediately to school personnel.

## **Insurance**

### **INJURIES AT SCHOOL**

The Gering Public Schools does not pay for medical bills for students injured at school or while participating in extracurricular activities. The school provides information and enrollment forms for parents wishing to purchase medical insurance through an independent insurance company which is not affiliated with the Gering Public Schools. Parents are encouraged to review the insurance material.

## **Copyright and Fair Use Policy**

It is the school's policy to follow the federal copyright law. Students are reminded that, when using school equipment and when completing course work, they also must follow the federal copyright laws. The federal copyright law governs the reproduction of works of authorship.

Copyrighted works are protected regardless of the medium in which they are created or reproduced; thus copyright extends to digital works and works transformed into a digital format. Copyrighted works are not limited to those that bear a copyright notice.

The "fair use" doctrine allows limited reproduction of copyrighted works for educational and research purposes. The relevant portion of the copyright statute provides that the "fair use" of a copyrighted work, including reproduction "for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies

for classroom use), scholarship, or research” is not an infringement of copyright. The law lists the following factors as the ones to be evaluated in determining whether a particular use of a copyrighted work is a permitted “fair use,” rather than an infringement of the copyright.

- The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- The nature of the copyrighted work;
- The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and
- The effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Although all of these factors will be considered, the last factor is the most important in determining whether a particular use is “fair.” Students should seek assistance from a faculty member if there are any questions regarding what may be copied.

### **Toxic Substance Control Act**

Gering Public Schools annually conducts asbestos inspections in its facilities as required by Section 203 of Title 2 of the Toxic Substance Control Act. 15 U.S.C. 2643. Management plans requiring those inspections are available for your review in principals’ offices and in the Central Administration Office at 1519 10th Street, Gering, Nebraska during regular business hours.

## **ATTENDANCE**

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### ***Attendance Policy***

Regular and punctual student attendance is required. The Board’s policies require such attendance, the administration is responsible for developing further attendance rules and regulations, and students and parents are responsible for developing behaviors which will result in regular and punctual student attendance.

### **Attendance and Absences**

Absences From School - Definitions. An absence from school will be reported as: (a) an excused absence or (b) an unexcused absence.

1. Excused Absences. Absences should be cleared through the Principal’s office in advance whenever possible. An absence or tardy, even by parental approval, may not be excused. All absences, except for illness and/or death in the family, require advance approval. An absence for any of the following reasons will be excused, provided the required procedures have been followed:
  - a. Attendance at a funeral for a member of the immediate family (parents, siblings, and grandparents),
  - b. Illness which causes a student to be absent from school,
  - c. Doctor or dental appointment which require student to be absent from school,
  - d. Court appearances that are required by a court order and the student is not responsible for needing to be in court,
  - e. School sponsored activities which require students to be absent from school,
  - f. Family trips in which student accompanies parents(s)/legal guardian(s),
  - g. Other absences which have received prior approval from the Principal.

The principal has the discretion to deny approval for the latter two reasons, depending on circumstances such as the student's number of other absences, the student's academic status, the tests or other projects which may be missed, and in the case of a family trip, whether the trip could be taken during non-school time and the educational nature of the trip.

2. Unexcused Absences: an absence which is not excused is unexcused. If a student's absence is unexcused the student may receive zeros for any class work missed during the absence, and may be required to make up work and the time missed.

A student who accumulates absences may be considered truant as per state law, Neb.Rev.Stat. § 79-201 to 79-209. Truancy is a violation of school rules. The student may be required to make up the time missed. Students who leave the school premises without permission during the school day will be considered truant.

Reporting and Responding to Truant Behavior. In all school districts in this state, any Superintendent, principal, teacher or member of the school board who know of any violation of section 79-201 on the part of any child of school age, his or her parent, the person in actual or legal control of such child, or any other person shall within three days report such violation to the attendance officer of the school, who shall investigate the case. When, of his or her personal knowledge, by report or complaint from any resident of the district, or by report or complaint as provided in this section, the building Principal believes that any child is unlawfully absent from school, the Building Principal shall immediately investigate.

Excessive Absenteeism. Students who accumulate five (5) absences in a quarter shall be deemed to have "excessive absences." Such absences shall be determined on a per day basis for elementary students and on a per class basis for secondary students. When a student has excessive absences, the following procedures shall be implemented:

1. One or more meetings shall be held between a school attendance officer, school social worker, or other persons designated by the school administration and the parent/guardian and the student to report and attempt to solve the truancy problem. If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such a meeting, the principal shall place in the student's attendance records documentation of such refusal.
2. Educational counseling to determine whether curriculum changes, including but not limited to, enrolling the child in an alternative education program that meets the specific educational and behavior needs of the child.
3. Educational evaluation, which may include a psychological evaluation, to assist in determining the specific condition, if any, contributing to the truancy problem, supplemented by specific efforts by the school to help remedy any condition diagnosed.
4. Investigation of the truancy or excessive absenteeism problem by the school social worker, or another person designated by the administration to identify conditions which may be contributing to the problem. If services for the child and his or her family are determined to be needed, the person performing the investigation shall meet with the parent/guardian and the child to discuss any referral to appropriate community agencies for economic services, family or individual counseling, or other services required to remedy the conditions that are contributing to the truancy or excessive absenteeism problem.

Reporting Habitual Truancy. If the child is habitually truant, the building Principal will file a report with the county attorney of the county in which such person resides. The county attorney may file a complaint against a person violating section 79-201 before the judge of the county court of the county in which such person resides charging such person with violation of section 79-201 or may file a petition under the

Nebraska Juvenile Code alleging the person violating section 79-201 is a juvenile described in subdivision (3)(a) or (3)(b) of section 43-247. Nothing in this section shall preclude a county attorney from being involved at any stage in this process to address excessive absenteeism.

Sec. 20. Section 79-2104, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2010

### ***Tardiness***

Students will be considered tardy to school if they are not in their assigned class by 8:20 AM. Students who arrive after 8:20 AM, but before 10:00 AM will be considered tardy. Five tardies will equal one absence. Students arriving after 10:00 AM will be considered absent for a half day. Students arriving after 1:00 p.m. will be considered absent for a full day.

### ***Leaving School***

Students who must leave school for any reason during the school day must check out at the office before leaving. Students leaving school must be cleared in advance by a note or phone call from the student's parent or legal guardian. Upon returning to school that same day, students are expected to sign in at the office. A sheet will be available on the office counter for this purpose. Appointments with doctors and/or dentists should be scheduled outside the regular school day. Early dismissal (leaving school prior to 3:05 PM) will count against student attendance in the same way as tardies (five early dismissals will equal one absence). Students who leave school before 1:25 PM will be counted absent for the afternoon.

### ***Make-up Work***

When a child returns to school after an absence, all make-up work should be completed as soon as possible. Generally, a student will be allowed two days to make up work for one day missed, except when make-up work must be completed sooner because it is impeding the child's progress. For example, if a student is absent for two (2) days, he/she will have four (4) days to make-up the missed work before being required to give up recesses and other free time. Chronic absenteeism or students who have failed to make up work in the past may be required to stay in at recess or at lunchtime immediately upon their return to school from an absence.

Parents should work closely with the teacher to make the task of make-up as easy and profitable as possible for the returning student. If an absence is anticipated, arrangements should be made for the make-up work prior to the absence.

## **SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT**

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### ***Reporting to Parents***

It is very important for students and parents to be informed about the student's progress in school. To understand themselves, to capitalize on their strong points and to remedy any weaknesses; students need to know what their strengths and weaknesses are. In order for parents to work cooperatively with the school in supporting educational endeavors, they need to know how their son or daughter is progressing, and they need information on the educational program. For these reasons, a good reporting system is a necessity.

The following procedures will be followed in reporting to parents:

1. Kindergarten through 5th grade will have two parent-teacher conferences during a school year. These conferences will be scheduled for parents before the end of the first nine (9) weeks of school and again towards the end of the third nine (9) week period. In addition to scheduled parent-teacher conferences, individual conferences may be scheduled when a need exists or upon the request of the parent.
2. Report cards will be issued at the end of each nine (9) week period. At the end of the other nine (9) week periods, report cards will be sent home with students. The school calendar included in this handbook designates the dates when each nine-week period ends. Report cards will generally be issued the following Thursday. Please remember these important dates.

### **Standards-Based Learning**

The goal of the Gering Public School District is to report grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning, and the change to standards-based grading is an effort to reach that goal. Subjects will be assessed using a standards-based system. Standards-based learning measures your student's mastery of the essential standards for a class, or how well your student understands the material in class.

At the beginning of every unit, the teacher will break down the standards for the unit into smaller objectives and criteria using a detailed rubric. During the unit, students are assessed to see if they truly know the material using a variety of assessments, such as traditional pencil-and-paper tests, projects, discussions, or reports. The class grade will be based solely on the evidence the teacher collects demonstrating mastery of the essential standards.

The goal of this system is to provide the teacher, student, and parent as accurate a picture as possible of the student's learning to encourage a dialogue about how the student can master the material for the class. In particular, because learning is a process that takes place over time, each assessment will provide feedback for the student about what to focus on next, and the student will be allowed to retake assessments. If the new assessment shows a higher level of mastery, that new score replaces the old one.

### **Standards - Based Learning Scale**

The following are general explanations of the levels of the rubric scales:

<p><b>3 - Meets Standards/on Grade Level:</b> The student consistently meets grade level standards and expectations. Performance is characterized by the ability to apply skills with accuracy, independence and quality with minimal assistance. This is an excellent level of achievement, and one that a student should be working toward as developmentally appropriate.</p>	<p><b>2 - Partially Meets Standards/Reaching Grade Level:</b> The student is progressing toward grade level standards and expectations. Performance varies in consistency with regard to accuracy and quality. The student requires additional practice and support.</p>	<p><b>1 - Below Standards/Not at Grade Level:</b> The student is not meeting grade level standards and expectations. Additional instruction, practice and support is necessary to move toward grade level standards and expectations.</p>
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### **Promotion and Retention**

The Gering Public School's administration and teachers have an interest in each individual student and all staff members are willing to work with students and parents to ensure that academic progress is achieved. When academic progress has not been achieved, the decision must be made as to whether or

not to retain the child in a grade for another year. The following policy will be followed when considering the promotion or retention of a child:

Generally speaking, the District does not support retention of a student in the same grade for the next school year. Several significant factors should be considered and certain procedures should be followed during the retention process if it is considered:

1. The attitude of principals and teachers toward promotion and retention must be positive so that the best interests and the future of the student are the primary consideration for decisions regarding grade placement.
2. In reaching a decision to retain a child, the teacher and/or principal, and when necessary, the school psychologist and specialists involved, should study all available data before a decision is reached.
3. Poor attendance and physical and emotional immaturity may be justification for retention.
4. Teacher judgment should always be a prime factor in reaching a decision to retain a child; however, to help the teacher, principal, and specialist reach this decision, achievement test results may be considered.
5. The final responsibility for the promotion or retention of an individual student rests with the principal as with any other official action taken within his/her school.
6. As the study of all factors is carried out to determine whether to promote or retain a child, close contact with parents should be maintained. Conferences with teacher, principal, and parents and/or guardians involved are necessary.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

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### **Summer School**

Summer School may be provided for those students meeting district criteria. If you need more information regarding summer school, please contact your building principal.

### **School-Wide Title I**

Students who receive a good education have a better chance for being successful in life. Title I is a federally funded program that helps students achieve academic standards and improve their scholastic performance.

Schools that meet income requirements can use Title I money to improve the whole school through school-wide programming. That means all students can benefit from Title I. Geil, Lincoln and Northfield elementary schools qualify for school-wide Title I programs. Each of these three buildings has a comprehensive plan to ensure high quality learning and continuous school improvement. The program currently focuses on the areas of reading/language arts, math, and behavior.

Parents are encouraged to be involved with the school and their children's education. This can be done by reading newsletters and notes, attending meetings and parent-teacher conferences, volunteering some time to the school, reviewing and updating the parent policy, pledging to support learning at home by signing the compact, and participating in activities sponsored by the school.

## **Positive Behavior Support (PBS)**

In order to ensure a safe learning environment for all students, the school staff is committed to the following:

- Using a positive, preventative, and educational approach to student behavior
- Having a plan with clear direction for staff
- Explicitly teaching student behavior expectations
- Empowering all staff to implement the plan
- Students taking responsibility for their own behavior
- Using natural and logical consequences when behavior problems occur
- Seeking parent support for appropriate student conduct and disciplinary procedures

In order to carry out the philosophy and beliefs stated above, our school has chosen to implement the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) model. PBS is a program designated to teach students to build a more positive school-wide atmosphere. The ultimate goal is to teach students to be self-managers, who encourage and challenge each other to higher behavioral and academic standards.

This is accomplished through the use of clear expectations which are explicitly taught, regularly acknowledged and fairly corrected. Students are “set-up” for success in school.

## **Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST)**

BIST is an evidence based program adopted by the Gering School District to help staff implement the following systems.

- A communications system of regular meetings, checklists for student/administrator referral, information feedback and checkups.
- A proactive, rather than reactive, behavior system which fits with the goals of Positive Behavior Support.
- A common language which builds and develops responsibility.
- Safe places where students who are in trouble can go to process and get help.
- Mentors who will support teachers of difficult students. (Mentors can be teachers, colleagues, volunteers and others)
- A behavior intervention team of school staff to give back-up for teachers and administration.

BIST operates on these basic life goals:

- I can do something even if I don't want to or it's hard.
- I can make good choices when I'm mad or have big emotions.
- I can be okay when others are not okay.

## **Special Education Identification and Placement Procedures**

### What Does Special Education Mean?

Special education means specially designed instruction, curriculum, and services through the use of staff, facilities, equipment and classrooms which have been adapted to provide special instruction for students with disabilities.

In addition, special education provides the support services necessary for evaluation, placement and instruction for students with disabilities. These services are free to parents, unless they elect to place their child in a program other than one approved by the school district.

### How are Students With Disabilities Identified?

The first step is for parents to provide written permission to have their child evaluated. The request for permission will include a description of the action to be taken and a description of each evaluation procedure. Written statements showing the results of the evaluation and the reasons for placement in a special education program must be kept on file. Within 30 days after a student has been verified as having a disability, a conference will be held with parents. Advance notice will be given. At the conference, an Individual Education Program (IEP) will be developed.

#### Students Who May Benefit

A student verified as having autism, behavior disorder, hearing impairment, mental handicap, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual handicap may be placed in regular education with support services or may benefit from a special education classroom or service.

#### Independent Evaluation

If a parent disagrees with an evaluation completed by the school district, the parent has a right to request an independent educational evaluation at public expense. Parents should direct inquiries to school officials to determine if the school district will arrange for further evaluation at public expense. If school district officials feel the original evaluation was appropriate and the parents disagree, a due process hearing may be initiated. If it is determined that the original evaluation was appropriate, parents still have the right to an independent educational evaluation at their own expense.

#### Re-evaluation

Students identified for special education will be re-evaluated at least every three years by the IEP team. The IEP team will review existing evaluation data on the student and will identify what additional data, if any, are needed. The school district shall obtain parental consent prior to conducting any re-evaluation of a student with a disability.

#### Individual Education Program (IEP)

Each student with a disability must have a written IEP prepared by the staff in cooperation with parents specifying programs and services which will be provided by the schools. If necessary, the district will arrange for interpreters or other assistants to help parents in preparing and understanding the IEP. Once in place, the program is reviewed on a regular basis with the parent.

An IEP is developed in a conference setting. Parents will be notified of the persons who will be in attendance. The IEP conference shall include at least the following:

1. A representative of the school district;
2. An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results;
3. One or both parents or guardian;
4. The child (when appropriate)
5. At least one regular education teacher if the child is or may be participating in the regular education environment;
6. At least one special education teacher;
7. A representative of the nonpublic school if the child is attending a nonpublic school;
8. A representative of a service agency if the child is receiving services from an approved service agency; and
9. Other individuals, at the discretion of the parent or school district.

It is permissible for parents to bring other persons to the IEP meeting, but it is a good idea to inform the school before the scheduled meeting. The school district will provide parents with a copy of the IEP.

### Special Education Placement

The student's placement in a special education program is dependent on the student's educational needs as outlined in the Individual Education Program (IEP). The school district must assure that students with disabilities are educated with students who do not have disabilities, to the maximum extent possible. Students with disabilities may be placed in special classes, separate schools or other situations outside the regular educational environment when the nature of the child's needs require specialized educational techniques which are not available in current settings. Determination of a student's educational placement will be made by a team of persons who know the student and who understand the tests and procedures that assess the student's learning abilities.

Parents are asked for written consent to determine whether or not they approve the educational placement recommended for their child. If the parent does not speak English or is hearing impaired, an interpreter may be requested. Written notice shall be given to parents a reasonable time before the school district: 1) Proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, verification or educational placement of a child or the provision of a free appropriate public education; or 2) Refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the child.

### Transportation of Students Receiving special Education

The district special education staff will make arrangements for transportation for eligible students to the extent such is required by the student's IEP. Students assigned to special education programs requiring attendance at schools outside their regular attendance area will be transported. Special conditions may warrant that special education students receive transportation to their assigned schools. If parents are dissatisfied with a transportation decision, they may contact the Superintendent for a review.

### Access to Student Records

Parents have the right to inspect and review any education records relating to their child which are collected, maintained or used by the school district in providing educational services.

### Parental Review of Programs

Parents who want to review their child's placement for any reason should request an IEP team meeting. If parents are not satisfied with the results of the conference, they may appeal to the Nebraska Department of Education for a formal hearing to be conducted by a state hearing officer. Parents dissatisfied by the findings and decisions made in a state level hearing have the right to bring civil action.

### Plan and Budget

With the exception of personally identifiable student records, district special education plans and budgets are available for public inspection.

This is a summary of the Gering Public Schools district plan for special education students. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of the complete district policy or a copy of the Nebraska Department of Education Rule 51 (complaint procedures) or Rule 55 (appeal procedures) may contact the Director of Student Services at the Gering Public Schools District Offices.

### **Building Alternate Routes for Kids' Success (BARKS)**

BARKS, formally DAWGS, is an alternative, in-district educational placement available to students who received services on an Individualized Education Plan, or IEP. It is an intensive behavior program within the district's continuum of least restrictive environments (LRE) for students in grades K-5th. BARKS is a placement option available to students with disabilities when exhaustive interventions have been

implemented in less restrictive learning environments without meeting the desired level of positive outcomes for the student. Students may only be placed in the BARKS program through IEP team decision.

The mission of the program is to provide a positive environment with clear expectations and immediate consistent feedback to assist students in developing appropriate behavior management skills. BARKS believes that students should be served in the least restrictive environment allowing for academic and behavioral success.

Along with academic skills, students in BARKS will participate in individual and group social skills counseling.

Students attending BARKS will receive behavior intervention through the use of the Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST), Crisis Prevention Institute strategies, and a four tier leveling system. When a student has completed the requirements for exiting the BARKS program, the IEP team will meet to plan his/her transition to the next appropriate least restrictive environment (LRE).

The program is located at Lincoln Elementary. Classes are held from approximately 8:05 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. daily. For more information, contact Julie Siebke, Director of Student Services, or Jesse Neugebauer, Lincoln Elementary Principal.

### **Multi-Tier System of Supports Team (MTSS)**

Gering Public Schools recognizes that students can have experiences, circumstances, or conditions that may affect their academic performance and overall success in the school environment. When concerns are presented to the school relating to a student's underperformance in an area or other challenges impacting his/her school success, one avenue of support the school may pursue with the student and his/her family is the MTSS process.

MTSS is a research-based, systematic approach required by the State of Nebraska used to respond to identified student needs and deficits. It involves a system of service delivery (a.k.a. RtI) designed to provide effective instruction for all students using a comprehensive and preventive problem solving approach. It employs a tiered method of instructional delivery in which the core curriculum addresses and meets the needs of most students (Tier 1), additional instruction is provided for those needing supplementary support (Tier 2), and intensive and individualized services are provided for the students who continue to demonstrate more intensive needs (Tier 3). Tiered instructional supports are available for academics (math and reading), social skills, and positive behaviors.

At the center of MTSS is the MTSS Team, or SAT Team (Student Assistance Team). This team is made-up of grade level teachers, special education teachers, building counselors and administrators, Title 1 interventionists, the school psychologist, and the families of referred students. The team meets regularly to plan and review additional services and interventions provided to the students with the ultimate goal of addressing whatever gaps exist in the students' skill sets and supporting their overall school success.

Often at the elementary level, SAT Teams may be formed to address one or more of the following issues affecting students: low attendance, underperformance in one or more academic areas, socio-emotional skill deficits, and behavioral concerns.

Referral to the MTSS process can be made by various concerned individuals including the student, family members, or school staff. Individuals wanting additional information about the referral process can speak to a school counselor or building principal. After the referral, information will be gathered to help identify the problem(s) the student is experiencing. The MTSS Team will then meet to formulate an appropriate plan of action.

A possible outcome of the MTSS process, following multiple attempts at intervention and support put in place by the SAT Team, is a team referral of a student for special education eligibility assessment.

### **Guidance Services**

Gering Public Schools employs a guidance counselor(s) for the purpose of assisting with the District's testing program and to assist with scheduling and attendance and for students to discuss problems and resolve conflicts in classroom visits, small group counseling, and individual counseling. If you wish to see a counselor, stop by a counselor's office and make arrangements for an appointment.

Gering Public Schools also offers the services of an elementary licensed-mental health provider to prek-5th grade students at all three elementary locations. For additional information, please contact your building counselor or the district director of student services.

### **GPS Health Services**

The Gering School District employs full time nurses or medical technicians working under a certified RN who cover the district's locations. Each school location has a First Responder Team and staff who are CPR/First Aid/AED certified, Attack on Asthma and Medication Administration trained to assist as the schools are not staffed with a full-time nurse. Basic first aid will be administered to a student, if more extensive care is needed, then the parent/guardian (or emergency contact) will be notified, or 911 will be contacted.

Information regarding GPS Health Services can be found at the following link to our Health Service Handbook: [2026-27 Health Services Handbook](#)

### **Please note from the Health Services Handbook:**

Parents and/or guardians have the following notification responsibilities:

- All newly enrolled students will need a physical/vision exam which was done within the last (six) 6 months of entering school. The school will also need to be provided the current immunization report that is compliant with the State of Nebraska guidelines. Copies of these documents will be made and the originals returned to the guardians at the time they are brought in. **All documents need to be turned in and approved by the health office prior to the student's first day of school.**
- Inform the school of PE or recess restrictions. If a student requires restricted PE or recess due to a health condition for more than (1) school day, then a healthcare provider note is required. If a student has a note limiting or restricting PE, this will include recess. If a student is out of school for five (5) consecutive days due to illness, a note from the student's health provider will need to be provided to the school's health office.
- Each school location has a First Responder Team and staff who are CPR/First Aid/AED certified, trained on Asthma & Anaphylaxis and Medication Administration to assist students. The schools are not staffed with full-time nurses. Basic first aid will be administered to students; if more

extensive care is needed, then the parent/guardian (or emergency contact) will be notified, or 911 will be contacted.

In addition to listed contagious diseases which may require a student to remain home listed in the handbook, Gering Public Schools policy includes:

1. **Elevated Body Temperature:** A student with temperature over 100 degrees shall be sent home from school. The student can return to school once fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (Tylenol, Ibuprofen, etc.). A fever is defined as 100-degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8-degrees Celsius. Or student may return with documented physician approval.
2. **Hepatitis B and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS):** Determination of the school attendance status of a student with Hepatitis B or HIV/AIDS will be on a case by case basis.
3. **Missed school days from illness:** If a student is absent for five consecutive school days due to illness, then doctor note is required to allow for his/her return to school.
4. **Nausea and/or Vomiting:** If student has nausea and/or vomiting, then remaining out of school for 24-hours is strongly recommended.
5. **MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus):** May return with documented physician approval.

\*Any student who becomes ill or injured during the school day will report to the school nurse. An ill or injured student may not leave school until permission of the parent, or the person designated by the parent, has been received. Ill or injured students are not to leave the building without the knowledge of the health office staff and without signing out properly in the office. The Health Office is to be used for the purpose of receiving First Aid treatment for injuries or illness.

### **Birth Certificate Requirements**

State law requires that a certified copy of a student's birth certificate be provided within 30 days of enrollment of a student in school for the first time. You may obtain a certified copy from the Bureau of Vital Statistics in the state in which your child was born. Assistance in obtaining birth certificates may be obtained from Health Records Managements, P.O.Box 95065, Lincoln, NE 68509-5065. There is a fee per certificate.

Please note: The document parents receive from the hospital looks like a birth certificate, but it is not a certified copy. A certified copy has the raised seal of the state of Nebraska on it and is signed by the director of vital statistics.

If a birth certificate is unavailable, other reliable proof of a student's identity may be used. These documents would include naturalization or immigration documents showing date of birth or official hospital birth records, a passport, or a translation of a birth certificate from another country. The documents must be accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate.

### **High Ability Learning (HAL)**

Pursuant to Nebraska Department of Education Rule 3 Regulations, Gering Public Schools identifies learners of high ability and seeks to address their unique needs through a variety of instructional methods. The Gering Public Schools HAL identification matrix incorporates criteria including nationalized achievement test scores to identify students above the 90th percentile district-wide.

### **Admission**

A pupil must be five (5) years of age on or before July 31 to be enrolled in Kindergarten. All students entering the Gering Public Schools for the first time must present a valid birth certificate and a complete

record of immunizations in addition to a physical examination requirement specified in the Nebraska Statute 79-214. In addition, a visual evaluation by a physician, a physician assistant, an advanced practice registered nurse, or an optometrist within six months prior to entering Nebraska schools for the first time.

All students are required to have the following: 3 doses of DtaP, DTP, DT, one given on or after the 4th birthday; 3 doses of Polio vaccine; 3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine; 2 doses of MMR or MMRV vaccine, given on or after 12 months of age and separated by at least one month; and 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age.

Written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian, or health care provider will be accepted. If the child has had varicella disease, he or she does not need any varicella shots.

008.02 From July 1, 1994, and thereafter, each student shall be protected prior to enrollment against the diseases listed, except as follows:

008-02A Immunization shall not be required for a student's enrollment in any school in this state if he or she submits to the admitting official either of the following:

008.02A1 A statement (attachment 3, Refusal of Immunization for Medical Reasons, which is incorporated herein by this reference) signed by a physician licensed under the Uniform Licensing Law stating that, in the physicians' opinion, the immunizations required would be injurious to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's family or household; or

008.02A2 An affidavit (attachment 4, Refusal of Immunization for Religious Reasons, which is incorporated herein by this reference) signed by the student or, if he or she is a minor, by a legally authorized representative of the student, stating that the immunization conflicts with the tenets and practice of a recognized religious denomination of which the student is an adherent or member or that immunization conflicts with the personal and sincerely followed religious beliefs of the student.

### ***Student Fees***

The board of Education of Gering Public Schools has adopted a student fees policy in accordance with the Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act.

The District's general policy is to provide for the free instruction in school in accordance with the Nebraska Constitution. This generally means that the District's Policy is to provide free instruction which is required by state law or regulation and to provide the staff, facility, equipment, and materials necessary for such instruction, without charge or fee to the students.

Fees will be collected in specific classes pursuant to Nebraska state law. Students will pay for materials used in class projects that become the student's personal property.

## DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

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### ***Drug Free Schools***

The District implements regulations and practices that will ensure compliance with the Federal Drug Free Schools and Communities Act and all regulations and rules promulgated pursuant thereto. The District's safe and drug free schools program is established in accordance with principles of effectiveness as required by law to respond to such harmful effects.

### ***Comprehensive Substance Abuse Policy***

#### PHILOSOPHY

All students have the right to attend school in a drug free environment conducive to good learning. The use of illicit drugs, alcohol, or other substances is not only illegal; but it interferes with both effective learning and the healthy development of young people.

The educational system has a fundamental and ethical obligation to prevent drug abuse and maintain a drug free and safe educational environment, not only throughout the schools, but also in all school related activities.

#### USE/POSSESSION OF HEALTH ENDANGERING SUBSTANCES

Pursuant to its statutory authority to adopt policies, rules and regulations necessary to protect the government and health of students in the School District, the Board of Education of the Gering Public Schools has determined that the possession or use by students of tobacco or tobacco products, vapor products (including e-cigarettes), alcohol, narcotics, or other dangerous and/or illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia shall be prohibited.

- A. During the school day
- B. On school grounds
- C. By a participant in school activities
- D. As a spectator at school activities involving Gering participants
- E. Off school grounds, if there is a substantial interference with school purposes

Students who possess or use tobacco or tobacco products, vapor products (including e-cigarettes) alcohol or narcotics, or other dangerous drugs or drug paraphernalia, except as directed by a physician during the school day, on school grounds or while participating in or attending school activities, shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions, including but not limited to expulsion or suspension.

Enforcement of disciplinary sanctions shall be in accordance with the procedures established by the Gering Public Schools' Comprehensive Substance Abuse Policy and Guidelines for Students Participating in Extracurricular Activities.

### ***Disciplinary Procedures and Actions***

Any student charged with having violated school rules or Nebraska State laws relating to possession, use, or sale of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, mood-altering drugs, controlled substances, or any drug "look-alike" substance, on school premises, at school sponsored/sanctioned activities, or when being transported in vehicles dispatched by the school district, shall be immediately notified (along with the student's parents) of the charge, given a full written statement of the charge and accompanying

suspension, and advised of his/her rights to a review of the validity of the charge in the form of a hearing before the school's Board of Education within a reasonable time. In order to insure the student's right to due process, the procedural requirements of Nebraska State Law. Student Suspension or Expulsion Act sections 79-4170 to 79-4205 shall be followed. Those students found to have violated school rules or Nebraska State laws shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions and procedures under the direction of the school principal or the school's site administrative staff, as determined by the number of prior offenses by the student.

**A. Procedures for Dealing with Students Under the Influence of Alcohol, Drugs or Other Harmful Substances Other than Tobacco**

1. Any Staff member who believes that a student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs will notify a principal or designee immediately.
2. The principal or designee will take the necessary disciplinary actions as outlined in the following section (Section B).

**B. Disciplinary Actions for Students Under the Influence of Alcohol, Drugs or Other Harmful Substance Other Than Tobacco**

1. First Offense
  - a. A meeting is held with student and parents.
  - b. The student is given a five (5) day out of school suspension, but shall be offered the option of in school suspension if he/she agrees to have immediate testing for drugs/alcohol in the body and to seek diagnostic evaluation for substance abuse if the tests are positive.

The student must follow those recommendations made by a resource specialist for substance use/abuse or related problems. If the student fails to follow treatment recommendations he/she shall be required to complete the remainder of the five-day out of school suspension. (The School District will provide a list of qualified specialists).
  - c. A recommendation for a long-term suspension or expulsion will be considered, depending upon the severity of the case.
  - d. In an emergency case necessitating immediate health care services, the above procedures shall be put in place as soon as the student is physically and mentally functional.
2. Second Offense (occurring within three years of the first offense).
  - a. A conference will be held with the parents as soon as possible. Immediate drug/alcohol testing will take place.
  - b. Upon confirmation of a positive drug/alcohol test, the student will automatically be suspended ten (10) days.
  - c. Parents will be provided with information on qualified substance abuse treatment resources.
  - d. The student will be required to undergo assessment by a qualified substance abuse specialist and submit proof of an assessment by that specialist before being allowed to return to school. The student must agree to fulfill those recommendations made by the substance abuse specialist.
  - e. Failure to comply with the above will result in long term suspension or expulsion hearings being initiated against the student.
3. Third Offense (occurring within three years of the first offense).
  - a. The student will be suspended pending expulsion proceedings which will be initiated according to the School district's expulsion policy.

**C. Procedures for Dealing with Students in Possession**

Students who possess alcohol, narcotics, other drugs, drug “look-alikes”, or drug paraphernalia on school property or at school sponsored/sanctioned activities will be handled in the following manner:

1. Any staff member who comes in contact with evidence and/or contraband will notify a principal or a designee immediately.
2. Any staff member who has reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in possession of alcohol, narcotics, other drugs, drug “look-alikes”, or drug paraphernalia will notify a principal or designee immediately.
3. The principal or designee may call the local police department and request assistance in conducting a search for any illegal substances. All substances (contraband) found in the search will be given to the police department for analysis to determine if it is an illegal substance.
4. Upon notification by the appropriate agency for law enforcement that the contraband contains narcotics or other dangerous drugs, or if the possession of alcohol is involved, the principal or designee will take the necessary disciplinary action as outlined in Section **E**.

**D. Disciplinary Actions for Students in Possession**

Discipline is the same as outlined in the Disciplinary Actions for Students Under the influence of Alcohol, Drugs or Other Than Tobacco in Section B of Comprehensive Substance Abuse Policy.

**E. Procedures for Dealing with Students Engaged in Selling, Giving or Exchanging**

Students who are engaged in selling, giving or exchanging alcohol, narcotics, other drugs, drug “look-alikes”, or drug paraphernalia on school property or at school sponsored/sanctioned activities will be handled in the following manner:

1. If an employee is witness to any act in which alcohol, narcotics, other drugs, drug “look-alikes”, or drug paraphernalia is transferred from one person to another, the employee will immediately attempt to detain the student(s) involved and request that they accompany him to a principal or designee. If the student refuses, the employee will notify a principal or designee immediately.
2. The principal or designee will attempt to obtain evidence by directly requesting it from the student or through search procedures outlined in the Section titled- “Searches”.
3. Follow the same procedure for handling evidence and/or contraband as outlined above in Section **C**.

**F. Disciplinary Actions for Students Selling, Giving or Exchanging**

Any student found to be in violation of school rules or Nebraska State laws by selling, giving, or exchanging any substance stated herein, shall be immediately notified (along with the parents) of the charge, and shall otherwise be entitled to the same right to a hearing according to School District policy.

1. First Offense
  - a. Student is given a **TEN** (10) day suspension.
  - b. The principal or designee will conduct a conference with parents and/or police representatives.
  - c. A recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion will be considered, depending upon the severity of the case.
  - d. The school administration will cooperate fully with local law enforcement agencies when investigations and searches, related to drug offenses, are in progress.
2. Second Offense

- a. The student will be suspended, pending a long-term suspension or expulsion proceeding, which will be initiated according to the School District's expulsion policy.

**G. Procedures for Dealing with Students in Possession of Tobacco Products**

- 1. First Offense and Second Offense
  - a. Student will be given a written warning.
  - b. Parents will be contacted and receive a copy of the written warning given to the student.
- 2. Third and Subsequent Offense(s)
  - a. The student will be suspended from school for three (3) days or must successfully complete a smoking cessation class/rehabilitative program.
  - b. The principal or designee will conduct a conference with the student and parent.

## STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

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### ***High School Activities***

Elementary students are welcome at all high school sporting events. There are, however, no elementary student sections at these activities. Students are to sit in the stands with an adult. Students are not to be dropped off at an event without adult supervision. If a student attends an event and is running around without supervision, the parent will be contacted and an adult will need to pick him/her up. Students may also have activity passes taken away for the rest of the year if it is warranted.

### ***Conduct and Discipline***

Students in the Gering Elementary Schools are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner as to reflect credit to the school system and their families. Failure to do so will result in corrective action by school officials.

The Gering School officials feel that a child should, at all times, show proper respect for school property, personnel and fellow students. The majority of students show this respect, but to ensure that all students comply, it is necessary to have certain rules and regulations.

Each elementary school and classroom teacher will specify to students reasonable rules and regulations which will apply in the classroom, lunchroom, halls and on the playground. Compliance with these regulations is required and will enhance the education of all students.

The administrative Regulations of the Gering Public School District outlines the procedures to be followed in cases where disciplinary action is a necessity. These regulations are approved by the Board of Education and govern action in all the elementary schools.

### ***Administrative Regulations***

#### ***STUDENT DISCIPLINE***

The primary objective of the public schools is the education of children and youth. It is recognized that this objective can be best realized with students who are happy, well-adjusted, law-abiding and healthy young citizens. Unfortunately, not all children and youth are socially adjusted to the extent that they conform to the recognized standards of good conduct. It is sometimes necessary for the schools to take disciplinary action, not only for the sake of the individuals who do not obey the laws and regulations of society generally, the schools particularly, but for the sake of their conduct on or in close proximity to the school grounds, on the playground and during an intermission, recess, field trips and all other school sponsored activities.

In the maintenance of a sound learning environment, the District shall expect acceptable behavior on the part of all students who attend school in the district. Discipline shall be enforced daily and consistently, regardless of race, creed, sex, color, age or national origin. Such discipline shall be consistent with applicable federal and state laws.

The overall responsibility for discipline and the welfare of the student is assumed by the principal. The principal will handle extreme behavioral cases.

The imposition of serious discipline on any student, including but not limited to suspension from interscholastic activities, suspension from school, and expulsion shall be governed by the provision of the Disciplinary Procedures for Students in the Gering Public School District as adopted by the Board of Education.

The primary responsibility for discipline in the classroom rests with the teacher. The teacher shall use reasonable and professional judgment in controlling and maintaining order and in administering prudent disciplinary measures.

### ***Discipline Policy***

1. **Short-Term Suspension:** Students may be excluded by the Principal or the Principal's designee from school or any school function for a period of up to five school days (short-term suspension) on the following grounds:

- a. Conduct that constitutes grounds for expulsion, whether the conduct occurs on or off school grounds; or, other violations of rules and standards of behavior adopted by the Gering Public Schools Board of Education or the administrative or teaching staff of the school, which occur on or off school grounds, if such conduct interferes with school purposes or there is a nexus between such conduct and school.

The following process will apply to short-term suspensions:

1. The Principal or Principal's designee will make a reasonable investigation of the facts and circumstances. A short-term suspension will be made upon a determination that the suspension is necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference with school purposes.
2. Prior to commencement of the short-term suspension, the student will be given oral or written notice of the charges against the student. The student will be advised of what the student is accused of having done, an explanation of the evidence the authorities have, and be afforded an opportunity to explain the student's version of the facts.
3. Within 24 hours or such additional time as is reasonably necessary following the suspension, the Principal or administrator will send a written statement to the student and the student's parents or guardian describing the student's conduct, misconduct or violation of the rule or standard and the reasons for the action taken.
4. An opportunity will be given to the student and the student's parent or guardian to have a conference with the Principal or administrator ordering the short-term suspension before or at the time the student returns to school. The Principal or administrator shall determine who in addition to the parent or guardian is to attend the conference.

A student on a short-term suspension shall not be permitted to be on school grounds without the express permission of the Principal.

2. **Long-Term Suspension:** A long-term suspension means an exclusion from school and any school functions for a period of more than five school days but less than twenty school days. A student who is on a long-term suspension shall not be permitted to be on school grounds without the express permission of the Principal. A notice will be given to the student and the parents/guardian when the Principal recommends a long-term suspension. The procedures will be those set forth in the Student Discipline Act.

- 3. Expulsion:** Expulsion means exclusion from attendance in all schools, grounds and activities of or within the system for a period not to exceed the remainder of the semester in which it took effect unless (a) the misconduct occurred within ten school days prior to the semester, or (b) the misconduct occurred within ten school days prior to the end of the second semester, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect for summer school and the first semester of the following school year, or (c) the expulsion is for conduct specified in these rules or in law as permitting or requiring a longer removal, in which case the expulsion shall remain in effect for the period specified therein. Such action may be modified or terminated by the school district at any time during the expulsion period.

**Suspensions Pending Hearing.** When a notice of intent to discipline a student by long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment is filed with the Superintendent, the student may be suspended by the principal until the date the long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment takes effect if no hearing is requested or, if a hearing is requested, the date the hearing examiner makes the report of his or her findings and a recommendation of the action to be taken to the Superintendent. The suspension pending hearing may be imposed if the principal determines that the student must be suspended immediately to prevent or substantially reduce the risk of (a) interference with an educational function or school purpose or (b) a personal injury to the student himself or herself, or students, school employees, or school volunteers.

**Summer Review:** Any expulsion that will remain in effect during the first semester of the following school year will be automatically scheduled for review before the beginning of the school year in accordance with law.

**Alternative Education:** Students who are expelled may be provided an alternative education program that will enable the student to continue academic work for credit toward graduation. In the event an alternative education program is not provided, a conference will be held with the parent, student, the Principal or another school representative assigned by the Principal, and a representative of a community organization that assists young people or that is involved with juvenile justice to develop a plan for the student in accordance with law.

**Suspension of Enforcement of an Expulsion:** Enforcement of an expulsion action may be suspended (i.e., “stayed”) for a period of not more than one full semester in addition to the balance of the semester in which the expulsion takes effect. As a condition of such suspended action, the student and parents will be required to sign a discipline agreement.

**Students Subject to Juvenile or Court Probation:** Prior to the readmission of school of any student who is under 19 years of age and who is subject to the supervision of a juvenile probation officer or an adult probation office pursuant to a court order Court, who chooses to meet conditions of probation by attending school, and who has previously been expelled from school, the Principal or the Principal’s designee shall meet with the student’s probation officer and assist in developing conditions of probation that will provide specific guidelines for behavior and consequences for misbehavior at school (including conduct on school grounds and conduct during an educational function or event off school grounds) as well as educational objectives that must be achieved. If the guidelines, consequences, and objectives provided by the Principal or the Principal’s designee are agreed to by the probation officer and the student, and the court permits the student to return to school under the agreed to conditions, the student may be permitted to return to school.

The student may with proper consent, upon such return, be evaluated by the school for possible disabilities and may be referred for evaluation for possible placement in a special education

program. The student may be expelled or otherwise disciplined for subsequent conduct as provided in Board policy and state statute.

4. **Other Forms of Student Discipline:** Administrative and teacher personnel may take actions regarding student behavior, other than removal of students from school, which are reasonably necessary to aid the student, further school purposes, or prevent interference with the educational process. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, counseling of students; parent conferences; rearrangement of schedules; requiring that a student remain in school after regular hours to do additional work; restriction of extracurricular activity; or requirements that a student receive counseling, psychological evaluation, or psychiatric evaluation upon the written consent of a parent or guardian to such counseling or evaluation. The actions may also include in-school suspensions. When in-school suspensions, after-school assignments, or other disciplinary measures are assigned, the student is responsible for complying with such disciplinary measures. A failure to serve such assigned discipline as directed will serve as grounds for further discipline, up to expulsion from school.

#### **Section 4 Student Conduct Expectations**

Students are not to engage in conduct which causes or which creates a reasonable likelihood that it will cause a substantial disruption in or material interference with any school function, activity or purpose or interfere with the health, safety, well-being or rights of other students, staff or visitors.

1. **Grounds for Short-Term Suspension, Long-Term suspension, Expulsion or Mandatory Reassignment**

The following conduct has been determined by the Board of Education to have the potential to seriously affect the health, safety or welfare of students, staff and other persons or to otherwise seriously interfere with the educational process. Such conduct constitutes grounds for long-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment, and any other lesser forms of discipline. The conduct is subject to the consequence of longer-term suspension, expulsion, or mandatory reassignment where it occurs on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by the school and being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or an employee's designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event.

- a. Willfully disobeying any reasonable written or oral request of a school staff member or the voicing of disrespect to those in authority.
- b. Use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation, harassment, or similar conduct in a manner that constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes or making any communication that a reasonable recipient would interpret as a serious expression of an intent to harm or cause injury to another.
- c. Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to property, stealing or attempting to steal property of substantial value, repeated damage or theft involving property, or setting or attempting to set fire of any magnitude;
- d. Causing or attempting to cause personal injury to any person, including any school employee, school volunteer, or student. Personal injury caused by accident, self-defense, or other action undertaken on the reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect some other person shall not constitute a violation of this subdivision;
- e. Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of or with the intent of obtaining money or anything of value from such student or making a threat which causes or may be expected to cause a disruption to school operations;

- f. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon or that has the appearance of a weapon or bringing or possessing any explosive devices, including fireworks;
- g. Selling, using, possessing or dispensing of alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, drugs, controlled substance, or an inhalant; being under the influence of any of the above; possession of drug paraphernalia, or the selling, using, possessing, or dispensing of an imitation controlled substance as defined in section 28-401 of the Nebraska statutes, or material represented to be alcohol, narcotics, drugs, a controlled substance or inhalant. Use of a controlled substance in the manner prescribed for the student by the student's physician is not a violation. The term "under the influence" has a less strict meaning than it does under criminal law; for school purposes, the term means any level of impairment and includes even the odor of alcohol or illegal substances on the breath or person of a student; also, it includes being impaired by reason of the abuse of any material used as a stimulant.
- h. Public indecency or sexual conduct.
- i. Engaging in bullying, which includes any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or a school employee's designee, or at school-sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events;
- j. Sexually assaulting or attempting to sexually assault any person. This conduct may result in an expulsion regardless of the time or location of the offense if a complaint alleging such conduct is filed in a court of competent jurisdiction;
- k. Engaging in any activity forbidden by law which constitutes a danger to other students or interferes with school purposes. This conduct may result in an expulsion regardless of the time or location of the offense if the conduct creates or had the potential to create a substantial interference with school purposes, such as the use of the telephone or internet off-school grounds to threaten; or
- l. Violation of any rules established by the school district or school officials if such violations constitute a substantial interference with school purposes;
- m. Truancy or failure to attend assigned classes or assigned activities; or tardiness to school, assigned classes or assigned activities;
- n. The use of language, written or oral, or conduct, including gestures, which is profane or abusive to students or staff members. Profane or abusive language or conduct includes, but is not limited to, that which is commonly understood and intended to be derogatory toward a group or individual based upon race, gender, disability, national origin, or religion;
- o. Dressing or grooming in a manner which is dangerous to the student's health and safety or a danger to the health and safety of others or repeated violations of the student dress and grooming standards; dressing, grooming, or engaging in speech that is lewd or indecent, vulgar or plainly offensive; dressing, grooming, or engaging in speech that school officials reasonably conclude will materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school; dressing, grooming or engaging in speech that a reasonable observer would interpret as advocating illegal drug use.
- p. Willfully violating the behavioral expectations for those students riding Gering Public Schools buses.

**A student who engages in the following conduct shall be expelled for the remainder of the school year in which it took effect if the misconduct occurs during the first semester, and if the expulsion for such conduct takes place during the second semester, the expulsion shall remain in effect for the first semester of the following school year, with the condition that such action may be modified or terminated by the school district during the expulsion period on such terms as the administration may establish:**

- a. The knowing and intentional use of force in causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, school volunteer, or student, except if caused by accident, self-defense, or on the reasonable belief that the force used was necessary to protect some other person and the extent of force used was reasonably believed to be necessary, or
- b. The knowing and intentional possession, use or transmission of a dangerous weapon other than a firearm.
- c. Knowingly and intentionally possessing, using, or transmitting a firearm on school grounds, in a school-owned or utilized vehicle, or during an educational function or event off school grounds, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event. This conduct shall result in an expulsion for one calendar year. "Firearm" means a firearm as defined in 18 U.S.C. 921, as that statute existed on January 1, 1995. That statute includes the following statement: "The term 'firearm' means (a) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (b) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (c) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (d) any destructive device." The Superintendent may modify such one year expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis, provided that such modification is in writing.
- d. Bringing a firearm or other dangerous weapon to school for any reason is discouraged; however, a student will not be subject to disciplinary action if the item is brought or possessed under the following conditions:
  - i. Prior written permission to bring the firearm or other dangerous weapon to school is obtained from the student's teacher, building administrator and parent.
  - ii. The purpose of having the firearm or other dangerous weapon in school is for a legitimate educational function.
  - iii. A plan for its transportation into and from the school, its storage while in the school building and how it will be displaced must be developed with the prior written approval by the teacher and building administrator. Such a plan shall require that such item will be in the possession of an adult staff member at all times except for such limited time as is necessary to fulfill the educational function.
  - iv. The firearm or other dangerous weapon shall be in an inoperable condition while it is on school grounds.

## **2. Additional Student Conduct Expectations and Grounds for Discipline**

The following additional student conduct expectations are established. Failure to comply with such rules is grounds for disciplinary action. When such conduct occurs on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose or in a vehicle being driven for a school purpose by a school employee or by his or her designee, or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event, the conduct is grounds for long-term suspension, expulsion or mandatory reassignment.

## ***Restorative Practice Policy***

Our school district supports proactive and reactive evidence-based initiatives to manage student misbehavior. Restorative Practices are grounded in principles and values that: are needs based, hold students accountable, are focused on repairing harms, and support meaningful outcomes. Restorative Practices will be integrated within existing discipline measures and utilized as deemed appropriate.

### **Restorative Practice Process:**

Restorative Practices reflect the philosophy that when a misdeed occurs within a school, it affects those harmed, those causing the harm, and the wider school community. The goal of Restorative Practices is to address conflict using open and respectful dialogue that focuses on the harm caused strategies to repair this harm and the relationships of those involved. Restorative Practices can include group conferencing, peer mediation, victim-offender mediation, or classroom peace circles, and can be formal or informal. These processes may be handled by district personnel, school resource officers, or others that support the district such as, contractors, ESUs, volunteers, and those serving through Nebraska Supreme Court-approved mediation centers. In a Restorative Practice Conference, students and parents/guardians agree to the following:

- **CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION:** The goal of restorative practice is to foster new understanding through dialogue that results in a mutually-agreed resolution to the issues at hand. Students and parents agree to speak honestly and to listen respectfully without interruptions. The mediator/facilitator's role is to manage communication and help the parties work to discover solutions that meet the needs and interests of all parties to the fullest extent possible. The mediator/facilitator will not make judgements, give legal advice, or present parties with solutions to their problems.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVILEGED, AND VOLUNTARY COMMUNICATIONS:** Pursuant to Neb. Rev. §§43-247.03, parties agree not to record or create transcripts of sessions and acknowledge they are responsible to maintain confidentiality and agree that communications during preparation, process, and follow up will not be shared with others, excepting:
  - Agreements reached in the restorative process.
  - When written permission by all participants is given.
  - When statements regarding unreported allegations of child abuse or neglect or threats to harm self or another are revealed.
  - When process information must be shared with funding or referring agencies, such as Diversion, Probation, County Attorneys, or Courts.
- **AGREEMENTS:** No agreement can be forced upon any party. Parties agree to take responsibility for carrying out any agreements made during the restorative process.
- **PROGRAM EVALUATION:** Participants may be asked to take part in evaluations of the process to comply with reporting requirements.

### ***Student Appearance***

Students at Gering Public Schools are expected to dress in a way that is appropriate for a school setting. Students should not dress in a manner that is dangerous to the health and safety of anyone or interferes with the learning environment or teaching process in our school. **The following is a list of examples of attire that will not be considered appropriate; this list is not inclusive of all items which may be excluded:**

- Clothing or jewelry that is gang related;
- Clothing that shows an inappropriate amount of bare skin or underwear (Midriffs, spaghetti straps, sagging pants);
- Clothing or jewelry that advertises beer, alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs;
- Clothing or jewelry that could be used as a weapon (chain, spiked apparel) or that would encourage “horse-play”;
- Head wear including hats, caps, bandannas, and scarves;
- Clothing or jewelry that exhibits nudity, makes sexual references or carries double meanings.

Parents are asked to use discretion when advising their students in the use of makeup, artificial fingernails, or other cosmetic accessories. Makeup can distract from learning, create peer pressure around appearance, and is developmentally inappropriate for elementary-aged children. Artificial fingernails can inhibit student success with typical academic tasks.

### **No Aerosol Products Policy**

To help keep all students safe and healthy, aerosol products are not allowed at school. Some students and staff have allergies, asthma, or sensitivities that can be triggered by aerosol sprays.

Please do not bring or use items such as:

- Spray deodorant
- Perfume or body spray
- Hair spray
- Spray sunscreen
- Any other aerosol can products

Families are encouraged to send non-aerosol alternatives as necessary.

### **Harassment and Bullying**

One of the missions of Gering Public Schools is to provide safe and secure environments for all students and staff. Positive behaviors (non-violence, cooperation, teamwork, understanding, and acceptance of others) are encouraged in the educational program and required of all students and staff. Inappropriate behaviors (bullying, intimidation and harassment are to be identified and corrected. Students and staff are to avoid such behaviors. Strategies and practices are implemented to reinforce positive behaviors and to discourage and protect others from inappropriate behaviors.

“**Bullying**” is behavior in which one person or group engages in harmful action towards another person or group acting on a real or perceived imbalance of power or view of superiority over a period of time. The behavior typically includes verbal (e.g. teasing or name-calling) and physical aggression (e.g., hitting, pushing), threatening, excluding or ignoring, spreading rumors, or taking, defacing or destroying the others’ property. “Harassment” includes the same actions, though not necessarily from a standpoint of perceived power. Harassment is prohibited. Bullying/harassment is a violation of student conduct rules, and appropriate disciplinary measures, up to expulsion, will be enforced. When bullying or harassment is done on the basis of gender, disability, race or other protected status, it is considered a very serious offense for which expulsion may be a likely consequence depending on the severity of the conduct.

Students who are the victim of bullying or harassment or who observe such occurrences are to promptly report the problem to their teacher or to the Principal so the problem can be addressed. Students who make reports of bullying activity will not be retaliated against for making the report.

### ***Elementary In-District Option Procedure***

Gering Public Schools is happy to provide families with the opportunity to option between our three exceptional elementary locations: Geil, Northfield, and Lincoln. When families choose to explore their options for elementary enrollment, they should first report to their zoned elementary school and complete an in-district option request form. Once the form is completed, it will be shared between the principal of the zoned elementary, the principal of the requested elementary, and the district director of student services. Within a reasonable window of time, the district will communicate final placement decisions with the requesting family.

### ***Transportation***

For the 2026-2027 school year Gering Public Schools offers busing services within each zoned boundary. Families who choose to enroll in an elementary school other than their zoned school will not be able to participate in the busing program. In situations where a student is sent to another school within the district outside of the family's zone due to classrooms already being at student capacity for the student's grade, busing may still be provided.

The privilege of riding a school bus is contingent upon a student's good behavior and observance of established regulations for student conduct both at bus stops and onboard buses. Since bus transportation is provided to assist the education program, the board shall require students to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. The driver of a school bus shall be responsible for the safety of the students on the bus, both during the ride and while students are entering or leaving the vehicle. Therefore, it is the bus driver's duty to notify the supervisor of transportation and they notify the principal of the school involved if any student persists in violating the established rules of conduct.

After due warning has been given to the student and to parents/guardians, the principal may withhold from the student the privilege of riding the school bus. In such cases, the parents of the children involved will be responsible for seeing that their children get to and from school safely. The student may also face detention, suspension or expulsion, in accordance with established policies, for flagrant violation of school bus rider conduct regulations or conduct detrimental to the safe operation of the bus.

Bus transportation is a privilege offered for free to the students by the school district. Abuse of this privilege may result in a student being denied bus transportation.

*See Application for Permission to Ride School Bus (distributed to all students who ride the bus)*

### ***Bus Etiquette***

1. Students must get on and off the bus at their designated bus stop **ONLY**. (This is the bus stop closest to their home address.) **The district does not transport students to and from daycare addresses.**
2. Bus stops are at the side of the road or street. At these bus stops, order must be maintained to protect the safety of all students. There is to be no snowball or rock throwing, abusive language or horseplay.

3. Do not push or crowd when loading or unloading. Outside of ordinary conversation, classroom conduct is to be observed by students.
4. **Students must remain seated while the bus is moving. If the bus is equipped with seat belts they must be worn while the bus is in motion.**
5. The driver is in full charge of the bus and students. Students are required to comply promptly, cheerfully and fully with his or her requests.
6. There must be “**ABSOLUTE SILENCE**” at all railroad crossings.
7. Aisles are to be kept clear of anything that might prove to be hazardous. (Band instruments, books, backpacks, etc.)
8. Do not put hands, arms, or head out of windows. No litter is to be thrown on the bus floor or from the bus. Students are not to yell at anyone in the bus or outside the bus.
9. The emergency door is for emergency exits only. **DO NOT OPEN IT!**
10. Horseplay, wrestling, abusive language, harassing or infringing on other students’ rights or safety **WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
11. When the students leave the bus, they should walk to a distance of approximately twelve feet in front of the bus before crossing the roadway. Do not hide, crawl under the bus to recover anything, or hold onto the bus. Do not cross behind the bus.
12. Always look both ways before crossing the street. Some drivers of cars ignore the bus signal, so be extremely careful with oncoming traffic.
13. Any damage to the bus is to be reported to the driver at once. **DO NOT** write on the seats or floor. Students will be held responsible for any damage they do to the bus.
14. **STUDENTS MUST BE AT THE BUS STOP ON TIME.** The bus **WILL NOT** wait for students who are tardy.
15. **NO FOOD OR DRINKS** are allowed on the bus (to avoid choking hazard) with the exception of **LONG DISTANCE** activity and field trips. Trash must be put into the trash containers. If you spill, clean it up! **ABSOLUTELY NO SUNFLOWER SEEDS OR GUM CHEWING.** If these rules are not obeyed, food and drink will be forbidden on the buses at all times.
16. **RESPONSIBLE USE OF ELECTRONICS.** Example: headphones, iPads, etc. Sound from electronic devices must be heard through ear buds or turned off. No photographs or videos while on the bus.
17. Students must abide by the rules posted in the bus.

**PENALTY:** Violations could be the cause of a student being suspended, temporarily or permanently from riding the school bus.

**PUPIL SAFETY INSTRUCTION:** During the school year, each pupil who is transported on a bus shall be instructed in safe riding practices and will be expected to participate in emergency drills.

**PARENTS:** We ask you to go over these regulations with your children so they have a safe trip to and from school.

### **FirstView**

FirstView® by First Student is the industry’s most comprehensive and secure bus tracking and parent communication app. FirstView® helps you better manage your time during the hectic before- and after school rush by putting your student’s up-to-the-minute bus information in your hands. Easy to download, set up and use, FirstView® is packed with helpful features to give you peace of mind, including estimated bus arrival time, opt-in district messaging regarding delays or issues, customizable alerts for when the bus is chosen distance or number of minutes away, secure password protection and built-in customer support.

## ***Acceptable Use Policy for Electronic Resources***

The use of electronic resources is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of your privilege. Students using electronic resources are required to follow District policy and procedures. The supervising staff member will determine what is appropriate use in accordance with the following guidelines, and may deny, revoke, or suspend your access.

1. The use of your account and/or access must be consistent with the educational objectives of the Gering Public Schools. Use of electronic resources for recreational games is prohibited.
2. To transmit or knowingly receive any materials in violation of any United States or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: copyrighted material, threatening, harassing, pornographic or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret.
3. Use for commercial activities is generally not acceptable. Use for product advertising or political lobbying is prohibited. Extensive use for personal and private business is also prohibited.
4. Abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Be polite. Do not be abusive in your messages to others. Hate mail, harassment, discriminatory remarks and other antisocial behaviors are prohibited.
  - b. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
  - c. Do not reveal your full name, phone number, or home address, or that of other students.
  - d. Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. Network storage areas will be treated as school property. Files and communications may be reviewed by District personnel. Material relating to, or in support of, illegal activities will be reported to the proper authorities.
  - e. The sending of "chain letters" is considered a misuse of the system and may result in the loss of the account.
  - f. *Talk, Write and Chat* commands may be intrusive and should only be used after receiving permission from the other party.
  - g. Permission of the supervising staff member must be obtained before "downloading" any files due to potential "virus" infection.
  - h. Be reasonable in the amount of time you use the system. Be considerate of other individuals using the system. Time limits may be imposed.
  - i. Classroom use will take precedence over independent use.
5. Respect the integrity of the computing system. Do not intentionally develop or activate programs that harass other users, infiltrate a computer system or alter the software components of a computer or computer system. These include, but are not limited to: viruses, forging email, hacking, and attempting to use administrative commands.
6. Do not vandalize by harming or destroying the data or hardware on this system or any other system.
7. Security of any computer system is essential. Access to electronic resources is intended for the exclusive use by authorized individuals. Any problems which arise from the use of an account are the responsibility of the account holder. This may include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Trespassing in another's work or files;
  - b. Giving out your password or the password of others;
  - c. Attempting to login to another individual's account;
  - d. Failure to notify the supervising staff member of a security problem.

8. The Gering Public Schools will periodically revise the *Acceptable Use Policy* and will make determinations on whether specific uses of the network are consistent with the intent of policy.
9. Indemnity - Gering Public Schools makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the Internet service . GPS will not be responsible for damages you suffer. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, miss-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence, errors, or omissions. GPS will not be responsible for any financial charges incurred by an account user or someone else using the account. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at your own risk. GPS specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.
10. Failure to follow this Acceptable Use Policy may result in suspension of account privileges as well as being subject to the school's discipline policies.

## **STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS**

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### ***Notice of Nondiscrimination***

The United States Department of Agriculture's required nondiscrimination statement must be printed as follows:

**The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants, for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender, identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)**

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9999 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form to letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

**USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**

**PLEASE NOTE: As stated above, all protected bases do not apply to all programs. *The first six protected bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability and sex are the six protected bases for applicants and recipients of the Child Nutrition Programs.***

School Food Authorities (SFAs) participation in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After School Snack Program or Special Milk Program must include this statement in full, on all program materials used for public information, public education or public distribution.

Nebraska SFAs must include the nondiscrimination statement in their student handbook in the section that addresses access to or information about the school meals program. It must also be included on the school's website if school meal information is available.

If the material is too small to permit the full statement to be included, the material will at a minimum include this statement in print no smaller than the text:

**USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**

The USDA “And Justice for All” poster must be displayed at each feeding site in a location that is visible to students during meal service.

**Designation of Coordinator(s)**

Any person having inquiries concerning this district’s compliance with anti-discrimination laws or policies or other programs should contact or notify the following person(s) who are designated as the coordinator for such laws, policies or programs. The contact address for the coordinator is: Gering Public Schools, 1519 10th Street, Gering, NE 69341, 308-436-3125.

Law, Policy or Program	Issue or concern	Coordinator
Title VI	Discrimination or harassment based on race, color, or national origin; harassment	Superintendent
Title IX	Discrimination or harassment based on sex; gender equity	Superintendent
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)	Discrimination, harassment or reasonable accommodations of persons with disabilities	Director of Student Services
Homeless student laws	Children who are homeless	Director of Student Services
Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities	Safe and drug free schools	Superintendent

**Notice to Parents of Rights Afforded by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973**

The following is a description of the rights granted by federal law to qualifying students with disabilities. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning the decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions. You have the right to:

1. Have your child take part in, and receive benefits from, public education programs without discrimination because of his/her disability.
2. Have the school district advise you of your rights under federal law.
3. Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation or placement of your child.
4. Have your child receive a free appropriate public education.
5. Have your child receive services and be educated in facilities that are comparable to those provided to every student.
6. Have evaluation, educational and placement decisions made based on a variety of information sources and by personnel who know the student and who are knowledgeable about the evaluation data and placement options.

7. Have transportation provided to and from an alternative placement setting (if the setting is a program not operated by the district) at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the district.
8. Have your child given an equal opportunity to participate in nonacademic and extracurricular activities offered by the district.
9. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation and placement.
10. Request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions or actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program or placement. (You and your child may take part in the hearing. Hearing requests are to be made to the Superintendent).
11. File a local grievance.

### ***Notification of Rights Under FERPA***

The Gering Public Schools will on occasion release routine directory information (84-712.05) to the general public which includes: "Student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degree and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information." The information released may be to military recruiters, newspapers, colleges & universities, athletic and activity programs, etc. Parents may have their student's name and information withheld from dissemination upon written request to the office of the principal.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask that school district to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her

tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the district discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

### ***Notice Concerning Directory Information***

This district may disclose directory information. The types of personally identifiable information that the district has designated as directory information are as follows: student's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date of and place of birth, major fields of study, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status (e.g. undergraduate or graduate, full-time or part-time), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and most recent previous educational agency or institution attended. A parent or eligible student has the right to refuse to let the district designate any or all of those types of information about the student as directory information. The period of time within which a parent or eligible student has to notify the district in writing that he or she does not want any or all of those types of information about the student designated as directory information is as follows: two weeks from the time this information is first received. The district may disclose information about former students without meeting the conditions in this section.

The district's policy is for education records to be kept confidential except as permitted by the FERPA law, and the district does not approve any practice, which involves an unauthorized disclosure of education records. In some courses student work may be displayed or made available to others. Also, some teachers may have persons other than the teacher or school staff, such as volunteers or fellow students, assist with the task of grading student work and returning graded work to students. The district does not either approve or disapprove such teaching practices, and designates such student work as directory information and as noneducation records. Each parent and eligible student shall be presumed to have accepted this designation in the absence of the parent or eligible student giving notification to the district in writing in the manner set forth above pertaining to the designation of directory information. Consent will be presumed to have been given in the absence of such a notification from the parent or eligible student.

Notice Concerning Designation of Law Enforcement Unit:

The District designates the Gering Police Department as the District's "law enforcement unit" for purposes of (1) enforcing any and all federal, state or local law, (2) maintaining the physical security and safety of the schools in the District, and (3) maintaining safe and drug free schools.

### ***Notice Concerning Staff Qualifications***

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives parents/guardians the right to get information about the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers. Upon request, Gering Public Schools will give parents/guardians the following information about their child's classroom teacher:

1. Whether the teacher has met State qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.

2. Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency or provisional teaching certificate.
3. The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher. You may also get information about other graduate certification or degrees held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree. We will also, upon request, tell parents/guardians whether their child is being provided services by a paraprofessional and, if so, the qualifications of the paraprofessional. The request for information should be made to an administrator in your child's school building. The information will be provided to you in a timely manner. Finally, Gering Public Schools will give timely notice to you if your child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet the requirements of the Act.

### ***Student Privacy Protection***

Gering Public Schools protects the privacy of students in accordance with applicable laws which include the following:

#### Right of Parents to Inspect Surveys Funded or Administered by the United States Department of Education or Third Parties:

Parents shall have the right to inspect, upon the parent's request, a survey created by and administered by either the United States Department of Education or a third party (a group or person other than the District) before the survey is administered or distributed by the school to the parent's child.

Protection of Student Privacy in Regard to Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive: The District will require, for any survey of students which contain one or more matters deemed to be sensitive (see section headed "Definition of Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive"), that suitable arrangements be made to protect student privacy (that is, the name or other identifying information about a particular student). For such surveys, the District will also follow the procedures set forth in the section entitled: "Notification of an Right to Opt-Out of Specific Events."

Right of Parents to Inspect Instructional Materials: Parents shall have the right to inspect, upon reasonable request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for their child. Reasonable requests for inspection of instructional materials shall be granted within a reasonable period of time after the request is received. Parents shall not have the right to access academic tests or academic assessments, as such are not within the meaning of the term "instructional materials" for purposes of this policy. The procedures for making and granting a request to inspect instructional materials are as follows: the parent shall make the request, with reasonable specificity, directly to the building principal. The building principal, within five (5) school days, shall consult with the teacher or other educator responsible for the curriculum materials.

In the event that the request can be accommodated, the building principal shall make the materials available for inspection or review by the parent, at such reasonable time and place as will not interfere with the educator's intended use of the materials.

In the event there is a question as to the nature of the curriculum materials request or as to whether the materials are required to be provided, the building principal shall notify the parent of such concern, and assist the parent with forming a request which can reasonably be accommodated. If the parent does not formulate such a request, and continues to desire certain curriculum materials, the parent shall be asked to make their request to the Superintendent.

Rights of Parents to be Notified of and to Opt-Out of Certain Physical Examinations or Screenings. The general policy and practice of the District is to not administer physical examinations or screenings of students which require advance notice or parental opt-opt rights under the applicable federal laws, for the reason that the physical examinations or screenings to be conducted by the District will usually fit into one of the following exceptions:

(1) hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings; (2) physical examinations or screenings that are permitted or required by an applicable State law; and (3) surveys administered to students in accordance with the individuals with Disabilities Education Act. For physical examinations or screenings which do not fit into the applicable exceptions, the District will follow the procedures set forth in the section entitled: "Notification of an Right to Opt-Out of Specific Events."

Protection of Student Privacy in Regard to Personal Information Collected from Students: The practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information. The District will make reasonable arrangements to protect student ;privacy to the extent possible in the event of any such collection, disclosure, or use of personal information. "Personal information" means individually identifiable information about a student including: (1) a student or parent's first and last name, (2) home address, (3) telephone number, and (4) social security number. The term "personal information," does not include information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.

This exception includes the following examples: (i) college or postsecondary education recruitment, or military recruitment; (ii) book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low-cost literary products; (iii) curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary schools and secondary schools; (iv) tests and assessments used by elementary schools and secondary schools to provide cognitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about student, or to generate other statistically useful data for the purpose of securing such tests and assessments, and the subsequent analysis and public release of the aggregate date from such tests and assessments; (v) the sale by student of products or services to raise funds for school-related or education-related activities; (vi) student recognition programs.

Parental Access to Instruments use in the Collection of Personal Information: While the general practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information, parents shall have the right to inspect, upon reasonable request, any instrument which may be administered or distributed to a student for such purposes. Reasonable requests for inspection shall be granted within a reasonable period of time after the request is received. The procedures for making and granting such a request are as follows: the parent shall make the request, with reasonable specificity, directly to the building principal and shall identify the specific act and the students for the purpose of marketing that information.

The building principal, within five (5) school days, shall consult with the school staff member or person responsible for the program which has been reported by the parent to be responsible for the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information is occurring or there is a plan for such to occur, the building principal shall consult with the Superintendent for determination of whether the action shall be allowed to continue. If not, the instrument for the collection of personal information shall not be given to any students. If it is to be allowed, such instrument shall be provided to the requesting parent as soon as such instrument can be reasonably obtained.

Annual Parental Notification of Student Privacy Protection: The District shall provide parents with reasonable notice of the adoption or continued use of student privacy. Such notice shall be given to parents of students enrolled in the District at least annually, at the beginning of the school year, and within a reasonable period of time after any substantive change in such policies.

Notification to Parents of Dates of and Right to Opt-Out of Specific Events: The District shall directly notify the parents of the affected children, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when any of the following activities are scheduled, or are expected to be scheduled:

The collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information. (Note: the general practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information.)

Surveys of students involving one or more matters deemed to be sensitive in accordance with the law and this policy; and,

Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance; administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student or of other students. (Note: the general practice of the District is to not engage in physical examinations or screenings which require advance notice, for the reason that the physical examinations or screenings to be conducted by the District will usually fit into one of the following exceptions to the advance notice requirement and parental opt-out right: (1) hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings; (2) physical examinations or screenings that are permitted or required by an applicable State law, and (3) surveys administered to students in accordance with the individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

Parents shall be offered an opportunity in advance to opt their child out of participation in any of the above listed activities.

In the case of a student of an appropriate age (that is, a student who has reached the age of 18, or a legally emancipated student), the notice and opt-out right shall belong to the student.

Definition of Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive: Any survey containing one or more of the following matters shall be deemed to be "sensitive" for purposes of this policy:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's parent;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the students or the student's parent;
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

## ***Parental Involvement***

### General - Parental/Community Involvement in Schools

Gering Public Schools welcomes parental involvement in the education of their children. We recognize that parental involvement increases student success. Gering Public Schools fosters and facilitates, to the extent appropriate and in their primary language, parental information about, and involvement in, the education of their children. It is our philosophy to protect the emotional, physical and social well-being of all students.

1. Parental involvement is a part of the ongoing and timely planning, review and improvement of district and building programs.
2. Parents are encouraged to support the implementation of district policies and regulations.
3. Parents are encouraged to monitor their student's progress by reviewing quarterly report cards and attending parent-teacher conferences.
4. Textbooks, tests and other curriculum materials used in the district are available for review by parents upon request.
5. Parents are provided access to records of students according to law and school policy.
6. Parents are encouraged to attend courses, assemblies, counseling sessions and other instructional activities with prior approval of the proper teacher or counselor and administrator. Parents' continued attendance at such activities will be based on the students' wellbeing.
7. Testing occurs in this school district as determined to be appropriate by district staff to assure proper measurement of educational progress and achievement.
8. Parents submitting written requests to have their student excused from testing, classroom instruction and other school experiences will be granted that request when possible and educationally appropriate. Requests should be submitted to the proper teacher or administrator within a reasonable time prior to the testing, classroom instruction and other school experiences will be granted that request when possible and educationally appropriate. Requests would be submitted to the proper teacher or administrator within a reasonable time prior to the testing, classroom instruction or other school experience and should be submitted to the proper teacher or administrator within a reasonable time prior to the testing, classroom instruction or other school experience and should be accompanied by written explanation for the request. A plan for an acceptable alternative shall be approved by the proper teacher and administrator prior to, or as a part of, the granting of any parent request.
9. Participation in surveys of students occurs in this district when determined appropriate by district staff for educational purposes. Parents will be notified prior to the administration of surveys in accordance with district policy. Timely written parental requests to remove students from such surveys will be granted in accordance with district policy and law. In some cases, parental permission must be given before the survey is administered.
10. Parents are invited to express their concerns, share their ideas and advocate for their children's education with board members, administrators and staff.
11. School district staff and parents will participate in an annual evaluation and revision.

## ***Title I Parent and Family Engagement***

Gering Public Elementary Schools intend to follow the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy guidelines in accordance with federal law, Section 1116(a-f) ESSA, (Every Student Succeeds Act) of 2015.

### **In General**

Each school served under this part shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy, agreed on by such parents, that shall describe the means for carrying out the requirements. Parents shall be notified of the policy in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language the parents can understand. The policy shall be made available to the local community and updated to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

- Schools shall provide opportunities for the participation of parents and family members including those with migratory children, limited English proficiency, or have disabilities. Parents shall be notified of the Parent and Family Engagement Policy, information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities in an understandable and uniform format and to the extent practicable provided in a language the parents can understand;
- convene an annual parent meeting scheduled at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under this part and to explain the requirements of this part, and the right of the parents involved;
- involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of the school Parent and Family Engagement Policy;
- provide opportunities for parents and family members to participate in decisions relating to the education of their children. The school shall provide other reasonable support for parental involvement activities;
- provide parents of participating children timely information about programs under this part, a description and explanation of the curriculum in use, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards. The school will provide assistance, opportunities, and/or materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement in a format, and when feasible, in a language the parents and family members can understand.
- educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, with the assistance of parents in the value and utility of contributions of parents, how to reach out to, communicate with and work with parents as equal partners;
- coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs and activities with other Federal, State and local programs, including preschool programs that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children.

### ***Homeless Children and Youth***

A homeless child or youth is defined as one who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

The term includes-

- (1) Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.
- (2) Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- (3) Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (4) Migratory children (as defined in section 1309 of the ESSA of 1965, as amended), who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in this definition.

This definition includes both youth who are unaccompanied by families and those who are homeless with their families. The district will comply with state and federal law as it relates to homeless children or youth.

#### Assurances

1. The district adopts these policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and youths are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
2. The district will designate an appropriate staff person as the Local Educational Liaison (LEL) for homeless children and youths, to carry out the duties in compliance with state and federal law.
3. The district adopts these policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to and from the school of origin. The “school of origin” means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. This will be done in accordance with the following, as applicable:
  - a. If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the district in which the school of origin is located, the child’s or youth’s transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by that district.
  - b. If the homeless child’s or youth’s living arrangements in the district served by the school of origin terminate and the child or youth, through continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another district, the school of origin and the local district in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the two districts are unable to agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

#### Comparable Services

Each homeless child or youth shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other students in the school in which the child is placed including transportation services, educational programs for children with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency, educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as Title I, school nutrition programs, programs in vocational and technical education, and programs for gifted and talented students.

#### Local Educational Liaison

The Superintendent or designee shall serve as the district’s Local Educational Liaison who will serve in tracking, monitoring and coordinating programs and activities for these children. The identity and duties of the LEL shall annually be provided to the NDE, school staff, providers and advocates of services to homeless persons, and to homeless students.

1. In general, the LEL shall coordinate:
  - a. The provision of services with local social services agencies, the NDE Homeless Education Liaison, community and school personnel, and other agencies or programs providing education, social and related services to homeless children and youths and their families; and
  - b. With other local educational agencies on inter-district issues, such as transportation or transfer of school records.
2. Coordination purpose- The coordination shall be designed to:
  - a. Ensure that homeless children and youths have access and reasonable proximity, to available education and related support services; and
  - b. Raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness.

3. The LEL shall receive appropriate time and training to carry out the duties required by law and this policy, and ensure that:
  - a. Homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
  - b. Homeless children and youths enroll in schools of the district, which includes attending classes and participating fully in school activities, and have a full and equal opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic standards as other children and youths;
  - c. Homeless families, children, and youths receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services;
  - d. The parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
  - e. Receive individualized counseling from counselors to prepare and improve their readiness for college, including college selection, application, financial aid, and on-campus support;
  - f. Unaccompanied youths are informed of their status as independent students under the Higher education Act of 1965 and may obtain assistance from the LEL to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid;
  - g. Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is communicated where such children and youths receive services under the federal laws for homeless children, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
  - h. Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with state and federal law; and
  - i. The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that is selected for the youth.

#### Enrollment and Placement

The district will handle enrollment and placement of homeless children in compliance with state and federal law according to the child's or youth's best interest such that it shall:

1. Continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness-
  - a. In any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or
  - b. For the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
2. Enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.
3. The choice regarding enrollment shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.
4. Issues of guardianship, proof of residency, and dress code requirements shall not be cause for delay or denial of enrollment. The district is not prohibited from requiring a parent or guardian of a homeless child to submit contact information.
5. If the school district is unable to determine the grade level of the student because of missing or incomplete records, the child will be placed in the appropriate grade level by the same procedures used for non-homeless children.

#### School Stability

In determining the best interest of the child or youth the district shall:

1. Presume that keeping a homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest unless doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth.
2. The district must consider student-centered factors related to a child's or youth's best interest including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth.
3. If the district determines that it is not in a child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin, or the school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, it must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form that is understandable.

### Enrollment Disputes

The dispute procedure must be made available for resolving disputes over eligibility, as well as school selection or enrollment. If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school:

1. The district shall immediately provide the child's parent or guardian or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth a written explanation of the decision made regarding the school selection including the right to appeal the decision. It shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth and include the LEL contact information. The child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of his dispute.
2. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the initial complaint, the LEL shall carry out the dispute resolution process in accordance with 92 NEC 19-005.002
3. The parent/guardian (or student, if applicable) may file a written appeal of the decision to the Nebraska Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner or designee may file a written response to the appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the appeal.
4. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Commissioner's decision, the parent/guardian (or student, if applicable) may file a written appeal of the decision with the State Board of Education and shall be governed by 92 NAC Rule 61.

### Records

Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluation for special services or programs, regarding each homeless child or youth shall be maintained:

1. So that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district;
2. The district will treat the student's homeless status as a Student Education Record, not deemed to be directory information; and
3. In a manner consistent with the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act.

The LEL shall document the number of homeless children and youths receiving services, and maintain financial records regarding any federal funds used for providing such services.

### Immunization Requirements

Homeless students will not be denied enrollment for lack of immunization records. The school district will make a reasonable effort to locate immunization records from the information provided or will assist the student in obtaining the necessary immunizations. Permanent exemptions for homeless students from the immunization requirement in this policy will be allowed only for reasons in accordance with the law.

### Review and Revision

The district shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youths in the district. In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship. Special attention shall be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school.

Legal Reference:                   Neb. Statute 79-215  
  NDE Rule 19 and Rule 61  
  42 U.S.C. §11431 and §11432 (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) with amendments  
  20 U.S.C. §1232g Federal Education rights and Privacy Act

### ***School Breakfast and Lunch Programs***

Gering Public Schools uses an automated scanning system to record payments and charges to family accounts. Parents/guardians are expected to maintain a positive balance in their family lunch account, as the system works basically like a checking account, which requires money in the account to provide meals to students rather than a credit card amount.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

At the start of the school year, a form will be provided online for parents including an application for free or reduced lunches and breakfasts. **We encourage you to complete the form and return it as soon as possible, as benefits from the prior year expire on September 30 of the current school year .** Any charges incurred from that point until the new form is approved are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

### ***GUIDELINES REGARDING THE COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT MEAL CHARGES***

The Gering Public School food service department utilizes a computerized point-of-sale system, Infinite Campus. Upon enrollment, all students are given a Student account. Money deposited into this account can be used for the purchase of breakfast, lunch, milk and ala carte items. Parents can check their child's account balance and make deposits in the Parent Portal at <http://www.geringschools.net/parents/>.

### **Payment Options:**

The food service department recommends that money is pre-paid into the account prior to the point-of-sale. The following payment options are available:

- 1. Major credit card through the Parent Portal.**
- 2. Check:**
  - a. Must be made to Gering Public Schools.**
  - b. Must have student's full name in memo.**
  - c. If more than one student is on a single check, the check must specify how much money is to be deposited into each account.**

- d. **If a check is returned due to non-sufficient funds (NSF), we will attempt to collect all money owed. In the event it cannot be collected, a third party collection agency will be utilized.**
3. **Cash: Must be submitted in a sealed envelope with students' full name and amount on the envelope.**

**Account Balance Information:**

Gering Public Schools expects parents to be responsible for monitoring their student's Café account and maintaining a positive balance . Free and reduced price meal assistance is available to all patrons at any time throughout the school year. Applications may be obtained from any of our school offices. The building Principal's office will notify parents of negative account balances. In the event a student's account reaches a negative balance, no extra meals or ala carte items can be charged.

**In the event a student's Café account reaches a negative balance of \$10, the following will apply.**

An alternate lunch will be served, consisting of a peanut butter or cheese sandwich and milk. The student will continue to receive an alternate meal until all charges are paid and the account has a positive balance. Free and Reduced eligible students are entitled to one reimbursable meal. Extra meals and ala carte items will need to be purchased.

At the end of the school year, if a family no longer has children attending school, moves out of the district, or becomes eligible for free meals, the family may request reimbursement of any balance in the family account. Funds for families with students continuing the following school year will remain in the family account for the next school year.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S.Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

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**WE APPRECIATE YOUR HELP AND COOPERATION AS WE WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE EDUCATION PROGRAMS! PROVIDING QUALITY PROGRAMS -- WE CARE!!!**

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## Parent - School Compact

### Gering Public Schools 2025-2026 School Year

This Title I School-Parent Compact has been jointly developed with parents and outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high academic standards. At the annual parent-teacher conferences the compact shall be discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement.

#### Teacher:

*It is important that students achieve. I agree to do the following:*

1. Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment to enable children to meet the challenging state academic standards.
2. Regularly communicate with parents on their child's progress.
3. Demonstrate professional behavior and positive attitude.
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Signature \_\_\_\_\_

#### Parent / Caring Adult:

*I want my child to achieve; therefore I will encourage him/her by doing the following:*

1. Communicate and work with teachers and school staff on an ongoing basis, be involved and support my child's learning.
2. Support my child's learning--volunteer in their classroom; participate, as appropriate, in decisions related to their education, guide positive use of extracurricular time.
3. Make sure my child is at school every day and on time, unless he/she is ill.
4. Provide a quiet place and time to do schoolwork and encourage my child to complete schoolwork.
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

#### Student:

*I know my education is important to me. It is important that I work to the best of my ability. I agree to do the following:*

1. Be at school every day and on time unless I am sick.
2. Come to school each day prepared with supplies and an attitude to learn.
3. Be responsible for my own behavior.
4. Respect and cooperate with other students and adults.
5. Return completed school work on time.
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of Gering Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, age, national origin or genetic information in its education programs, administration, policies, employment or other agency programs.

## TITLE 92 CHAPTER 27

### Preamble:

The educator shall believe in the worth and dignity of human beings. Recognizing the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, the devotion to excellence and the nurture of democratic citizenship, the educator shall regard as essential to these goals the protection of the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator shall accept the responsibility to practice the profession to these ethical standards. The educator shall recognize the magnitude of the responsibility he or she has accepted in choosing a career in education, and engages, individually and collectively with other educators, to judge his or her colleagues, and to be judged by them, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. The standards listed in this section are held to be generally accepted minimal standards for public school certificate holders in Nebraska with respect to ethical and professional conduct and are, therefore, declared to be the criteria of ethical and professional performance adopted pursuant to the provisions of Section 79-866 R.R.S. for holders of public school certificates. If the certificate holder is employed in a nonpublic school, that context shall be taken into account in the application of these standards.

### Principle I

#### Commitment as a Professional Educator

Fundamental to the pursuit of high educational standards is the maintenance of a profession possessed of individuals with high skills, intellect, integrity, wisdom, and compassion. The educator shall exhibit good moral character, maintain high standards of performance and promote equality of opportunity.

### Principle II

#### Commitment to the Student

Mindful that a profession exists for the purpose of serving the best interests of the client, the educator shall practice the profession with genuine interest, concern, and consideration for the student. The educator shall work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

### Principle III

#### Commitment to the Public

The magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the education process requires dedication to the principles of our democratic heritage. The educator bears particular responsibility for instilling an understanding of and confidence in the rule of law, a respect for individual freedom, and a responsibility to promote respect by the public for the integrity of the profession.

### Principle IV

#### Commitment to the Profession

In the belief that the quality of the services to the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to improve service, to promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged, and to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education. The educator shall believe that sound professional relationships with colleagues are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.



Learners Today  
LEADERS TOMORROW

# **Activities Handbook**

## **2026-27 School Year**

## **GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACTIVITIES POLICIES**

Due to the size and professional scope of our activities program, a great deal of coordination and cooperation is required in order for all programs to function effectively. Therefore, it is necessary to put our policies and regulations in writing in order for all of us to operate freely within the same framework.

The policies and procedures listed in this handbook provide each staff member with a practical guide of the standards, practices, regulations and policies of Gering Public Schools and the Nebraska School Activities Association.

The Gering Public Schools has made a commitment to provide excellent facilities and to offer a variety of activities for our students. The activities are to be coordinated and directed by competent personnel.

The handbook is divided into three sections. Section One contains information that applies to all activities, Section Two pertains to the policies and procedures of non-athletic activities and, Section Three is confined to athletic policies and procedures.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The athletic and activities programs are intended to be in conformity with the general objectives of the district. At no time does the program place the total education curriculum secondary in emphasis. The program functions as part of the whole curriculum and constantly strives for the development of a well-rounded individual.

Excellent activities and athletic traditions are not built overnight. It takes hard work and the dedication of many individuals over many years. It has been the tradition of Gering to participate so that honor comes to our community, school, and our athletes and participants. The continuation of such a tradition is worthy of the best efforts of all concerned; the supporters, the sponsors and coaches, the athletes, and the student body. We will always enter every competition "to win". In doing so, we will always maintain respect for our school, our opponents, and most of all, ourselves.

We will also remember that it is at the freshman, sophomore and reserve levels that athletes of varsity ability skills are nurtured. Besides placing the emphasis on winning, it is our philosophy to give as many individuals as possible the opportunity to play so that they may develop the necessary fundamentals in order to participate at the varsity level. By participating in the inter-scholastic program, we hope that all athletes are able to obtain some of the individual values and benefits of the program.

Students and parents must realize that participation in sports and other co-curricular activities is an earned privilege granted by the district to a student. This privilege may be revoked or temporarily suspended if a student's schoolwork and/or conduct become unacceptable.

## 1. Responsibilities to Yourself

We like to think of a student who participates in activities as being someone special in that certain responsibilities are imposed on him or her. A participant is one who accepts these responsibilities and broadens them to develop strength of character. Participants owe it to themselves to get the greatest possible benefit from their school experiences, their studies, and their involvement in other co-curricular activities, as well as from athletics.

You owe it to yourself to always do whatever you do in life to the best and fullest of your ability.

## 2. Responsibilities to the School

By being a team member, you have the responsibility to your school to always do your best and always follow the guidelines set forth. By being a team member, you are representing your school and your community.

You automatically assume a leadership role when you are on an extracurricular squad. The student body and citizens of the Gering community know you. You are on the stage with the spotlight on you.

The student body, the community, and other communities judge our school based upon your conduct and attitude, both on and off the field. Because of this leadership role, you can contribute to our school spirit and community image. Your performance and your devotion to high ideals make your school proud of you and your community proud of your school. The younger students are watching you. They will imitate you in many ways. Do not let them down...give them high ideals of citizenship, scholarship, and teamwork to copy.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICE WARNING!**

Activity Participants are reminded that anytime you share information electronically, it is NO LONGER PRIVATE INFORMATION!!!! Examples may include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, computers, cellphones (including text messages), personal blogs, and any/all other electronic devices.

Students/Parents are thus notified that the school administration, while possibly not initially involved in securing information in the sharing process of electronic information, WILL follow normal investigative procedures if a possible school violation and/or activity suspension may be involved.

### **SECTION ONE - - GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL ACTIVITIES**

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION**

#### **Procedure For Handling Any Parent/Player Concerns**

In order to resolve any conflicts or potential problems, we encourage all who are connected to the Gering Public Schools Athletic/Activities program to use the following line of authority:

1. **Coach/Sponsor**
2. **Activities/Athletic Director**
3. **Principal**
4. **Superintendent**
5. **School Board**

Definition of the line of authority:

**1. COACH/SPONSOR**

1. Represents the school in interscholastic activities.
2. Conducts their work within the frameworks of the goals of the school system, the policies and procedures of the department of activities, and the regulations of the Nebraska State Activities Association.
3. Strictly enforces eligibility rules.
4. Determines team selections fairly.
5. Considers athletics/activities as part of the total educational program, encouraging the students to work to their maximum ability in academics.
6. Exhibits proper and exemplary behavior at all times.
7. Is entirely responsible for the guidance of students while in their direct charge.

**2. ACTIVITIES/ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**

1. Directs operation of the activities/athletic programs.
2. Selects and supervises all coaches/sponsors.
3. Evaluates the activities/athletic programs and the activities/athletic staff.
4. Coordinates the athletic program with the other school activities.
5. Participates in budget preparation of the activities/athletic program.
6. Recommends assignment of coaches/sponsors to the Principal.

**3. PRINCIPAL**

1. Is responsible for all activities affecting students in his/her building.
2. Is closely involved with the operation of the activities/athletic programs.
3. Approves staff recommended for coaching assignments.

**4. SUPERINTENDENT**

1. Is ultimately responsible for all phases of the public school programs.
2. Delegates his/her power of administration of the interscholastic activities/athletic programs through the High School Principal to the Activities/Athletic Director.

**5. SCHOOL BOARD**

1. Developing policies in accordance with state statutes.
2. Approving means by which professional staff may make these policies effective.

As parents and/or students in the Gering Public School system we must believe in the system. In turn the administration and coaches/sponsors will be professional in their demeanor in order to resolve any conflicts or potential problems.

## SECTION TWO - - INFORMATION FOR NON-ATHLETIC EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### ORGANIZATIONS/ACTIVITIES

Many organizations/activities are available to students according to the student's personal interest. The many organizations are listed in hopes that each student will participate in at least one activity. Gering Public Schools sponsors the organizations listed below. These organizations are under the jurisdiction of the activities department.

One-Act Play Production*	Student Council
Speech*	DECA
Vocal Music*	Harmony
Instrumental Music*	Color Guard
Journalism*	Yearbook
National Honor Society	G-Club
German Club	FFA
Jazz Band	HOSA
Key Club	Mock Trial*
FCA	FCCLA
REACH	GGAA
Spirit Squad	Book Club
Leo Club	National Junior Honor Society
Dance Team	Spanish Club
Art Club	

\*Organizations that are governed by the Nebraska School Activities Association

### Required One Time Activities FEE: ~~35.00~~ \$40.00 includes Activity Pass

- Activity Fee for all Students participating in Activities. All Athletics, Clubs, and or groups representing Gering Middle and High School. This fee was always offered for individual passes for all Gering Activities. Gering Activities charge a ~~six~~ seven dollar admission fee for adults and a ~~four~~ five dollar admission fee for students at regular high school events. This fee will cover full access into both middle level and high school level single events. Tournaments not included.

The required Activity Fee will bring a foundation of support for our activities as expenses go up including paid officials, cost of concessions, purchasing of equipment, uniforms, etc. . .Along with providing easy and quick access for students to come and support all Bulldog events without wondering if they have to pay for admissions. Hoping to build a better crowd. Passes will be Free and Reduced for students who have registered for Free and Reduced lunches accordingly.

### Constitutions

In order to clearly define an organization's purpose and delineate the membership's responsibilities, each organization is required to draft a constitution. A copy of the organization's constitution is then placed on file in the Activities Director's office. All organizational constitutions are reviewed and updated periodically.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL**

The Student Council is the most important organization in the “life” of a school. Its purpose is not to govern the students but to serve the students.

The Student Council will strive to do the following:

1. To provide an open atmosphere of communication between students, staff, and administration.
2. To encourage student participation in school life.
3. To involve students, staff, and administration in a cooperative group effort to work for school improvement.
4. To provide means to promote the values of school life.

Members of the Student Council are elected by school-wide ballot. Each class elects representatives to the Student Council. Presidents and Vice-Presidents of each organization are also members of the Student Council. The President of Student Council is elected by the Sophomore and Junior class members. All students are eligible for election to the Gering High School Student Council.

## **ONE-ACT PLAY PRODUCTION**

The All-school play is staged in the fall of the year. It provides any opportunity to perform or work backstage on a quality production. The All school play is open to any high school student. Selection is made through tryouts.

## **COLOR GUARD**

Utilizing flags, the Color Guard is the marching band’s auxiliary unit for field and parade routines.

## **FBLA**

Future Business Leaders of America is an organization available to students interested in vocations relating to business management.

## **FCCLA**

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America is a National Career and Technical Student Organization for young men and women in family and consumer sciences education.

## **G-CLUB**

G-Club is an organization available to boys who have lettered in a high school sport.

## **GERING GIRLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (GGAA)**

GGAA is an organization available to girls who have lettered in a high school sport.

## **DEUTSCHVEREIN – GERMAN CLUB**

German club is an organization available to students who have enrolled in at least one year of German. Students learn about German people and their culture.

## **HARMONY**

Harmony is a select show choir with instrumental ensemble. Students perform at community events and compete in regional festivals. Membership is by audition. Harmony is conducted during a class period; credit is earned for the course.

## **JAZZ BAND**

The Jazz Band is a select ensemble that performs jazz-oriented music. Jazz Band performs in festivals and other school activities. Jazz Band is conducted during a class period; credit is earned for the course.

## **KEY CLUB**

Key Club, which is the student equivalent of Kiwanis Club, is a service organization that promotes community service projects and cultivates leadership potential.

## **MOCK TRIAL**

Mock Trial is sponsored by the Nebraska State Bar Foundation and is administered by the local Bar Association. The students prepare and present, in competition, the prosecution and defense of a court case

## **MUSICAL**

The Musical is a Spring theater production open to all students by audition.

## **NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY**

National Junior Honor Society is an honorary organization based on scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Students in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade are admitted through faculty selection. Members participate in many school and community service projects. The group is sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Members of this organization do not automatically qualify for National Honor Society.

## **NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY**

National Honor Society is an organization, sponsored by NASSP, to which juniors and seniors are selected on the basis of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Students who have met core requirements, have at least a 3.0 GPA, and are judged by a faculty selection committee, are eligible for membership to NHS.

## **REACH/CLOWNS**

Reach/Clowns is a drug-free organization. The members plan and practice activities that encourage students to learn the negative effects of drugs and alcohol.

## **SPEECH – DEBATE TEAM**

Speech and Debate Teams are activities available to students interested in contest speaking or debating. Students may join the National Forensic League and perhaps advance to national competition.

## **SPANISH CLUB**

Multicultural Club will further explore cultures, through food, arts and crafts, music, dance, and other activities.

## **SPIRIT SQUAD**

Spirit Squad consists of a cheer team and the GHS Mascot "Brutus". The role is to promote positive spirit leadership for varsity athletic events.

## **FCA--FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES**

The group unites with the mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of the student.

## **YEARBOOK**

Yearbook is a yearlong class. The goal is to produce the school yearbook. Special recommendation by the teacher is necessary to be in the yearbook. Credit is given for this class.

## **FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES Board Policy 506.8**

Students may raise funds for school sponsored events with the permission of the building principal. Collection boxes for school fundraising must have prior approval from the building principal before being placed on school property.

The main emphasis of any fundraising campaign should be on the educational aspects of the program.

No tickets for any purpose except for school activities authorized under Board policies or otherwise expressly permitted by the building principal will be sold on school premises.

No contribution of money for any purposes will be collected from or by school children except as authorized by the building principal.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent, in conjunction with the principal, to develop administrative regulations regarding this policy.

## **HOMECOMING**

Homecoming is held during the fall season. Homecoming royalty is crowned during/after a home football game. The dance is held on the following Saturday night in the high school gym. Dance time is from 8:00 pm – 11:00 am. Candidates for royalty must be seniors and are selected by each of the school's organizations. Student body votes on the royalty candidates. Student Council sponsors Homecoming. The dress is semi-formal.

The following procedures are used for nomination and election of Homecoming Royalty:

1. Three weeks before Homecoming week, EVERY organization in GHS is contacted and asked to nominate a candidate from within their organization. If the organization has both male and female members, they may nominate both male and female candidates. Single gender organizations may only nominate candidates of that gender.
2. Each organization will provide an alternate as well. If a student has already been nominated from another organization, the alternate will be added from the second organization. The interest is to provide as many students as possible with the opportunity to be selected for this honor.
3. On Monday of Homecoming week, the student body will vote for all the candidates, this reduces the Royalty to six finalists.
4. On Wednesday of Homecoming week, the student body votes on the Homecoming Royalty.
5. The Student Council sponsors will count all ballots for both elections.

## **WINTER ROYALTY**

Winter Royalty is held during the winter season. The crowning for Winter Royalty is done at either a basketball game or a wrestling match. The dance is held on the following Saturday in the high school gym. Dance time is from 8:00 pm – 11:00 am. G-Club and GGAA will select seniors as candidates. The student body will vote for the royalty candidates. GGAA sponsors Winter Royalty. The dress is semi-formal.

The Gering Girls Athletic Organization (GGAA) and G-Club organize the Winter Royalty Coronation and Dance.

The following procedures are used for the nomination and election of the Winter Royalty:

1. GGAA nominates six senior girls and G-Club nominates six senior boys.

Any senior who has not been selected as Homecoming King/Queen or attendant will be eligible for Winter Royalty.

The members of each organization (GGAA and G-Club) will vote for six candidates from the list of eligible senior members in their organization.

The top six vote getters are placed on the ballot. If there is a tie for the final position, all persons tied will go onto the ballot.

2. The six queen candidates nominated by GGAA and the six king candidates nominated by G-Club are placed on the ballot.

Student Council members will distribute the ballot so that the entire student body and teachers can vote for one candidate for king and one candidate for queen.

The final candidates are announced as soon as possible after the balloting has occurred.

## **PROM**

The Junior – Senior Prom is held during the spring season. This is the final dance associated with the school year. It is an opportunity for the seniors to say good-bye and the juniors to accept the leadership role. Prom dance shall be held on a Saturday with time to be determined by the administration. The Junior Class sponsors Prom. The dress is formal.

The following procedures are used for the nomination and election of the Prom Royalty:

1. A senior who has not been selected as a Homecoming King/Queen, Winter Royalty King/Queen, or attendants for both.
2. Ballots are distributed so that only juniors and seniors can vote for three queen candidates and three king candidates.

## **BAND PERFORMANCES**

Gering High School is very proud of the band and the program that it has. The pep band is encouraged to play at all home varsity games. They will also play at local district competitions, if the hosting school will allow the visiting bands to be involved.

**SECTION THREE - - INFORMATION FOR GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
ATHLETIC PROGRAM**



## GERING ATHLETIC VISION

**TO SEE THE WORLD IMPACTED POSITIVELY BECAUSE OF THE VALUES TAUGHT AND LEARNED THROUGH  
COMPETING IN BULLDOG ATHLETICS**

### GERING GRIT

COACH	PLAYER
Maintain intensity and vision day in and day out Trust your vision especially in the face of adversity Challenging players to improve and compete	Have the passion to excel and to persevere without exception.  Working through difficult workouts and giving 100% in everything we do.

### GRATITUDE

COACH	PLAYER
Appreciate opportunities that coaching provides and understand the responsibilities that come with it. Grateful for the hard work of players and fellow coaches.	Grateful for the opportunity to compete as part of a team.  Thankful for the skills God has given us.

### RESPONSIBILITY

COACH	PLAYER
Communicating well with players, other coaches, parents, fans administrators Punctuality and preparation (plans, strategies, equipment, etc.) Continued growth in sport knowledge/expertise	Be a role model for others Showing up on time and being at practice entire time Knowing your role as a player Giving maximum effort in practice, classroom and everyday life

### INTEGRITY

COACH	PLAYER
Doing the right thing all the time Do what you say	Doing the right thing all the time Do what you say

### TRUST

COACH	PLAYER
Good Knowledge of sport and ability to teach it. Consistent Coaching Philosophy that encourages fearless competition Personal caring for every individual Purposeful, Intentional, and Consistent Character	Belief in each other and my coaches Accountability--Teammates holding each other accountable  Trustworthy--To be trusted you must first be trustworthy

The athletic program of Gering Public Schools is designed to provide wholesome opportunities for those High School students who desire competitive activity in athletics. A program of ten female sports and nine male sports are available for High School students.

Any student is welcome to try out for any of the inter-scholastic teams available to them providing they meet the requirements established by the Nebraska School Activities Association and the school and they agree to follow the guidelines established in this booklet.

The guidelines established herein for the inter-scholastic program of Gering Public Schools were developed by the cooperative efforts of the athletes, the coaching staff and the administration. They are revised each year with input from each of the mentioned groups and are indicative of what we hope to accomplish in our athletic program.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT CODE**

**Gering students agree to:**

- 1. Maintain their academic work at the required level to conform with local and state eligibility rules during the season of their activity.**
- 2. Attend all practice sessions unless he/she is pre-excused by the sponsor of the activity.**
- 3. Respect the authority and judgment of their sponsors/coaches.**
- 4. Abstain from the use of vulgar or profane language while representing the Gering Public Schools.**
- 5. Respect the schools', fellow classmates' and an opponents' property and to treat it accordingly.**
- 6. Give up personal desires for the benefit of the overall program.**
- 7. Maintain self-control during and after all practices, performances and games.**
- 8. Conduct themselves in such a manner that he/she shall not bring discredit to the school.**
- 9. Refrain from the use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages and controlled substances.**
- 10. Abide by the expectations established by the coach/sponsor.**

## Athletic Program Summary

The basic premise of the Gering Public Schools' athletic program is to provide a variety of offerings that will enable most students to be involved in one or more inter-school activities. If a school is conscientious in the execution of its responsibilities, the educational benefits that the student/athletes receive from the program will have a significant impact on their lives.

### A. Boys' Program

#### Level of Competition

Football

Varsity  
Junior Varsity  
Freshman  
Middle School

Cross Country

Varsity  
Junior Varsity  
Middle School

Tennis

Varsity  
Junior Varsity

Basketball

Varsity  
Junior Varsity  
Freshman  
Middle School

Swimming

Varsity  
Junior Varsity

Wrestling

Varsity  
Junior Varsity  
Middle School

Track

Varsity  
Junior Varsity  
Middle School

Soccer

Varsity  
Junior Varsity  
Middle School

Golf

Varsity  
Junior Varsity

**B. Girls' Program**

	<u>Level of Competition</u>
<b>Volleyball</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity Freshman Middle School</b>
<b>Softball</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity</b>
<b>Golf</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity</b>
<b>Cross Country</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity Middle School</b>
<b>Basketball</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity Freshman Middle School</b>
<b>Wrestling</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity Middle School</b>
<b>Swimming</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity</b>
<b>Track</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity Middle School</b>
<b>Soccer</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity Middle School</b>
<b>Tennis</b>	<b>Varsity Junior Varsity</b>

**TIME CONFLICTS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

An individual student who attempts to participate in several extracurricular activities will, undoubtedly, be in a position of a conflict due to time obligations.

The athletic department recognizes that each student should have the opportunity for a broad range of experiences in the area of extracurricular activities and to this end, will attempt to schedule events in a manner so as to minimize time conflicts.

Students have a responsibility to do everything they can to avoid continuous time conflicts. This would include being cautious about becoming a member of too many activities where conflicts are bound to happen. It also means notifying the faculty sponsors involved immediately when a conflict does arise.

When conflicts do arise, the sponsors will get together and work out a solution so the student does not feel caught in the middle. If a solution cannot be found, the Activities Director or Principal will have to make the decision based on the following:

1. The relative importance of each event;
2. The importance of each event to the student;
3. The relative contribution the student can make;
4. How long each event has been scheduled;
5. Conversation with parents.

Once the decision has been made and the student has followed that decision, he/she will not be penalized in any way by the faculty sponsor. If it becomes obvious that a student cannot fulfill the obligation of a school activity, he/she should withdraw from that activity.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATION**

Interscholastic athletics involving boys and girls competing with or against each other are prohibited except as prescribed by state and federal law and as determined by the NSAA Board of Directors interpretations of such law.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

NSAA (Nebraska School Activities Association) Eligibility Rules

In order to represent Gering Public Schools in interscholastic athletic competition, a student must abide by eligibility of the Nebraska School Activities Association.

NSAA eligibility rules are available at [www.nsaahome.org](http://www.nsaahome.org)

If you do not understand a summary of these rules or you need an explanation of other requirements, consult the high school principal or activities director.

## **INSURANCE COVERAGE**

The following is an effort to clarify the insurance coverage provided by and available through the Gering Public School District for the students at Gering Senior High School.

The liability policy with National Sports Underwriters, Ltd., carried by the Nebraska School Activities Association covers the member schools (GHS) in all activities under the jurisdiction of the Association. This does not include the Gering Middle School. This coverage is intended to provide catastrophic insurance to anyone whose medical expenses exceed \$25,000 within one year of injury.

The School District of Gering strongly encourages all students of the district to have health insurance or to purchase student accident insurance through the Student Assurance Services Incorporated. There are a variety of coverage available in the Student Assurance Services insurance that fit student needs. Some examples of these are as follows: Full-Time Coverage, School Time Coverage, Football and Extended Dental.

## **PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES**

1. An athlete will not be allowed to change sports during a season unless he/she has received prior approval from the head coaches of the sports involved.
2. If an athlete is dropped from a squad due to disciplinary action, or quits the squad, he/she may not practice in another sport until the completion of the season of the sport in question.
3. If an athlete is cut from the squad, he/she may go out for another sport whose season is concurrent.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Every effort must be made to notify teachers in advance of a participant's impending absence for scheduled contests or events. A procedure that will provide proper advance notice and be accurate necessitates a continuous updating of rosters. If members of a team/organization are going to miss school, a list of participants should be submitted to the appropriate office three (3) school days prior to the day of the scheduled absence.

## **ADMISSION TO ATHLETIC EVENTS**

General admission to high school varsity and reserve events will be ~~\$6.00~~ \$7.00 for adults and ~~\$4.00~~ \$5.00 for students. Middle school events will be ~~\$4.00~~ \$5.00 for adults and ~~\$2.00~~ \$3.00 for students.

All Sport passes for adults will cost ~~\$75.00~~ \$80.00 per person. All Sport passes for students will cost ~~\$35.00~~ \$40.00 per student. This card will admit the bearer to all athletic contests at the high school and middle school, excluding tournaments. Varsity tournaments will be \$8.00 for adults and \$6.00 for students, and middle school tournaments will be \$6.00 for adults and \$5.00 for students. Family Activity Pass will be ~~\$150~~ \$165.

Senior Citizens who are 65 or older can receive an "Honorary Lifetime" pass at no charge. The "Honorary Lifetime" pass entitles a person admittance to all high school or middle school programs. Senior citizens desiring such a pass should contact the Activities Director office.

## **TRAVEL TO AND FROM ACTIVITIES**

Gering Public Schools' staff members and activity groups will travel to and from all contest events by school bus or school vehicles. Travel by private cars is discouraged, but when used, strict insurance standards are adhered to. All members of any activity group will return from a contest/event by the same means of transportation for taking them to the contest/event with the following exceptions:

A participant may continue on a trip with his or her parents or remain at the site when their parents are visiting friends, relatives, etc.

1. If returning to Gering causes a hardship upon the family such as if the participant lives between the site and Gering.
2. If a participant must return home early because of another obligation or emergency situation.
3. Students who go to an event/contest as spectators are allowed to participate in the pep band while at the contest/event.

4. Participants may be allowed to drive to local contests, such as District Music – games at WNCC, if they have the proper paperwork filled out 24 hours in advance of the event.
5. Prior approval by the administration is required. Paperwork for a request to travel is located in the office of the administration and available from the coach or sponsor.

This policy is followed in all aspects of the activity program in order to ensure unity among the squads/groups and because of the liability factor involved.

In (1), (2) and (3) of the exceptions above, the participant may be released to their parents, and only their parents, at the site. Arrangements will be made beforehand via student transportation paperwork from the parents to the Principal, Assistant Principal or Activities Director.

When traveling by school bus, students should remember the following:

1. Always be on time for departure.
2. There will be no loud or boisterous talking.
3. All riders will always be seated.
4. There will be complete silence when the bus stops at railroad crossings.
5. There will be no yelling out windows or waving of arms out the windows.
6. Students will always leave the bus by the front door.
7. There will be no food or drink taken on the bus unless given permission by the sponsor. In some cases when a High School athletic team is required to be away from home all day for a contest, arrangements will be made to feed the team members. Generally speaking, team members will eat their pre-game meal at home.

## **LEVEL OF COMPETITION (9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE) TEAM SPORTS**

### Freshmen Participation in Varsity Sports

For the freshmen athlete who is highly gifted and skilled in a particular sport, and who needs to be challenged by a higher caliber competition than is offered in the ninth grade program, the opportunity to move into the varsity program shall be made available to him/her through the following procedure:

1. The head coach notifies the activities director and high school principal that there is a freshman student she/he would like in the varsity program. This notification should occur as early in the season as possible to allow the greatest benefit to the student and team.
2. If the activities director agrees that it is in the best interest of the student and team that she/he participates in the varsity program, the activities director sets up a conference with the parent(s), student, head coach, and him/herself to discuss the matter.
3. When considering moving a freshman to the varsity program, family and school representatives shall discuss the athletic ability and physical/emotional maturity levels of the student. All potential positive and negative benefits of varsity participation shall be reviewed.
4. A freshman may be moved to the varsity program if, as a result of the conference, the parent(s) and student agree it is in the best interest of the student to do so.
5. Once a freshman student has been moved to the varsity level, she/he may participate in the 9th games or JV games, but not both. \_ However, flexibility shall be given to the head coach and staff to play the student according to his/her ability level at the varsity level.

## **PERSONAL CONDUCT AND ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION**

The following procedures are designed to put into practice the following philosophies:

1. **Extracurricular Program:** Students who participate in Gering High School's extracurricular program receive benefits not accorded the student who do not participate; therefore, students have an additional responsibility to represent the school and its programs in a manner symbolic of the goals, objectives, mission, and philosophy of the Gering Public Schools.
2. To participate in the Gering Public Schools extracurricular program, grades 9-12, a student must follow NSAA guidelines regarding enrollment.
3. Students who have engaged in inappropriate behaviors often times misrepresent their respective schools by virtue of a public performance.

Extracurricular Activities governed by this policy include Football, Volleyball, Softball, Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, Wrestling, Swimming, Track, Golf, Tennis, Speech, Harmony, Treble Choir, Mixed Chorus, Instrumental Band, Jazz Band, National Honor Society (Middle School and High School), One Act, Musical, Mock Trial, Cheerleaders, Student Council, Clubs, Organizations, and other school sponsored activities. This listing is not intended to be all-inclusive and at times may apply to additional activities that exhibit similar characteristics to those listed.

### **Activity Code of Conduct**

This activity code of conduct is supplemental to the Gering High School student code of conduct which is in STUDENT CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE POLICY of this handbook and any action taken hereunder may be in addition to any action under the student code of conduct.

#### **Grounds for Extracurricular Discipline**

The grounds for suspension from practices, participation in interscholastic competition, or other participation in extracurricular activities and competitions are set forth below. In becoming familiar with the conduct rules for extracurricular activities, participants need to remember that they are not only representing themselves, but also, their school and community in all of their actions. Special conduct rules exist for the reasons that:

**Participants in Activities Assume Responsibility for Leadership and are Representatives of Our School:** Participants in extra-curricular activities assume a leadership role. The student body, the community and other communities judge our school on the students conduct and attitudes, and how they contribute to our school spirit and community image. The students' performance and devotion to high ideals make their school and community proud.

**Activities are a Privilege:** Extra-curricular activities have an important place in the educational program of Gering High School. It is a privilege for the students who choose to participate. Students who participate and are accepted into the program are expected to demonstrate cooperation, patience, pride, character, self-respect, self-discipline, teamwork, sportsmanship, and respect for authority. It is the belief that accepting responsibility for one's actions is a part of that philosophy.

The conduct rules apply to conduct of the student, regardless of whether the conduct occurs on or off school grounds. (If the conduct occurs on school grounds, at a school function or event, or in a school vehicle, the student may also be subject to further discipline under the general student code of conduct). The conduct rules apply to conduct which occurs at any time during the school year, and also includes the time frame which begins with the official starting day of the fall sport season established by the NSAA and extends to the last day of the spring sport season established by the NSAA, whether or not the student is a participant in an activity at the time of such conduct.

1. Willfully disobeying any reasonable written or oral request of a school staff member, or the voicing of disrespect to those in authority.
2. Use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation, harassment or similar conduct in a manner that constitutes a substantial interference with school or extracurricular activity purposes or making any communication that a reasonable person would interpret as a serious expression of an intent to harm or cause injury to another.
3. Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to property, stealing or attempting to steal property, repeated damage or theft involving property or setting or attempting to set a fire of any magnitude.
4. Causing or attempting to cause personal injury to any person, including a school employee, school volunteer, or student. Personal injury caused by accident, self-defense, or other action undertaken on the reasonable belief that it was necessary to protect another person shall not constitute a violation.
5. Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of, or with the intent of, obtaining money or anything of value from a student or making a threat which causes or may be expected to cause a disruption to school operations.
6. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon or that has the appearance of a weapon, or bringing or possessing any explosive device, including fireworks, on school grounds or at a school function or event, or in a manner that is unlawful or contrary to school activity rules.
7. Selling, using, possessing or dispensing alcohol, tobacco/vapor products, narcotics, drugs, a controlled substance, or an inhalant; being under the influence of any of the above; possession of drug paraphernalia, or the selling, using, possessing, or dispensing of an imitation controlled substance as defined in section 28-401 of the Nebraska statutes, or material represented to be alcohol, narcotics, drugs, a controlled substance or inhalant. Use of a controlled substance in the manner prescribed for the student by the student's physician is not a violation. (Note: Refer to "Drug and Alcohol Violations" for further information).
8. Public indecency.
9. Sexual assault or attempting to sexually assault any person. Engaging in sexual conduct, even if consensual, on school grounds or at a school function or event.
10. Engaging in bullying, which includes any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or a school employee's designee, or at school-sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events;
11. Engaging in any activity forbidden by law which constitutes a danger to other students, interferes with school purposes or an extracurricular activity, or reflects a lack of high ideals.
12. Repeated violation of any of the school rules.
13. Truancy or failure to attend assigned classes or assigned activities; or tardiness to school, assigned classes or assigned activities.
14. The use of language, written or oral, or conduct, including gestures, which is profane or abusive to a school employee, school volunteer, or student. Profane or abusive language or conduct includes, but is not limited to, that which is commonly understood and intended to be derogatory toward a group or individual based upon race, gender, national origin, or religion.
15. Dressing or grooming in a manner which is dangerous to the student's health and safety or a danger to the health and safety of others or repeated violations of dress and grooming standards; dressing, grooming, or engaging in speech that is lewd or indecent, vulgar or plainly offensive; dressing, grooming, or engaging in speech that school officials reasonably conclude will materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school or of an extracurricular activity; dressing, grooming, or engaging in speech that a reasonable observer would interpret as advocating illegal drug use.
16. Willfully violating the behavioral expectations for those students riding Gering Public School buses or vehicles used for activity purposes.
17. Failure to attend scheduled practices and meetings. If circumstances arise to prevent the participant's attendance, the validity of the reason will be determined by the coach or sponsor.

Every reasonable effort should be made to notify the coach or sponsor prior to any missed practice or meeting.

18. All other reasonable rules or regulations adopted by the coach or sponsor of an extracurricular activity shall be followed, provided that participants shall be advised by the coach or sponsor of such rules and regulations by written handouts or posting on bulletin boards prior to the violation of the rule or regulation.
19. Failure to comply with any rule established by the Nebraska School Activities Association, including, but not limited to, the rules relating to eligibility.
20. Any activity that is deemed by the Gering High School administration to not demonstrate high ideals.

All terms used in the Code of Conduct have a less strict meaning than under criminal law and are subject to reasonable interpretation by school officials.

### **Consequences**

Students may be suspended from practices or participation in interscholastic competition or participation in co-curricular activities for violations of the Code of Conduct. The period of suspension or other discipline for such offenses shall be determined by the school administration. The disciplinary consequence will be determined based on consideration of the seriousness of the offense, any prior violations, the student's compliance with the self-reporting obligations, the student's level of cooperation and willingness to resolve the matter, and the student's demonstration of a commitment to not commit future violations.

### **Gering Public School Random Drug Testing Program**

Students who participate in school sponsored competitive extracurricular activities at the secondary school (Grades 7-12) level are eligible for random testing. Students who do not consent to participate in the testing program shall not be eligible to participate in school sponsored competitive extracurricular activities. Students may volunteer for participation in the testing program even if they do not participate in a school sponsored competitive extracurricular activity.

The following shall result from a positive test result:

The student's parents or guardians will be contacted and a meeting will be held to discuss the positive test result, with the object of collaborating on a plan to assist the student in avoiding future substance abuse.

The student's privilege of participating in extracurricular activities will be restricted as follows:

**First Offense:** The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities for two weeks or three events, whichever is shorter. The student may not return to participate in extracurricular activities until the student shows proof that the student: (a) is participating in substance abuse counseling with a qualified professional and is following the recommendations of the counselor and (b) tests negative in a District-administered drug test.

**Second Offense:** The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity for 9 weeks. The student may not return to participate in extracurricular activities until the student shows proof that the student: (a) is participating in substance abuse counseling with a qualified professional and is following the recommendations of the counselor and (b) tests negative in a District-administered drug test, and (c) agrees to submit to monthly District-administered drug test during the next twelve month period.

**Third Offense:** The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity for one calendar year. The student may not return to participate in extracurricular activities until the student shows proof that the student: (a) is participating in substance abuse counseling with a qualified professional and is following the recommendations of the counselor and (b) tests negative in a District-administered drug test, and (c) agrees to submit to monthly District-administered drug test during the next twelve month period.

**Fourth Offense:** The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity for the remainder of the student's secondary school career.

The parents or guardians are responsible for the costs of the rehabilitation program, which includes substance abuse counseling and follow-up.

Positive results will not lead to the imposition of any academic consequence or disciplinary action, other than the above described limitations on the privilege to participate in extracurricular activities.

### **Drug and Alcohol Violations.**

Meaning of Terms - Use or consume includes any level of consumption or use. Use of a controlled substance in the manner prescribed for the student by the student's physician is not a violation.

Under the influence means any level of impairment and includes even the odor of alcohol on the breath or person of a student, or the odor of an illicit drug on the student. Also, it includes being impaired by reason of the abuse of any material used as a stimulant.

Possession includes having control of the substance and also includes being in the same area where the substance is present and no responsible adult present and responsible for the substance.

Possession includes situations where, for example:

- A. Alcohol is in a vehicle in which the student is present. The student is considered to be in possession if the student is aware that the alcohol is in the vehicle, even though the student has not touched or consumed the alcohol; and
- B. Alcohol is present at a party attended by the student. The student is considered to be in possession if the student is aware that alcohol is at the party and fails to immediately leave the party, even though the student has not touched or consumed the alcohol.

In these situations, a violation would not exist if the alcohol is in the control of a parent or guardian or other responsible adult (age 21 or older) such that students are not allowed to access the alcohol. A violation would also not exist if the student did not know or have a reasonable basis to know that alcohol would be present, and the student leaves the location where the alcohol is present as soon as the student could safely do so. (Students are expected to leave immediately, but are not to do so in a manner that would endanger them. For example, you are not to leave in a car being driven by a person who has been drinking just to get away from the alcohol party immediately when there is no other way to get home. Instead, you should call for a safe ride home and, while waiting, clearly distance yourself from the alcohol).

### **Drug and Alcohol Offenses**

Because of the significance of drug and alcohol violations on the student participants and other students and the school, the following consequences are established for such violations:

Possessing or using tobacco, chewing, vapor product or smoking during the season

**First offense:** Suspension from all activities and events for one week or one event and completion of a substance education course.

**Second and subsequent offenses:** Suspension from all activities and events for two weeks or three events and completion of a smoking cessation class.

An activity participant who violates the drug or alcohol rules (other than steroids) shall be prohibited from participating in any extracurricular activity for the following minimum periods:

**First Offense:** The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities for two weeks or three events, whichever is shorter. The student may not return to participate in extracurricular activities until the student shows proof that the student: (a) is participating in substance abuse counseling with a qualified professional and is following the recommendations of the counselor and (b) tests negative in a District-administered drug test.

**Second Offense:** The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities for nine weeks. The student may not return to participate in extracurricular activities until the student shows proof that the student: (a) is participating in substance abuse counseling with a qualified professional and is following the recommendations of the counselor and (b) tests negative in a District-administered drug test.

**Third Offense:** The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activities for ONE CALENDAR YEAR. The student may not return to participate in extracurricular activities until the student shows proof that the student: (a) is participating in substance abuse counseling with a qualified professional and is following the recommendations of the counselor and (b) tests negative in a District-administered drug test.

**Fourth Offense:** The student is ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity for the remainder of the student's secondary school career.

The parents or guardians are responsible for the costs of the rehabilitation program, which includes substance abuse counseling and follow-up.

Positive results will not lead to the imposition of an academic consequence or disciplinary action, other than the above described limitations on the privilege to participate in extracurricular activities.

**Self-Reporting.** A student who violates the Code of Conduct must self-report. A failure to self-report will lead to a longer suspension or other discipline. The self-report must be made to the principal, athletic director, or the head coach or sponsor of an activity in which the student participates. The student's parent or guardian may initiate the self-reporting process, but the student will be later required to give a written statement of the self-report.

The self-report must be made :

- (1) before the end of the next school day after the conduct occurred and
- (2) before participation in an extracurricular or co-curricular activity.

In making a self-report, the student must identify the events that took place, the conduct which the student engaged in, and any witnesses to the student's conduct, and will be required to put this information in a written statement. In the event the student has received a criminal citation, charge, or ticket, and proclaims innocence of a violation, the student will be required to self-report such offense and provide information as to why they should be found innocent, not as it relates to the criminal offense, but as it relates to the Code of Conduct.

All students are expected to be honest and forthright with school officials. In the event the coach or activity sponsor or any school administrator asks a student participant for information pertaining to compliance (or lack of compliance) by the student or other student participants with the Code of Conduct or eligibility conditions for participation in activities, the student is expected to fully, completely, and honestly provide the information. Students may be disciplined for a failure to be honest and forthright.

**Reduction for Self-Reporting:** If the student has self-reported, the first violation shall be reduced to one week for the first violation. A commensurate reduction (approximately one-half, as determined by the administration) for a second or subsequent violation shall be given for self-reporting. More Serious Violations: In the event of more serious drug or alcohol violations, such as students engaging in use of especially serious drug offenses (cocaine, meth, etc.) or procuring alcohol for minors, the consequence of the violation is not restricted by the foregoing, and may be established in the good discretion of the administration.

**Steroid Offenses:** A student who possesses, dispenses, delivers, or administers anabolic steroids shall be prohibited from participating in any extracurricular activity for the following minimum periods:

- First Violation: 30 consecutive days.
- Second or Any Subsequent Offense: One calendar year.

**When Suspensions Begin:** All suspensions begin with the next scheduled activity in which the student is a participant, after the determination by school officials of the sanction to be imposed; provided that the school officials shall have the discretion to establish a time period for the suspension that makes the suspension have a real consequence for the student. During a suspension, participants may be required or permitted to practice at the sole discretion of the coach or activity sponsor. Suspensions in the spring will be carried over to the fall when the suspension has not been fully served or when determined appropriate for the suspension to have a real consequence for the student.

**Letters and Post-Season Honors:** A student who commits a Code of Conduct violation is subject to the following:

1. Eligible to letter, provided the student meets the criteria of the coach or sponsor.
2. Not eligible to receive honors during the sport or activity in which they are participating at the time of the offense and/or in sports or activities in which they have been suspended due to a code violation.

The coach/sponsor, with the Athletic Director's approval, may make an exception if the student has self-reported or otherwise demonstrated excellence in character allowing for such honors.

**Determining a Violation Has Occurred:** A violation of the Code of Conduct will be determined to have occurred based on any of the following criteria:

1. When a student is cited by law enforcement and school officials have a reasonable basis for determining that grounds for the issuance of the citation exist.
2. When a student is convicted of a criminal offense. Conviction includes, without limitation, a conviction, a plea of no contest, and an adjudication of delinquency by a juvenile court.
3. When a student admits to violating one of the standards of the Code of Conduct.
4. When a student is accused by another person of violating one of the standards of the Code of Conduct, and school officials determine that such information is reliable.
5. When school officials otherwise find sufficient evidence to support a determination that a violation has occurred.

**Procedures for Extracurricular Discipline:** The following procedures are established for suspensions from participation in extracurricular activities:

1. Investigation. The school official(s) considering the suspension will conduct a reasonable investigation of the facts and circumstances and determine whether the suspension will help the student or other students, further school purposes, or prevent an interference with a school purpose.
2. Meeting. Prior to commencement of the suspension, the school official(s) considering the suspension or their designee will provide the student an opportunity to give the student's side of the story. The meeting for this purpose may be held in person or via a telephone conference.
3. The student will be given oral or written notice of what the student is accused of having done, an explanation of the evidence the school has, and the opportunity to explain the student's version. Detail is not required where the activity participant has made a self-report or otherwise admits the conduct. Names of informants may be kept confidential when determined to be appropriate.
4. The suspension may be imposed prior to the meeting if the meeting cannot reasonably be held before the suspension is to begin. In that case the meeting will occur as soon as reasonably practicable. The student is responsible for cooperating in the scheduling of the meeting.
5. Notice Letter. Within two school days (two business days if school is not in session), or such additional time as is reasonably necessary following the suspension, the Athletic Director or the Athletic Director's designee will send a written statement to the student and the student's

parents or guardian. The statement will describe the student's conduct violation and the discipline imposed. The student and parents or guardian will be informed of the opportunity to request a hearing.

6. Informal Hearing Before Superintendent. The student or student's parent/guardian may request an informal hearing before the Superintendent. The Superintendent may designate the Athletic Director or another administrator not responsible for the suspension decision as the Superintendent's designee to conduct the hearing and make a decision. A form to request such a hearing must be signed by the parent or guardian. A form will be provided with the notice letter or otherwise be made available by request from the Principal's office. The request for a hearing must be received by the Superintendent's office within five days of receipt of the notice letter.

If a hearing is requested:

a. The hearing will be held within ten calendar days of receipt of the request; subject to extension for good cause as determined by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

b. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will notify the participants of the time and place of the hearing a reasonable time in advance to allow preparation for the hearing.

c. Upon conclusion of the hearing, a written decision will be rendered within five school days (ten calendar days if school is not in session). The written decision will be mailed or otherwise delivered to the participant, parents or guardian.

d. A record of the hearing (copies of documents provided at the hearing and a tape recording or other recordation of the informal hearing) will be kept by the school if requested sufficiently in advance of the hearing by the parent/guardian.

No Stay of Penalty. There will be no stay of the penalty imposed pending completion of the due process procedures Opportunity for Informal Resolution. These due process procedures do not prevent the student or parent/guardian from discussing and settling the matter with the appropriate school officials at any stage. Gering Public Schools will conduct random drug testing for all students who are participants in the activity programs available through and sponsored by Gering Public Schools.

## **HAZING**

There is no place in activities or the school system for any form of "hazing" of students. Any participant found to be involved in any form of "hazing" will be dealt with by the coach/sponsor in charge after consulting with the Activities Director. This punishment could be as severe as dismissal from the squad for the remainder of the season.

## **ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE FOR ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES**

Participation in extracurricular school activities is encouraged and desirable for all students. At the same time, the primary mission and responsibility for each student is to establish a firm academic foundation. A student participating in extracurricular school activities must show evidence of sincere effort towards scholastic achievement. To be eligible for participation in extracurricular activities students must:

1. Be enrolled in at least 20 credit hours in the semester of participation.
2. The student passed and received at least thirty credit hours the previous semester.

Administration reserves the right to make exceptions to Numbers 1 and 2 based on individual student considerations.

Extracurricular academic requirements do not apply to the following: a. Instructional field trips which are a part of the scheduled course learning experience; or b. Activities or events which are a consideration in determining the student's grade.

### **Relationships between Parents and Coaches/Sponsors**

Parenting and coaching are very difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding between coaches and parents, both are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide a more positive experience for everyone. Parents have the right to know the expectations placed on them and their children. Coaches and sponsors have the right to know that if parents have a concern, they will discuss it with the coach at the appropriate time and place.

#### Parents' Role in Interscholastic Athletics and Other Extracurricular Activities

##### Communicating with your children

- Make sure that your children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
- Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, competitive attitude, sportsmanship, and actual skill level.
- Be helpful but don't coach them. It's tough not to, but it is a lot tougher for the child to be flooded with advice and critical instruction.
- Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve their skills and attitudes. Help them develop the feeling for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
- Try not to relive your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure. If they are comfortable with you win or lose, then they are on their way to maximum enjoyment.
- Don't compete with the coach. If your child is receiving mixed messages from two different authority figures, he or she will likely become disenchanted.
- Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitude of your child with other members of the team.
- Get to know the coach(es). Then you can be assured that his or her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his or her leadership.
- Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before overreacting. Communicating with the coach Communication you should expect from your child's coach includes:
  - Philosophy of the coach
  - Expectations the coach has for your child
  - Locations and times of all practices and contests
  - Team requirements
  - Procedure should your child be injured
  - Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation
  - Communication coaches expect from parents
  - Concerns expressed directly to the coach
  - Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
  - Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations
  - Appropriate concerns to discuss with coaches:
    - The treatment of your child, mentally, and physically
    - Ways to help your child improve
    - Concerns about your child's behavior
    - Injuries or health concerns. Report injuries to the coach immediately!!
    - Tell the coach about any health concerns that may make it necessary to limit your child's participation or require assistance from trainers. Students are sometimes unwilling to tell coaches when they are injured, so please make sure the coach is told.
- Issues not appropriate to discuss with coaches:
  - Playing time
  - Team strategy
  - Play calling
  - Other student-athletes (except for reporting activity code violations)

- Appropriate procedures for discussing concerns with the coaches:
  - Do not confront a coach before or after a contest or practice (these can be emotional times for all parties involved and do not promote resolution)
  - Call to set up an appointment with the coach

What should a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide satisfactory resolution?

- Call the athletic director to set up a meeting with the athletic director, coach, and parent present. At this meeting, an appropriate next step can be determined, if necessary.

## **PRACTICE REGULATIONS – OFF SEASON**

In order that we may always have a well-rounded athletic program at Gering High School and because of limited facilities for some sport seasons, the following guidelines are followed concerning off-season organized practices:

1. No restrictions are placed on practices which are not sanctioned by the school district and which occur after the close of the school term and before the commencement of organized fall practices. Gering Public Schools will follow the NSAA guidelines pertaining to the rules for off-season practices.
2. No athlete shall work out using school facilities unless he/she is under the direct supervision of a coach or sponsor authorized by the district to supervise the activity. Outdoor facilities such as the track and practice fields may be used without supervision. The pole vault and high jump areas should not be used without proper supervision.
3. Coaches, sponsors and athletes of those sports which are in their off season shall be supportive of the athletes and coaches of those sports which are in season.
4. Without exception, a coach must be present when the Gering Public Schools' athletic facilities are being used.
5. All coaches should not lend his/her keys to students and any others.
6. Coaches shall not give individual instruction or run drills at off season practices if the numbers of students in attendance exceeds the numbers set by the Nebraska School Activities Association. Those numbers are:
  - a) Football and Soccer. An organized practice in 11-man football and soccer shall mean more than seven students under direct supervision of a sponsor. If more than one group is practicing at the same time, it shall be called an organized practice. The only pieces of general equipment shall be footballs, shoes, helmets, kicking tees, and hand held dummies and there shall be no contact with mechanical training devices or blocking sleds or with another player.
  - b) Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Volleyball, Tennis and Wrestling. An organized practice shall mean more than four students under the direct supervision of a sponsor. If more than one group is practicing at the same time, it shall be called an organized practice. In softball, beginning four weeks prior to the official start of softball practice, sponsors may work with up to eight (8) players using only balls, gloves and protective catcher's equipment. No other equipment; including bats, may be used by players or coaches. An organized practice shall mean more than eight (8) students under the direct supervision of a sponsor. If more than one group is practicing at the same time, it shall be called an organized practice. During the four weeks prior to the official start of practice, sponsors will have the option of working with four (4) student athletes or eight (8) student athletes using the prescribed allowable equipment.

- c) Track & Field, Swimming & Diving, Golf and Cross Country. An organized practice shall mean more than three students under direct supervision of a sponsor. If more than one such group is practicing at the same time, it shall be called an organized practice.
7. Conditioning Program. A school may organize and supervise a year-round conditioning program to include weight lifting, running, and exercising for its students in accordance with the following provisions:
  - a) Such a conditioning program shall be general in nature and may include only exercises designed to promote physical fitness, except that practice of individual skills of any sport may be taught in other than organized physical education classes if the school does strictly adhere to the specific rules governing organized practice.
  - b) Conditioning sessions shall be no longer than 60 minutes in length and no student shall participate in more than one such session per day.
8. At the end of each practice, the coach is expected to be the last person to leave the building. The locker room should be picked up, showers and lights turned off and all doors locked.
9. Off season sports practice will be held at a different time than the sport(s) in season.

### **PRACTICE REGULATIONS – IN SEASON**

The following guidelines are followed for in-season organized practices:

1. No athlete shall work out using school facilities unless he/she is under the direct supervision of a coach or sponsor authorized by the district to supervise the activity. Outdoor facilities such as the track and practice fields may be used without supervision. The pole vault and high jump areas should not be used without proper supervision.
2. Without exception, a coach must be present when the Gering Public Schools' athletic facilities are being used.
3. At the end of each practice, the coach is expected to be the last person to leave the building. The locker room should be picked up, showers and lights turned off and all doors locked.
4. Practices should not exceed two (2) hours in length and all buildings should be cleared and locked by 7:30 p.m.
5. N.S.A.A. guidelines state that no athletic contest or practices will be scheduled on Sunday. To cooperate with the churches of the community, the Gering Public Schools do not schedule activities on Wednesday evenings. (Participation in state-sponsored activities would be an exception.)
6. When a team is required to play a varsity contest on Monday, a practice may be scheduled on Sunday afternoon.

### **PRE-PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS**

Prior to practice/participation by a student in a sport, he/she must return:

1. A signed parental consent form(ONLINE)
2. A physical examination form(ONLINE)
3. Guidelines for student participation form(ONLINE)
4. An emergency medical release form, which will include insurance information.(ONLINE)
5. Paid Activity Fee of ~~\$35.00~~ \$40.00(Participation)

Students may not begin practice until all forms have been submitted. The athlete should complete all online registration completely before the first day of practice. Key medical forms will accompany the team. *The physical examination must be dated on or after May 1 of that academic year.*

## **COACHING EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Coaches' Professional and Personal Relationships and Expectations  
The need for precise job description specifications is becoming obvious with the stronger emphasis on credibility and accountability in coaching, with criteria to measure coaching accomplishments within the framework of the Gering Public School's objectives for their activity programs. These major performance areas stand out above others.
  - a. Rapport  
A coach must be able to develop a good rapport with any number of individuals and groups including team personnel, the student body, the professional staff (faculty, administration, maintenance, etc.), the community as a whole, spectators, officials, fellow coaches in the conference, media representatives and the parents of his/her players. Good rapport and an image of competency are invaluable for the coach.
  - b. Cooperation  
The district expects a maximum of cheerful give and take between all individuals associated in any degree with the comprehensive program. Coaches must work hand in hand with their Activities Director, Principal and other members of their staff.
  - c. Leadership  
Diligence, enthusiasm, honesty and a love for the game are all part of a professional pride that should be exhibited by any coach. Personal appearance and dress should be exemplary. Dressing appropriately for practice, following the practice schedule and building positive attitudes are very important.
  - d. Discipline  
Every facet of discipline is the coach's responsibility. Individually, the coach becomes a model of all that the program represents; observation of school codes, training rules, rules of the game, ideals of good sportsmanship, behavior of participants throughout the season-at home and away, and the conduct of the crowd especially where the student body is concerned. Desire to do well, win well, and lose well, should be emphasized. Staff, players and spectators should be motivated toward established goals.
  - e. Improvement  
A coach must constantly take advantage of opportunities presented for self-improvement. Attendance at district meetings, rules clinics, special workshops and clinics in specific fields and similar in-service training programs is required. Membership should be maintained in professional organizations, coaches' associations and similar groups whose programs are geared toward greater achievement and fuller performance. Keeping abreast of current literature in professional journals, newspapers and magazines and utilizing enrichment material available in other media forms is also expected.

## 2. Coaching Techniques

- a. Use sound and acceptable teaching practices.
- b. Provide well-organized practice sessions.
- c. Complete pre-season planning well in advance of the starting date.
- d. Adhere to a highly efficient and technically sound program of injury prevention. When injuries do occur, follow a prescribed routine and maintain good communications with patient, trainer, doctor and parents.
- e. Develop a system for maintaining equipment accountability, including seasonal inventory, repair, reconditioning and replacement. All purchasing should be accomplished through the allocated budget.
- f. Keep assistant coaches, student managers and statisticians well informed as to what is expected. Cooperate fully with maintenance staff, transportation people and others similarly involved in the overall program.

## 3. Coaches' Responsibilities

### a. **To the Players on the team**

The main reason for having athletic teams within the school is to help provide opportunities for young men and women to develop their respective capabilities to the fullest extent. Development of positive attitudes is an important means to accomplishing this aim. We must promote and teach only clean, aggressive and fair play, while stressing good sportsmanship at all times. The coach must be the leader and set the example of citizenship, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

The coach should be fair and unprejudiced with players, considering their individual differences, needs, interests, temperaments, aptitudes and environments.

Players have a right to expect coaches to have a genuine and up-to-date knowledge of that which they propose to teach.

The safety and welfare of players should always be uppermost in the coaches' minds. The coach's primary responsibility is to the individual boy or girl. The athlete's family must not be ignored; consideration must be given to the family and to their request.

### b. **To the School District**

As a coach, you are a frequent topic of conversation at various community locations – the home, the workplace and at the meetings of many civic organizations. Your professionalism, as well as your reputation as a coach, is constantly under scrutiny.

Your actions and statements should always reflect confidence and respect for the Gering Public Schools District. Much can be done by the coach in public contacts to build and maintain a high level of confidence in the athletic program and the school district.

### c. **To the School**

A coach owes his/her school his/her efforts and loyalty at all times. He/she must constantly strive for excellence in all areas of his/her school.

To be effective, a coach must be respected. To be respected, good personal habits and neat appearance are important; but most important are the examples of sportsmanship, citizenship and teamwork set by the coach. Being respected is much more important than being well liked. Treat the faculty, the players and the general students with the

same honor and respect that you desire to be shown to you. Private, firm, fair and constant discipline must be maintained.

The work of the coach must be an integral part of the educational program of the school. The coach should show mastery of the principles of education and consequent improvement in teaching and coaching.

The coach should give support to all endorsed activities of the school. At every opportunity, the coach should urge the student body to be polite, courteous and fair to the visiting team.

**d. To the Profession**

A coach in the Gering Public Schools District should continue professional growth in both the academic teaching area and the athletic coaching area. To best accomplish this, a coach is encouraged to belong to the various coaching associations open to the profession.

**e. To Fellow Coaches**

The makeup of a coaching staff is basically a quasi-autocratic society. The head coach must always be in control. Despite this position of authority, the head coach will encourage independent thought on the part of the staff. An important factor is human relations skills which provide for an open exchange of ideas in a courteous, thoughtful manner.

The head coach will praise the assistants and award recognition whenever possible. Misunderstandings between coaches should be discussed as soon as possible and in an appropriate location away from the athletes and other people not concerned with the program.

The head coach expects all staff to contribute a full measure of time, effort, thought and energy to the program. The assistant coaches must be willing and able to do things that they may not wish to do, or even like to do. They must fulfill the responsibility to the head coach, the boys and girls, and the sport itself.

It is most difficult to be a good assistant coach: however, the success of the school, the team and the coaching staff is dependent upon the quality and effort of the assistant coaches.

**f. To Other Coaches in Your School**

One must always bear in mind that his/her sport is not the only sport; it is only part of the total athletic educational program and of the school. Therefore, it is important to support, promote and cooperate with all the other coaches and activity sponsors for the well being of the total activities program.

A coach should support and serve fellow coaches whenever possible. All remarks should reflect confidence in one's fellow coaches. A strong, harmonious, interpersonal relationship must exist among coaches and other faculty members.

**g. To Faculty Members**

A coach is responsible for cooperating with every faculty member on the staff. If the staff. If the coach cooperates with the teachers academic subjects by allowing an athlete to make up a test on practice time, he/she can be certain that cooperation and

help will be returned in efforts by other faculty members to keep the athletes eligible and to get that extra helping hand when the going gets tough.

**h. Physical Plant/Equipment/Supplies**

Each coach is responsible for the following:

1. Keeping practice areas and locker rooms in order.
2. Storing equipment neatly and using equipment properly. Pride in the equipment and facilities is of primary importance to all athletes and coaches.
3. Keeping storage areas locked.
4. Keeping accurate inventories of supplies and equipment.

**CODE OF ETHICS**

In order to be of maximum effectiveness in serving and fostering the education of the students so entrusted to us and in promoting and supplementing the regular curriculum, it is the duty of all concerned with our secondary athletic and activities program to:

1. Cultivate an awareness that participation in athletics and activities is part of the total educational process and as such, the coach/sponsor should neither seek nor expect academic privileges for the participants.
2. Emphasize the proper ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play as they relate to the lifetime impact on the participants.
3. Develop a working awareness and understanding of all rules and guidelines governing competition, both in letter and intent.
4. Recognize that the purpose of athletics and activities is to promote the physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well-being of the individual participants.
5. Avoid any practice or technique that would endanger the present or future welfare or safety of any participant.
6. Adhere to policies that do not force or encourage students to specialize or restrict them from participation in a variety of activities.
7. Refuse to disparage an opponent, an official, an administrator or spectator in any aspect of the activity.
8. Strongly encourage the development of proper health habits, including the non-use of chemical, alcohol, steroids, tobacco, and other mood-altering substances.
9. Exemplify proper self-control at all times, accepting adverse decisions without public display of emotion or dissatisfaction with the officials or judges.
10. Encourage all to judge the true success of the athletic and activities programs on the basis of the attitude of the participants and spectators, rather than on the basis of a win or loss.

## **PRE-SEASON MEETING**

Prior to the beginning of each sport and non-athletic activity, coaches and sponsors traditionally meet with the students who are planning to participate in an activity. The NSAA feels these meetings are essential and encourages schools to require such meetings for all activities.

A change in NSAA Bylaws, effective the beginning of the 1987-88 school year, requires the Superintendent, or his/her designate, to explain NSAA eligibility rules to all participants and to certify, on the school eligibility certificate, that each student whose name is listed has had an explanation of all eligibility rules. This can be done during the pre-season meeting.

In addition, the failure to warn students and parents about the inherent dangers of participation in the activities has been interpreted as a form of negligence if a school is involved in any liability litigation. A general warning can be covered during the pre-season meeting.

## **PRE-SEASON MEETING SUGGESTIONS**

1. Schedule meetings prior to the first day of permitted practice. This will eliminate the possibility of an individual violating a rule of which he/she was not aware.
2. Take attendance and record the names of individuals attending the meeting.
3. Have a written record of topics covered.
4. Request that the parents attend the meeting.
5. Inform and explain NSAA eligibility rules to the athletes. These rules are given on the Parental Consent Form. Give examples of the types of activities which must be avoided in order to not violate the non-school participation rule.
6. Inform and explain, depending on the activity, the contest limitations, event limitations and entry limitations which govern the activity.
7. Explain the possible penalties if NSAA rules are violated.
8. Inform the students and parents of the type of injuries that can result from participation in athletic activities, the causes and practices which can lead to such injuries, and the ways that such injuries can be minimized or avoided. This procedure may serve as a general warning to parents and participants, but should not replace specific warnings given by a coach during practice drills.
9. For each particular sport there are a number of rules which have safety implications; cover those rules and the reasons for the rules. (Examples: Butt blocking, face tackling in football and the blocking of the airborne shooter rule in basketball.)
10. Explain the catastrophic insurance coverage, emphasizing that school-sponsored transportation to and from contests and practice must be used if a student is to be covered.
11. Explain your school's regulations and policies for inter-school competition.

## **CARE OF EQUIPMENT**

Each staff member must assume the responsibility for the proper care of equipment. A wholesome attitude among students towards the use and care of equipment is to be encouraged at all times. With the exception of reasonable wear, all students are expected to return equipment issued to them in the same condition as it was when the equipment was issued. Each student must also be cognizant of the fact that they must pay the replacement cost of any equipment that is lost, damaged or destroyed.

## **SUPERVISION**

Proper supervision of activities by coaches/sponsors is an absolute necessity of the Gering Public Schools. It is one of the primary responsibilities of staff members that are given extra duty assignments. One legal counsel expressed the following opinion regarding supervision:

One of the most direct legal responsibilities of the schools and school personnel with respect to students is the duty to provide adequate supervision.

What constitutes adequate supervision in the context of a suit against the school or school personnel for negligence is primarily a question of fact depending upon the nature of the activity and the foreseeable risk of harm involved therein. For example, the physical education instructor instructing students would be required to exert much greater supervision over the students engaged in activity than would, for example, the faculty sponsor of a language club which met in the school.

Nevertheless, regardless of how little risk might be foreseeable in a given activity, a total absence of any assigned supervision by school personnel would certainly enhance the potential liability of the school district should a student somehow become injured while participating in such activity.

If there were some supervision, no matter how minimal, there would always be the defense that it was adequate under the circumstances. However, if there were no supervision whatsoever, it is difficult to imagine a case in which it could be argued that no supervision was adequate supervision.

In order to comply with the aforementioned legal opinion on the importance of supervision, without exception a coach/sponsor must be present when the Gering Public Schools' facilities are being used. When a practice/activity is completed, the coach/sponsor is expected to be the last person to leave the building.

## **Team Selection and Playing Time**

### **A. Varsity Programs**

"Team selection" and "playing time" decisions are the responsibility of the individual coach or sponsor of the activity. Consistent, however, with the purposes of the activities program, the coaches and sponsors shall follow the following established guidelines for team selection and playing time decisions, along with such other guidelines as each individual coach and sponsor may develop which are not inconsistent with these established guidelines:

1. Student participants must demonstrate that they can and will represent themselves and their school in a manner which reflects the development of high ideals and appropriate values, which shall include good citizenship in the school and in the community.
2. Success. Student participants must demonstrate that they can make the activity program more successful, both from a standpoint of competitive success and success in

promoting a positive school spirit. Characteristics for purposes of this criterion include the student's: (1) talent or skill, (2) desire to improve the student's own skills or talents as well as those of others in the activity, and (3) attitude of respect towards teammates, the coach, the school, and the community.

3. The head coach in each sport will establish objective criteria to be used in the evaluation of athletes in his/her varsity program. The criteria will be listed in the sport handbook and covered in the pre-season meetings with all players. This information is available in the office of the Activities Director. The handbooks will be sent home to be signed by the student and the parent. **Each tryout period for the sport will be a minimum of five (5) practices;** this will give enough time for the coaches to evaluate the players prior to the team selections being made. If a decision is made to dismiss an athlete from the team, the decision should be based upon the results of the established evaluative criteria
4. After the evaluation period, players that make the teams will be assigned to varsity, junior varsity, sophomore, or freshman teams matching the student's abilities to the team needs. Team assignments may change from week to week. Non-varsity sports are for underclassmen, exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis with the approval of the Activities Director.
5. It is strongly recommended that all coaches refrain from the practice of cutting. One of the main objectives of the athletic program is to encourage student participation. Cutting a squad does not encourage student participation and is not permissible without prior approval from the Activities Director. When an athlete is cut from one program, he or she has the right to go out for another program if they desire. A coach shall take the time to explain to the individual why they are being cut.

## **A. ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

### Grievance Procedures

**Grievance:** A cause of distress, based upon an event or condition which affects the welfare and/or terms and conditions of employment of a certificated person; a group of certified people; or others; or the interpretation and/or application of the Board of Education Policies, administrative regulations, building level policies, negotiated agreements and other contractual obligations.

**Grievant:** An individual or group or individuals who submit a grievance for arbitration through established procedures.

**Party of Interest:** Persons or persons making the claim; any person who might be required to take action; any person against whom action might be taken.

## Procedures

### Level I (informal)

#### Initiating

Claim: Anyone who feels that they have a concern must initiate the process by discussing the matter with the building principal or immediate supervisor. Every attempt should be made to resolve the problem at this level.

### Level II

Step 1 Any concern that is not resolved at the informal level may be submitted as a formal grievance.

If the alleged aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her problem, or if no decision has been rendered following five (5) school days after stating the problem in the informal procedure, he/she may submit the problem as a formal grievance in writing to his/her principal or supervisor.

Step 2 If a grievance is not resolved at the building level to the satisfaction of the alleged aggrieved person, or if no decision has been rendered within three (3) school days after the presentation of the grievance in writing the individual may appeal the written grievance to the Superintendent of Schools. The appeal to the Superintendent must be carried out within three (3) days after receiving the written response from the building administrator or when that action was in order.

Within ten (10) school days the Superintendent shall meet with the alleged aggrieved person for the purpose of hearing and resolving the grievance. A record of such meeting shall be kept by the Superintendent. Within three (3) days following the meeting with the alleged aggrieved person the decisions and reasons shall be submitted to the alleged aggrieved person in writing.

Step 3 If the alleged aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance by the Superintendent of Schools or if no decision has been rendered within three (3) school days after the meeting with the Superintendent, the alleged aggrieved may appeal the grievance to the Board of Education. The appeal to the Board of Education must be carried out within six (6) days after receiving the Superintendent's written decision or when that action was in order.

Within twenty-five (25) school days after receiving the written appeal, the Board of Education shall meet with the aggrieved person for the purpose of hearing and resolving the grievance. Within ten (10) school days following the meeting with the aggrieved, the Board of Education shall render a decision with reasons therefore in writing.

Certain restrictions must apply at this level which are listed below:

1. Grievance may be placed on the agenda of the Board of Education to be heard at their regular or regular adjourned meetings; or the Board may set a date for a particular time and/or place.
2. A majority of the Board of Education must be present to hear the grievance.

3. A grievance may be heard in open or closed session, as all grievances will be recorded. This decision must be agreed upon by both parties.
4. Individual Board members will not act as a surrogate for the aggrieved.
5. The Board's decision shall be rendered only after all evidence is weighed, such as:
  - a. Tape recordings or memos of conference held prior to the Board meeting.
  - b. Private discussions with the Superintendent and/or Principal concerning their disposition of the original problem.
6. The Board of Education may call for a hearing on the grievance involving all parties of interest as witnesses.
7. Any party of interest may request additional hearings before the Board of Education.

#### General Provisions:

1. If the written grievance is not filed within twenty-one (21) calendar days after the individual knew, or should have known of the set of conditions on which the grievance is based, then the grievance shall be waived.
2. A grievance may be withdrawn at any level without prejudice.
3. No reprisals of any kind shall be taken by the Board of Education, the aggrieved, an administrator, or parties of interest, against any individual or group because of participation in this due process procedure.
4. Parties involved in this process may be represented by council or other individuals during this procedure.

#### **LODGING**

When lodging is necessary, the Activities Director and the participating coach/sponsor will make arrangements.

#### **MEALS**

District policy provides for a meal allowance for teams/organizations that travel to state competition. The exception would be if the state competition were held locally. If meal arrangements are needed the Activities Director and the participating coach/sponsor will make them.

The money allocation for per day is ~~\$20.00~~ \$30.00 for students / ~~\$25.00~~ \$40.00 for coaches.

#### **NEWS MEDIA**

It is important for coaches/sponsors to make every effort to be hospitable to representatives of the news media. Coaches/sponsors should assist the Activities Director in order to ensure that up-coming activities are well publicized and that necessary information is phoned to the local news media immediately following an activity.

## **PURCHASING**

In order to avoid confusion and/or a misunderstanding, the following procedures must be followed for all purchases:

1. All purchasing of equipment and supplies is to be done by the Activities Director.
2. The purchasing or repair of any equipment will not be considered until the staff member has an up-to-date inventory of his/her equipment on file in the office of the Activities Director.
3. A purchase order, signed by the Activities Director must accompany all orders. Any staff member ordering equipment or supplies without a purchase order will be personally responsible for paying any debts incurred.

Each staff member is responsible for the inventory of all new equipment or supplies as they are received. Any discrepancies in the order should be reported to the Activities Director.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

A request for transportation for an activity must be submitted to the Activities Director. A transportation request will be submitted by the Activities Director and sent to the Transportation Director. If the request is approved, a bus or van will be assigned for the activity.

### **A. Travel by Staff**

1. If a member of the faculty is required to use his/her personal car for school responsibilities, the staff member will be paid per mile.
2. If transportation is provided by the district, a credit card will be issued by the School District office.
3. When school transportation is used, it shall be the responsibility of the staff member using the vehicle to return it clean.

### **B. Travel by Teams/Organizations**

1. Gering activity groups travel to and from activities by school bus or van. Travel by private cars is not allowed.
2. Students will return from inter-scholastic contests with the sponsor unless arrangements have been made prior to the contest. (Parents requesting the change must contact the Activities Director.)
3. When buses are used, it shall be the responsibility of the sponsor to ensure that the bus is free of litter.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACTIVITIES PERSONNEL**

### **A. Activities Director**

The Superintendent of Schools is ultimately responsible for all phases of the Gering Public Schools activities program. The organization and administration of the interscholastic program is delegated to the Activities Director who works cooperatively with the secondary Principals. The duties of the Activities Director include:

1. Responsible for purchasing all equipment for the athletic department.
2. Promote the sale of all-sport and activity tickets.
3. Develops and maintains effective inventory and cost-accounting procedures.
4. Develops an annual activities budget.
5. Responsible for the rental of all facilities in the system.
6. Serves as a consultant to the superintendent and the Board of Education on matters pertaining to activities.
7. Insures compliance by Gering Public Schools with NSAA rules and regulations, and Board Policies.
8. Represents Gering Public Schools at state and regional conferences and meetings that pertain to interscholastic activities.
9. Schedules and supervises coaches, sponsors and directors.
10. Participates in the recruitment, interviewing, selection and evaluation of coaches, sponsors and directors.
11. Develops and secures the approval of policies for the assignment of personnel necessary to make an activity function smoothly. (i.e., officials, supervision, etc.)
12. Obtains transportation for all interscholastic contests.
13. Develops and maintains a well-rounded student activities program.
14. Develops consistent policies for activity letter awards
15. Schedules all activities 7-12.
16. Provides for the proper care, maintenance and storage of equipment.
17. Coordinates the use of all Gering Public Schools' facilities (i.e., practices, games, concerts, etc.)
18. Stimulates cooperation and conciliatory relationships among administrators, teachers and students in reference to the Gering Public Schools activities program.
19. Develops and maintains an effective public relations program.
20. Evaluates the activities program and recommends changes that are necessary for improvement.

## B. Head Coaches & Directors

1. Responsible for developing and maintaining a quality program for grades seven (7) through twelve (12).
2. Develops monthly, weekly and daily practice schedules.
3. Provides daily practice schedules for assistants. (The practice schedule will outline the assistant's responsibilities.)
4. Recommends assistant to the Activities Director.
5. Follows NSAA rules and regulations for conducting his/her interscholastic activity.
6. Evaluates assistants and files evaluations with the Activities Director.
7. Responsible for the equipment required for the activity. (i.e., an accurate checkout and inventory procedure.)
8. Responsible for the strict supervision of the practice area and/or locker room prior to, during and following each practice.
9. Provides a positive influence during the year in guiding and counseling students towards scholastic achievement and to aid in effecting acceptable student behavior.
10. Maintains an accurate inventory of injuries and provides effective follow-up procedures on the treatment of injuries.
11. Cooperates with special interest groups in developing and continuing his/her activity program.
12. Submits an annual report to the Activities Director. The report will include:
  - a. An equipment inventory
  - b. A roster of reserve and varsity letter winners
  - c. Season records and statistics.
  - d. An equipment requisition
  - e. Recommendations for program improvement

## C. Assistant Coaches and Directors

1. Follows the directions of the head coach/director in all matters pertaining to the activity.
2. Conducts planned daily practices incorporating those techniques and/or drills specified by the head coach/director.
3. Assists the head coach/director in developing daily practice sessions.
4. Attend all practice sessions and contests unless you are excused by the head coach/director.
5. Helps with the evaluation of the students in their respective programs.

6. Follows all NSAA guidelines for conducting interscholastic activities.
7. Assumes the leadership role in the absence of the head coach/sponsor.
8. Responsible for the inventory of that portion of the activity assigned by the head coach/sponsor.
9. Defends the decisions of the head coach/sponsor.

## **STAFF ASSIGNMENTS**

The Principal/Activities Director has assigned your duties; therefore, you are directly responsible to them. Your cooperation with the Principal/Activities Director and their staff will be expected and appreciated.

As a member of the Gering Public Schools' faculty, your primary responsibility is your classroom assignment. It is recognized that extra duty assignments are important and comprise a necessary component of a school's curriculum, however, the importance of extra duty assignments should be kept in proper perspective.

## **Attendance at Clinics/State Functions**

- A. The head coaches of all varsity sports may attend the state activity in their respective sport each year. (i.e., the state track meet, a state football game, etc.).

In addition, coaches may attend an event/clinic of his/her choosing if the information gained addresses program needs.

- B. The attendance and reimbursement at all clinics and state-sponsored activities will be set by the building Principal, the Activities Director and the Superintendent of Schools.
- C. Coaches will be responsible for their own meals, unless the team is playing. The district will pay one room per sport, and furnish transportation.

## **Inventory**

In order to provide continuity in the replacement and/or the repairing of equipment in each program, an accurate, updated inventory of equipment must be kept by the head coach of each sport. Proper inventory procedures by the head coach includes:

1. A systematic method of issuing and checking in equipment.
2. The inventory of all equipment for his/her sport two weeks, if not sooner, after the season has concluded.
3. Filing an inventory record in the Activities Directors' office no later than two (2) weeks after the conclusion of the season.

Inventory forms may be obtained from the Activities Director.  
Completed inventories are kept on file in the activity office.

## **Letter Requirements**

### A. Varsity and Reserve Letter Requirements for All Sports

1. The athlete must finish the season in good standing in order to receive a varsity or reserve letter.
2. All senior squad members who have participated all four years will receive a varsity letter.
3. Any athlete that does not receive a varsity letter will receive a reserve letter.
4. Student managers and statisticians will receive a reserve letter at the completion of their first season and a varsity letter at the completion of each season thereafter.
5. Upon the recommendation of the head coach, an athlete may receive a varsity letter. This allows awarding of letters to athletes who have been injured, have made outstanding progress, contributions toward team success, cancellation of events due to inclement weather, or other extenuating circumstances that may occur.
6. Each sport will have its own rules and regulations for lettering. Each sport will have the requirements listed in the handbook for their sport.

## **End of Season Banquets**

Activities will be allowed to use their bulldog accounts for end of the season banquets in the following manner to purchase:

### Awards

Coaches/Sponsors meals

Senior athlete/student meal

\$5 toward remaining participants meals

## **EXTRA DUTY SALARY SCHEDULE**

1. The Extra Duty Salary Schedule base will be ~~the current teacher salary base~~ reflect what is set forth by the Negotiated Agreement.
2. It is not necessary that each vacancy that exists on the schedule be filled.
3. Individuals new to the position will be granted up to five years of experience provided the experience is for the same position they are hired for.
4. Individuals moving to a new position within the same sport will maintain their experience steps if they move to a lower category (i.e., Category II to Category V) individuals moving to a higher category will begin at step one (i.e., Category II to Category I).
5. Pay for Activity Events
  - A. Staff Members will receive a bearer/guest activity pass for working two (2) activity events. Staff members may earn a student activity pass for each of their children by working one (1) additional activity event for each child's pass.
  - B. Employees assigned to perform the following duties outside of the normal school shall be compensated according to the schedule set forth below:  
Compensation:
    - \$20.00 per assignment for a High School activity
    - \$15.00 per assignment for a Middle School activity
    - \$30.00 per assignment for Supervision and Tournaments
  - C. Pay for activity assignments is a non-negotiated item. Individuals who perform services at activity assignment shall agree to set amounts.





Learners Today  
LEADERS TOMORROW

# **Certified Staff Handbook**

~~2025-26~~ 2026-27 School Year

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# Notice of Nondiscrimination

(Board Policies 103, 402.1, 501)

Gering Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, disability or other protected conditions or statuses in its educational programs, activities or employment policies as required by the Nebraska Equal Education Opportunity Act, Title VI and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies:

**Students:** Julie Siebke, Director of Student Services, 1519 10th Street, Gering, NE 69341  
(308) 436-3125 (jsiebke@geringschools.net).

**Employees and Others:** Stacy Rodriguez, Business Manager, 1519 10th Street, Gering, NE 69341  
(308) 436-3125 (srodriguez@geringschools.net).

The Superintendent of Gering Public Schools will coordinate compliance. Complaints or concerns involving discrimination or needs for accommodation or access should be addressed to the Superintendent of Schools.

Any person who believes she or he has been discriminated against, denied a benefit or been excluded may grieve such matters using the adopted grievance procedures of the Gering Public School District. Such procedure shall provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging acts of discrimination.

For further information about anti-discrimination laws and regulations, or to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (OCR), please contact OCR at One Petticoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street, #320, Kansas City, Missouri 64106, (816) 268-0550 (voice), or (877) 521-2172 (telecommunications device).

# Equal Employment Opportunity

(Board Policies 402.01, 406.02, 412.02)

The Gering Public School District shall provide equal opportunity to employees and applicants for employment in accordance with applicable equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws, directives and regulations of federal, state, and local governing bodies. Opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment includes hiring, placement, promotion, transfer or demotion, recruitment, advertising or solicitation for employment, treatment during employment, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and layoff or termination. The school district shall be non-discriminatory in major job categories where women, men, minorities, and persons with disabilities are underrepresented. Employees will support and comply with the district's established equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination policies. Employees shall be given notice of this policy annually. The Director of Curriculum and Assessment and/or Director of Business Services shall serve as the non-discrimination compliance coordinator.

Individuals who file an application with the school district will be given consideration for employment if they meet or exceed the qualifications set by the board, administration, and the Nebraska Department of Education for the position for which they apply. In employing individuals, the district shall consider the qualifications, credentials, and records of applicants without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability.

Advertisements and notices for vacancies within the district shall contain the following statement: “The Gering Public School District is an equal employment opportunity (EEO/non-discrimination) employer.” This statement shall also appear on application forms.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, shall be directed to the non-discrimination compliance coordinator by writing to ~~Kory Knight~~ Crystal Pasler or Stacy Rodriguez, Non-Discrimination Compliance Coordinator, Gering Public Schools, 1519 10th Street, Gering, NE, 69431; or by phone 308-436-3125.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, can also be directed in writing to the Director of the Kansas Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 10220 North Executive Hills Blvd, 8th Floor, Kansas City, MO, 64153, 816-880-4200; or the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission, State Office Building, 301 Centennial Mall South, 5th Floor, PO Box 94394, Lincoln, NE, 69509, 402-471-2024.

## ***Introduction***

Gering Public Schools serves approximately 2,000 students with an average student-to-teacher ratio of 18:1. The district believes that quality education begins with a quality staff and collaborative partnerships with local businesses and community agencies.

All three K-5 elementary schools offer all-day early childhood programming. Gering Middle School serves students in grades 6-8 and Gering High School serves grades 9-12. The High Ability Learner (HAL) program serves intellectually gifted students in grades 3-12, and our comprehensive special education (SPED) program provides a wide variety of services for our students with special needs.

Career Academies and work-based learning opportunities are in place at the high school. In addition, LINKS is a specialized program that provides an alternative, flexible learning environment for high school students.

The representative for Nebraska's 3rd District, Adrian Smith, graduated from Gering High School in 1989. Since the first graduating class, Gering Public Schools, in cooperation with the community, has strived to prepare students to pursue their goals for the future.

## ***School Mission Statement***

### **Educational Philosophy of Gering Public School (Policy 102)**

Gering Public Schools exists to equip today's learners with the skills necessary to be tomorrow's leaders. The vision of the district is to provide a collaborative community, inspiring excellence and innovation in teaching and learning to empower student growth and leadership in school and life.

The district seeks to satisfy this mission by developing and maintaining:

1. Qualified and competent administrative, teaching, paraprofessional, and other support staff;
2. A supportive learning environment which includes:
  - A welcoming and inviting structure that is emotionally safe, nurturing, supportive, and disciplined; respect, trust, integrity, and regard for self and others; and honors diversity;
  - Learning as the central purpose with students engaged in meaningful, relevant, and productive learning experiences; and
  - Implementation of policies and practices that result in an orderly environment with emphasis on consistent school-wide positive behaviors.
3. Safe, clean and supportive facilities and learning environments;
4. Comprehensive support programs and services that meet the diverse needs of all students;
5. Integrated, planned curriculum that:
  - Prepares students to achieve state standards and such additional standards as are established by the Board of Education;
  - Is appropriate for the developmental level of the students;
  - Addresses diverse learning needs;

- Instills a passion for learning and the importance of life-long learning;
- Develops problem solving and critical thinking skills, decision making skills, data gathering, and critical use information;
- Develops expected work ethics, as well as group participation and leadership skills;
- Incorporates character education and multicultural education, including respect for diversity;
- Provides for application of technology in all learning areas;
- Provides access to advanced courses;
- Implements an organized schedule that is functional and meets student needs in all curriculum areas.

## *Board of Education*

Members serve four-year terms, and receive no compensation for their work. Elections are held every two years. Board members act within the framework of rules set forth by the Nebraska State Board of Education and State and Federal laws. Current members are as follows:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Board Committee:</b>	<b>Service Details:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
Greg Trautman, <i>President</i>	Curriculum & Policy	Elected in 2022; current term expires in 2026.	<a href="mailto:gtrautman@geringschools.net">gtrautman@geringschools.net</a>
Tracy Wiese, <i>Vice President</i>	Curriculum & Personnel	Elected in 2021; current term expires in 2028.	<a href="mailto:twiese@geringschools.net">twiese@geringschools.net</a>
Josh Lacy	Facilities & Finance	Elected in 2017; current term expires in 2028.	<a href="mailto:jlacy@geringschools.net">jlacy@geringschools.net</a>
Matt Kautz	Facilities & Policy	Elected in 2022; current term expires in 2028.	<a href="mailto:mkautz@geringschools.net">mkautz@geringschools.net</a>
Bryan Barrett	Facilities & Policy	Elected in 2025; current term expires in 2026.	<a href="mailto:bbarrett@geringschools.net">bbarrett@geringschools.net</a>
John Maser	Curriculum & Policy	Elected in 2022; current term expires in 2026.	<a href="mailto:jmaser@geringschools.net">jmaser@geringschools.net</a>

## *District Facilities*

<b>Building:</b>	<b>Address:</b>	<b>Phone Number:</b>	<b>Hours of Operation:</b>
Central Office	1519 10th Street	(308) 436-3125	7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Geil Elementary	1600 D Street	(308) 436-2545	8:05 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.
Lincoln Elementary	1725 13th Street	(308) 436-2350	8:05 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.
Northfield Elementary	1900 Flatten Ave.	(308) 436-5555	8:05 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.
Gering Middle School	800 Q Street	(308) 436-3123	8:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.
Gering High School	1500 U Street	(308) 436-3121	8:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

## Administrative Staff

Building:	Name:	Position:	Email:
Central Office	<del>Dr. Nicole Regan</del> Dr. Kory Knight	<i>Interim Superintendent of Schools</i>	<a href="mailto:kknight@geringschools.net">kknight@geringschools.net</a>
	Jennifer Sibal	<i>Director of Communications</i>	<a href="mailto:jsibal@geringschools.net">jsibal@geringschools.net</a>
	Julie Siebke	<i>Director of Student Services</i>	<a href="mailto:jsiebke@geringschools.net">jsiebke@geringschools.net</a>
	<del>Kory Knight</del> Crystal Palser	<i>Director of Curriculum</i>	<a href="mailto:cpalser@geringschools.net">cpalser@geringschools.net</a>
	Stacy Rodriguez	<i>Director of Business &amp; Finance</i>	<a href="mailto:srodriguez@geringschools.net">srodriguez@geringschools.net</a>
	David Ferreyra	<i>Payroll Administrator</i>	<a href="mailto:dferreyra@geringschools.net">dferreyra@geringschools.net</a>
	Rich Evans	<i>Director of Technology</i>	<a href="mailto:revans@geringschools.net">revans@geringschools.net</a>
	D'Angelo Murillo	<i>Director of Maintenance</i>	<a href="mailto:dmurillo@geringschools.net">dmurillo@geringschools.net</a>
Geil Elementary	Angela Morris	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:amorris@geringschools.net">amorris@geringschools.net</a>
Lincoln Elementary	Jesse Neugebauer	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:jneugebauer@geringschools.net">jneugebauer@geringschools.net</a>
Northfield Elementary	Wendee Powell	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:wpowell@geringschools.net">wpowell@geringschools.net</a>
Gering Middle School	John Wiedeman	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:jwiedeman@geringschools.net">jwiedeman@geringschools.net</a>
	Jon Hutchison	<i>Assistant Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:jhutchison@geringschools.net">jhutchison@geringschools.net</a>
	Barb Harder	<i>Assistant Activities Director</i>	<a href="mailto:bharder@geringschools.net">bharder@geringschools.net</a>
Gering High School	Mario Chavez	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:mchavez@geringschools.net">mchavez@geringschools.net</a>
	<del>Crystal Palser</del>	<i>Assistant Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:cpalser@geringschools.net">cpalser@geringschools.net</a>
	Keaton Green	<i>Assistant Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:kgreen@geringschools.net">kgreen@geringschools.net</a>
	<del>Shawn Seiler</del> JJ Behrens	<i>Activities Director</i>	<a href="mailto:jbehrens@geringschools.net">jbehrens@geringschools.net</a>

For other staff contacts, visit the district website at [www.geringschools.net](http://www.geringschools.net)

## ***School Calendars and Schedules***

The school district calendar is found in Appendix A.

Staff work calendars are provided in Appendix B.

Staff scheduling is determined by Administrative Staff, and communicated accordingly upon hire. On occasion, temporary adjustments may be required on occasion to meet the needs of the district.

**Mandatory Attendance Days:** Gering Public Schools has the right to identify blackout periods when PTO requests cannot be approved. Blackout periods include events such as mandatory training days, district-wide professional development days, etc. and will be communicated in writing by the Superintendent of Schools. When possible, these dates will be reflected in advance on staff work calendars for planning purposes.

In the event a blackout period must be added to the calendar after the start of the school calendar year, at least a 3-business days written notice shall be provided prior to the implementation of a blackout period.

The district understands that emergencies occasionally arise, and requests for an accommodation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Staff members are expected to submit these requests in writing to the Superintendent of Schools and Building Administrator with as much notice as possible for consideration.

**District Summer Hours:** The district will honor these hours (including Central Office) effective the first Tuesday after Memorial Day and these hours will remain in place until the first week of August.

Please note: The specific dates that summer hours will start and end each year will vary slightly due to the calendar.

These summer hours include all staff, except summer school staff members who may follow an alternative schedule. Any exceptions need to be approved through the Business Office (i.e., summer school, etc.)

Summer hours will be Monday-Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with an unpaid 30-minute lunch break.

Deviations from this schedule must be approved through the Superintendent of Schools and Business Manager.

**School Cancellation:** The safety of students and staff is very important to the District. We also recognize that certain staff members are essential to district operations; therefore, in the event of school closure, 12-month classified employees, administrators and secretaries need to report to work as soon as safely possible in order to answer the phones and help students that come to school to make arrangements for safe rides back home.

Additionally, in the event of inclement weather, district maintenance and custodial teams will be responsible for the removal of snow from sidewalks and parking lots to ensure patron safety.

Once those issues have been handled, staff should consult with the supervising administrator on finishing the work day at the school office or taking work home to finish. If employees cannot get to work or choose to not work the remainder of the day, they have the following options to cover lost wages:

- Accrued personal leave may be applied (full-time employees only).
- Vacation leave may be applied (12-month employees only).

**Decision To Close Schools and Communication:** The Superintendent of Schools will decide if school is open or closed for that day. Once notified, Administrative Staff will start their building calling chain when applicable. Additionally, the Director of Communications or other designated staff members will generate an Infinite Campus message (phone call and/or text message) to all district staff and families, and notify local news media when inclement conditions warrants such action. The information is broadcast regularly by radio and television stations.

**Weather-Related Closure or Impacts:** A decision to close school is made when forecasts by the weather service and civil defense officials indicate that it would be unwise for students to go to school. If possible, a decision about the next school day will be made by 9 p.m. for announcement during the 10 p.m. news. An early decision is not always possible because of uncertain weather conditions. School officials will make periodic assessments of conditions during the night and will decide early in the morning (by 6 a.m. if possible) whether to have school or not.

The decision to cancel school is never an easy one, but the decision will always be made with student and staff safety at the forefront. In some instances, schools will be open, but certain services may be canceled (bus transportation, kindergarten, student activities).

If the school district does not close despite inclement conditions, but a staff member does not report for the scheduled workday time off will be considered personal leave or unpaid.

**Severe Weather During the School Day:** The Superintendent of Schools is authorized by the Board of Education to close school in case of severe weather. Every attempt will be made to avoid closing school once classes are in session.

In some instances, closing school during the day is inevitable if children are to safely return home before the brunt of a major storm hits. In these cases, as much advance notice as possible will be given. If school is closed during the day, staff will be notified by Administrative Staff and families will be notified via media broadcast and Infinite Campus messenger when possible.

Certified staff and administrators will be responsible for remaining with students until all students have safely left school or the administration has made arrangements for remaining students.

If, because of inclement conditions, students and employees are dismissed early, employees will be compensated for the remainder of the scheduled workday.

## ***Chapter 1 - Personnel Records***

Section 1-A

EMPLOYEE RECORDS & SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

Section 1-B

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF EMPLOYEE RECORDS

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### **Section 1-A**

### **Employee Records & Social Security Numbers**

(Board Policy 402.06, 403.01)

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The school district shall maintain personnel records on employees. The records are important for the daily administration of educational programs, for implementing board policy, for budget and financial planning, and for meeting state and federal requirements.

The records shall include, but not be limited to, records necessary for the daily administration of the school district, salary records, evaluations, application for employment, references, and other items needed to carry out board policy. Employee personnel files are school district records and are considered confidential records and therefore are not generally open to public inspection or accessibility. Only in certain limited instances, when the employee has given signed consent, will employee personnel records be accessible to individuals other than the employee or authorized school officials.

Employees may have access to their personnel files, with the exception of letters of reference, and copy items from their personnel files at a time mutually agreed upon between the Superintendent and the employee. The school district may charge a reasonable fee for each copy made. However, employees will not be allowed to access the employment references written on behalf of the employee. Board members will generally only have access to an employee's file when it is necessary because of an employee related matter before the board.

Employee personnel files will be kept current on all employees of Gering Public Schools. The copy of the employee's records kept at the Superintendent's office is the official copy of their records.

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### **Section 1-B**

### **Retention and Disposal of Employee Records**

A file shall be kept of the records of all resigned and retired employees. Such records shall be retained for no less than twenty years following termination, after which time they may be destroyed.

The Superintendent shall make applications for, and maintain on file in the central office, continuing authority for disposal of personnel files from the Records Management division of the Nebraska Secretary of State's office. Disposal of the personnel files shall be in the manner deemed most feasible by the Superintendent. The Superintendent will, after each instance of disposal, certify that action to the Records Management Division.

## ***Chapter 2 - Orientation***

Section 2-A	ORIENTATION
Section 2-B	MENTORING
Section 2-C	REQUIRED EMPLOYEE PAPERWORK
Section 2-D	CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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### **Section 2-A                      Orientation**

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Gering Public Schools provides orientation programs for new certified employees. Per the Negotiated Professional Agreement, three (3) additional days will be required of teachers new to the District with 1/185th pay.

Each Principal is responsible for orientation as it applies to introducing the new employee to the specific job and department. Principals may select a coworker to serve as a mentor to facilitate the new employee's transition. The length of each teacher's contract shall be 185-days.

The orientation includes a review of the Certified Employee Handbook with an explanation of the anti-discrimination and harassment policies, as well as required safety and health procedures. Certified staff will be annually informed of the Teacher Evaluation and Supervision model and are asked to sign acknowledgement of such.

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### **Section 2-B                      Mentoring**

(Board Policy 409.03)

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Building principals or supervisors will assign a mentoring teacher to every probationary teacher in the district. The mentoring teacher, insofar as possible, will be a tenured teacher with a minimum of three years teaching experience in the district and will be engaged in teaching within the same grade, building, or discipline as the probationary teacher. The mentoring teacher will not be involved in the evaluation of the probationary teacher, will not be in the line of authority, and will not exercise formal supervision over the new teacher with whom he/she is working. Each teacher will be advised during employee orientation as to who will observe and evaluate job performance. No formal observations will take place until such orientation has been completed.

The mentoring teacher will assist the probationary teacher in acclimating to the teaching profession and the district. The mentor's role is to assist the new teacher by being available to answer questions, explain the courses of study, instructional materials, building procedures, availability and district policies.

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### **Section 2-C                      Required Employee Paperwork**

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All new employees must complete the required paperwork at the Central Office. Employment forms such as the employment eligibility verification (Form I-9) and withholding allowance (Form W-4) are required by law and must be completed on or before the first day of employment. Gering Public Schools participates in E-Verify to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all persons hired to work for GPS. Incomplete employment paperwork may delay the issuance of paychecks.

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## **Section 2-D**

## **Change of Address**

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The Central Office payroll office must be notified by an employee of any change of address or telephone number as soon as it occurs. Employees are asked to also report a change of address or phone number to their school secretary/principal.

## ***Chapter 3 - Employment Procedures***

Section 3-A	RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION
Section 3-B	JOB POSTINGS
Section 3-C	HIRING
Section 3-D	SALARY
Section 3-E	CERTIFICATION
Section 3-F	TEACHER CONTRACTS
Section 3-G	RESIGNATION OR REQUEST FOR RELEASE FROM CONTRACT
Section 3-H	TERMINATION
Section 3-I	REDUCTION IN FORCE

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### **Section 3-A Recruitment & Selection**

(Board Policy 406.02)

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Gering Public Schools secures qualified personnel through effective recruitment. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent or his/her designees to determine the personnel needs of the school district, locate suitable candidates, and recommend qualified candidates to the board for employment. A certificated employee shall not be deemed to be employed by the school district until the employee and the Board of Education have signed a written contract.

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### **Section 3-B Job Postings**

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All vacant positions will be posted on the district website and via internal postings. It is not required that applicants from within the district be selected to fill the vacancy. The primary goal is to select the most qualified applicant for the position available. Any employee may submit to the Central Office a written request to be considered for any job posted for which he or she qualifies. Vacancies may also be advertised locally, regionally, and/or nationally. Gering Public Schools uses the Unified Talent software system to manage applications.

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### **Section 3-C Hiring**

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1. **Background Checks**--Before being accepted for paid employment to work with students, Gering Public Schools contacts the Nebraska Child Abuse/Neglect Central Registry and Nebraska Adult Protective Services to confirm that no substantiated referrals of child maltreatment have been filed against an applicant. GPS utilizes OneSource Background Check Company to process background checks.
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## Section 3-D

## Change of Address

(Board Policy 407.01)

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1. **Compensation and Related Benefits**--The requirements stated in the Negotiated Contract between employees in that certified collective bargaining unit and the board regarding wages and salaries of such employees shall be followed.
  2. **Salary Schedule Advancement**--The board shall determine which certificated employees will advance on the salary schedule for the certified employees' positions, keeping in mind the financial condition of the school district, the education and experience of the certificated employee, the educational philosophy of the school district, and other considerations determined by the board. The requirements stated in the Negotiated Contract between employees in that certified collective bargaining unit and the board regarding salary schedule advancement of such employees shall be followed. Original transcripts used to verify salary schedule advancement shall be turned into the district office no later than September 1.
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## Section 3-E

## Certification

(Board Policy 406)

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Certificated employees, including administrators, are those employees required to hold an appropriate certificate from the Nebraska Department of Education for their position as required by the Professional Practices Commission or others with professional licenses. Certificates required for a position will be considered met if the employee meets the requirements established by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Certificated employees must present evidence of a current certificate to the Superintendent prior to their first day of work and before any payment of salary each year.

**It is the responsibility of the teacher to keep their certificate current.** Failure to obtain or keep in full force a valid teaching or administrative certificate shall constitute cause for suspension, non-renewal, termination, or cancellation of employment or grounds for declaring an employment contract as null and void and of no force or effect. Maintaining a valid certificate is at all times a condition precedent to teaching or administrative employment in this school district. All teachers and administrators shall be properly certificated for the grade levels of instruction or administration to which they are assigned and must possess the basic preparation in any subject area taught or supervised.

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## **Section 3-F**

## **Teacher Contracts**

(Board Policy 406.03, 406.04 )

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The Superintendent is responsible for following all legal aspects of completing contracts with teachers. Contracts for certified personnel will be executed by all new employees when hired. Contracts for certified personnel will include the terms of employment and any special conditions of employment. Contracts are approved by the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent. The Board of Education grants to the Superintendent the authority to offer contracts for employment subject to final approval by the board.

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## **Section 3-G**

## **Resignation or Request for Release from Contract**

(Board Policy 408.02)

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Resignations or requests for release from contract must be presented in writing to the Board via the Superintendent, or his/her designee as early as possible, but no later than the date designated in the annual contract addendum. Any certified staff member requesting a release from their contract after the April 15 date may be considered for release only upon availability of a satisfactory replacement as determined by the administration.

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## **Section 3-H**

## **Termination**

If the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent or his/her designee, institutes dismissal proceedings against a member of the certified staff, it will be in accordance with Nebraska statutes §79-828 & §79-829, R.R.S. and school board policy.

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## **Section 3-I**

## **Reduction in Force**

(Board Policy 408.05)

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The board has the exclusive authority to determine the appropriate number of certificated employees. Reductions-in-force of certificated staff members may be required due to changes in the size or nature of the student population, limited financial support, changing programs, staff realignment or other changes in circumstances. Reduction-in-force may result in termination of employment, an amendment to the employee's contract reducing the employee from full-time to part-time status or an amendment to the contract of a part-time employee further reducing that employee's percentage of employment.

## ***Chapter 4 - Employment Laws***

Section 4-A	EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
Section 4-B	AGE DISCRIMINATION ACT
Section 4-C	AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA)
Section 4-D	DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING PROGRAM & PROCEDURES
Section 4-E	FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE
Section 4-F	DISCLOSURE AND PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEE HEALTH INFORMATION
Section 4-G	SUBSTANCE-FREE WORKPLACE
Section 4-H	FACILITIES FOR MILK EXPRESSION

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### **Section 4-A**

### **Equal Employment Opportunity**

(Board Policy 402.01)

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The Gering Public School District shall provide equal opportunity to employees and applicants for employment in accordance with applicable equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws, directives and regulations of federal, state, and local governing bodies. Equal opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment includes hiring, placement, promotion, transfer or demotion, recruitment, advertising or solicitation for employment, treatment during employment, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and layoff or termination. The school district shall be non-discriminatory in major job categories where women, men, minorities, and persons with disabilities are underrepresented. Employees will support and comply with the district's established equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination policies. Employees shall be given notice of this policy annually. The Director of Business Services shall serve as the non-discrimination compliance coordinator.

Individuals who file an application with the school district will be given consideration for employment if they meet or exceed the qualifications set by the board, administration, and the Nebraska Department of Education for the position for which they apply. In employing individuals, the district shall consider the qualifications, credentials, and records of the applicants without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability.

Advertisements and notices for vacancies within the district shall contain the following statement: "The Gering Public School District is an equal employment opportunity (EEO/non-discrimination) employer." The statement shall also appear on application forms.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, shall be directed to the non-discrimination compliance coordinator by writing to the Non-Discrimination Compliance Coordinator, Gering Public Schools, Gering, NE, 69431; or by phone 308-436-3125.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, can also be directed in writing to the Director of the Kansas Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 10220 North Executive Hills Blvd, 8th Floor, Kansas City, MO, 64153, 816-880-4200; or the Nebraska Equal Opportunity

## **Section 4-B**

## **Age Discrimination Act**

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The Age Discrimination Employment Act of 1967, as amended, protects applicants and employees 40 years of age and older from discrimination on the basis of age in hiring, promotion, discharge, compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. This Act prohibits:

1. Refusing to hire, to discharge, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to the terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of the individual's age, when the reasonable demands of the position do not require such an age distinction.
  2. Willfully utilizing any employment agency, placement service, training school or center, labor organization, or any other source that discriminates on the basis of age.
  3. Discrimination against any individual or to limit, segregate, or classify membership in any way that would deprive them of employment opportunities or would otherwise adversely affect an individual's status as an employee or applicant.
  4. Discharging or otherwise discriminating against any person because they opposed any unlawful employment practice; filed a charge or suit; or testified, participated, or assisted in any proceeding under the Act.
  5. Failing or refusing to refer for employment, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual because of the individual's age.
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## **Section 4-C**

## **Americans with Disabilities (ADA)**

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The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (hereinafter "ADA"), makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment against a qualified individual with a disability. The ADA also outlaws discrimination against individuals with disabilities in state and local government services, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. The part of the law that prohibits job discrimination is enforced by the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, (hereinafter "EEOC"), and state and local civil rights enforcement agencies that work with the commission.

The ADA also imposes a requirement on the employer to provide a "reasonable accommodation" for the known disabilities of applicants and employees, as long as that accommodation does not cause an undue hardship.

Under the ADA, the definition of a disability is: "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of that individual's major life activities." To meet this definition, the individual must have a bona fide impairment or be regarded as having an impairment, and the impairment must be a substantial limit on a major life activity.

If an employee wishes to ask for an accommodation, a Reasonable Accommodation Plan Meeting is scheduled with the employee, their supervisor, and the appropriate Central Office administrator to discuss and write a Reasonable Accommodation Plan.

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## Section 4-D

## Drug and Alcohol Testing Procedures

(Board Policy 404.08)

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### 1. Pre-Employment Testing

Employee applicants shall be subject to post-conditional job offer testing. Refusal to submit to such pre-employment testing, or testing positive, shall disqualify an applicant from employment.

### 2. Eligibility for Random Testing

Employees may volunteer for participation in the random drug testing program by submitting a completed Consent to Test Form.

### 3. Testing Procedure

#### a. Collection

The testing collection process will be conducted in a manner that protects privacy of the applicants or employees, guards against tampered specimens and ensures an accurate chain of custody of the specimen. The method of testing may involve the use of breath, saliva, urine, or hair samples. To the extent the testing involves the collection of urine, an adult monitor is to wait outside a closed restroom stall and listen for the normal sounds of urination.

It is intended that the procedures be modeled on those applicable to the testing of CDL employees, which include the testing of specimens for alcohol and unlawful substances. The tests are to be designed to detect only the use of alcohol or illegal drugs, including but not limited to amphetamines, marijuana, cocaine, steroids, opiates, and barbiturates, not medical conditions or the presence of authorized prescription medications.

#### b. Confidentiality

All activities related to the testing policy will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. 48-1901 to 48-1910 to the extent applicable and any other applicable confidentiality laws.

Test results will be shared only with staff who have a legitimate professional interest in having access to the information, on a “need to know” basis. Test results will not be turned over to any law enforcement authority in the absence of a court order, subpoena, or other legal process requiring such.

Test results will be kept in confidential files separate from the person’s other records. The test results will be destroyed when no longer needed for individual situations or for the overall testing program.

#### c. Re-Testing

An applicant may challenge the veracity of a positive test. If a positive test is proven to be false, the applicant will not be subject to the consequences of a positive test, provided that the consequences shall remain in place until the positive test is proven to be false.

A person will not be denied continued employment, be disciplined, or be subject to administrative action for a positive test unless the requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. 48-1906 and any other applicable laws are met.

The applicant or employee shall make a request to challenge a positive test with the Superintendent or designee within 72 hours of being notified of the positive test. The Superintendent or designee shall determine whether the challenge shall involve a retest of the specimen or a second test.

If the challenge will involve a retest of the specimen, the specimen previously submitted will be forwarded to a testing laboratory for confirmatory testing. The laboratory must be approved by the Superintendent or designee and adhere to federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) standards concerning drug testing protocols and procedures. Results of the retest will be provided to the Superintendent or designee by the approved laboratory. The re-testing shall be at the expense of the applicant or employee. To be a valid non-positive, the Superintendent or designee must be provided with information that establishes that the substance(s) detected in the initial test would remain detectable in the specimen at the time of the retest.

If the challenge will involve a second test, it will be completed using the District's standard procedures. The second test shall be at the expense of the applicant or employee. To be a valid non-positive, the Superintendent or designee must be provided with information that establishes that the substance(s) detected in the initial test would remain detectable via the testing method chosen as of the time of the second test.

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## **Section 4-E**

## **Family and Medical Leave**

(Board Policy 410.03)

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Unpaid family and medical leave will be granted up to 12 weeks per year to assist employees in balancing family and work life. For purposes of this policy, a year is defined as the employee contract year. Requests for family and medical leave shall be made to the Superintendent.

Employees may be allowed to substitute paid leave for unpaid family and medical leave by meeting the requirements set out in the family and medical leave administrative rules. Employees eligible for family and medical leave must comply with the family and medical leave administrative rules prior to starting family and medical leave. Any requirements stated in the Negotiated Contract between employees in that certified collective bargaining unit and the board regarding family and medical leave of such employees shall be followed.

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## Section 4-G

## Substance-Free Workplace

(Board Policy 404.07)

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Gering Public Schools is committed to providing an employment environment that is safe and provides appropriate motivation to ensure a creative and productive workforce. To this end, the district unequivocally endorses the philosophy that the workplace should be free from the detrimental effects of illicit drugs and alcohol. Acknowledgement of understanding and receipt of board standards and policy forms must be completed by each employee.

The board expects the school district and its employees to remain substance free. No employee shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of in the workplace any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance or alcoholic beverage as defined by federal or state law. "Workplace" includes school district facilities, school district premises or school district vehicles. "Workplace" also includes non-school property if the employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity, event or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the control of the school district or where the employee is engaged in school business.

If an employee is convicted of a violation of any criminal drug offense committed, the employee shall notify the employee's supervisor of the conviction within five days of the conviction.

The Superintendent will make the determination whether to require the employee to undergo substance abuse treatment or to discipline the employee. An employee who violates the terms of this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination. [An employee who violates this policy may be required to successfully participate in a substance abuse treatment program approved by the board.] If the employee fails to successfully participate in a program, the employee may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Disciplinary sanctions which may be taken against an employee for any non-compliance with this policy include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: (Not listed in order of importance. Any non-compliance could result in termination of employment.)

- A. Oral reprimand
- B. Written reprimand
- C. Suspension with pay
- D. Suspension without pay
- E. Termination of employment
- F. Cancellation of employment
- G. Non-renewal of employment
- H. Referral to appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution
- I. Voluntary or mandatory enrollment in in-patient care, training, or other programs or services relating to drug or alcohol use or abuse as a term and condition to any continuing employment by the district at the employee's cost.

Any disciplinary action sought to be imposed by the Superintendent or designee shall be carried out in accordance with policy and the law. Any employee of this school district who has been involved with an incident which may lead to their being charged or convicted of any violation of law involving illicit drugs or alcohol must immediately (within 24 hours) report such charge or conviction to the Superintendent or designee. Failure to report may result in any disciplinary action as set forth in this section.

## *Chapter 5 - Attendance & Absence*

Section 5-A

CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEE WORK DAY

Section 5-B

TEACHER ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

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### **Section 5-A**

### **Certificated Employee Work Day**

(Board Policy 406.05)

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The work day for certificated employees shall begin each day of the school year at a time established by the Superintendent. Certificated employees who are employed only during the academic year shall have the same work day as other certificated employees. The expected length of a certificated employee's school day will be established as the start and end time for each building as determined by the building principal and will include no less than a 30 minute lunch break. Certificated employees may have earlier or later arrival or departure times and be permitted to leave the building during the normal workday on an individual basis, provided that permission is obtained from the building principal in advance. Prior approval is not required during the employee's regularly scheduled lunch break. The building principal is authorized to make changes in the work day in order to facilitate the education program. These changes shall be reported to the Superintendent.

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### **Section 5-B**

### **Teacher Attendance & Punctuality**

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It is the practice of the Gering Public School district to require employees to report for work punctually, and to work all scheduled hours. Excessive tardiness and poor attendance disrupt workflow and productivity, and will not be tolerated. Regular and dependable attendance is an essential function of each job.

If a teacher must be absent for illness, please take appropriate steps including contacting the principal and notifying the SmartFind Express System no later than 6:00 a.m. so that a substitute may be secured. If requested, attempts to secure specific subs will be made. All necessary materials such as plans, seating charts, class rosters, etc., shall be easily accessible for the substitute teacher. All other absences require that the teacher complete a request form on SmartFind **before the absence**.

## Chapter 6 - Employee Benefits

Section 6-A	HEALTH & DENTAL INSURANCE
Section 6-B	COBRA
Section 6-C	FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN (SECTION 125 PLAN)
Section 6-D	WORKER'S COMPENSATION
Section 6-E	LONG-TERM DISABILITY
Section 6-F	VOLUNTARY GROUP LIFE INSURANCE
Section 6-G	RETIREMENT - NEBRASKA SCHOOL EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEM
Section 6-H	TAX SHELTERED ANNUITIES

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### Section 6-A

### Health & Dental Insurance

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Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Insurance of Nebraska (hereinafter "BCBS")

Employee/dependent eligibility for coverage is subject to the requirements set forth in the membership and underwriting guidelines and in the agreement between Educators Health Alliance (EHA) and BCBS.

#### EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS MUST ENROLL WITHIN 31 DAYS OF INITIAL ELIGIBILITY

1. Adding Employees - New eligible employees must enroll within 31 days of employment.
2. Adding New Spouses - As long as BCBS receives the application within 31 days of the marriage, the new spouse will become effective on the first day of the month following receipt of the application.
3. Adding Dependents – BCBS MUST receive the enrollment form within 31 days the dependent becomes eligible.
4. Adding Newborns – If an employee is covered under a single membership, Nebraska law requires automatic coverage for newborns for a period of 31 days. In order to continue coverage beyond this time, the employee must request a change to family coverage within the 31 day period and pay the additional premium. A new enrollment form must be completed to change to family membership. Employees already enrolled under a family membership must provide both their employer and BCBS with the newborn's name and date of birth within 31 days. This must be done by completing the EHA enrollment form.
5. Be aware of the concept of "coat-tailing" which means that if a spouse wants to come onto BCBS coverage along with a newborn, the spouse or other children may come on the first of the month following the baby's birth.
6. Adding an Adopted Child – Coverage will become effective on the date the employee legally assumes financial responsibility for the child (date of placement). When applying for coverage for an adopted child, the employee should provide written proof of the impending or final adoption. Such proof may include agency placement papers, a letter of confirmation from an attorney, a birth certificate showing the adoptive parents' names, or any other written documentation of the adoption proceedings. No waiting periods for pre-existing conditions will be applied.
7. Adding Stepchildren and Grandchildren – BCBS must receive a Dependency Statement along with a completed enrollment form within 31 days following the date the dependent becomes eligible for coverage. This application is subject to eligibility review and approval.

8. Adding Dependents by Court Order – In some cases, the employee may be ordered by the court to provide health care coverage for a dependent. The employee must notify BCBS as soon as possible. A completed enrollment form noting the change, along with the Qualified Medical Child Support Order must be completed.

#### Types of Enrollment

1. Employee Only Membership – Covers the employee only.
2. Employee and Child(ren) Membership – Covers the employee and their dependent child(ren).
3. Employee and Spouse Membership – Covers the employee and their spouse.
4. Employee and Family Membership – Covers the employee, spouse, and their dependent child(ren).
5. Coverage for Children up to Age 26: The Affordable Care Act allows young adults to stay on their parents' healthcare plan until age 26 even if the young adult no longer lives with his/her parents.

#### Effective Dates

1. New Hires and Dependents – As long as BCBS receives the enrollment form within 31 days of the date the employee and/or dependent becomes eligible, the effective date will be the first day of the month following receipt. Coverage may begin on the day the employee's employment contract goes into effect if specified on the application. The employer must contribute toward the premium as of the contract date.
2. Special Enrollees – The effective date for Special Enrollees who have lost other coverage will be the group's next due date following the qualifying event.
3. Late Enrollees - Effective November 1, 1999, no late enrollment will be allowed for employees of large subgroups (those with 51 or more employees).

#### Events Affecting Eligibility

In addition to termination of employment, some other events can affect the eligibility of an employee or dependent. Changes in employer contribution levels or minimum work hour requirements can result in new eligibility and enrollment periods for employees. Some examples of eligibility loss include: exceeding the dependent child maximum age; loss of dependent student status; a reduction in hours at work; divorce; or death. BCBS will periodically request verification of dependent status. These forms must be completed by the employee.

#### RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING CHANGE IN STATUS

*GPS employees are reminded of their responsibility to report any change in status that will affect their health insurance coverage*

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## **Section 6-B                      COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985)**

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1. What is COBRA?--COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985) is the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, is a federal law that requires a group health and/or dental plan to allow a covered person to continue his or her group coverage under certain circumstances when coverage would otherwise terminate. The COBRA coverage may be for 18, 29, or 36 months, depending on the qualifying event. This notice is intended to inform you, in summary fashion, of your rights and obligations under Continuation Coverage provisions of the law.
2. How COBRA Works

- a. COBRA Notification--When a qualifying event occurs, notification procedures must be followed. If coverage for a dependent ends due to divorce, legal separation or any other change in dependent status, the employee should notify the employer within 60 days of the qualifying event. Federal law requires an employer to send written notice of continuation of coverage rights within 14 days of a qualifying event. COBRA coverage is available to the qualifying employee or his/her dependents. If the employee was previously covered under a family membership, he or she can retain a family plan under COBRA. The employee must also have the option of selecting an appropriate plan to cover only those individuals applying for the extension. The option is controlled by the coverage levels offered to active employees.
- b. COBRA Enrollment--The employee must choose to continue coverage by enrolling for COBRA. The employee has 60 days from the COBRA notification or coverage termination date (whichever is later) to return the completed application to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska. Failure to enroll within the required time period will make the individual ineligible for continuation coverage. Individuals have 45 days from the COBRA enrollment date to pay the initial premium to BCBS. Since the COBRA application will not be processed until the premium is received, the initial payment should be sent with the form. Failure to pay the initial premium within the required time period will end COBRA eligibility.
- c. COBRA Premiums--The COBRA premium includes a 2% administration fee above the group rates and is due on the first day of each coverage month. However, a 30-day grace period is allowed for premium payment. The premium must be received by the Payroll Office by the last business day of the month due. Late payment or non-payment of premiums will result in the COBRA coverage being terminated as of the last premium paid through date.
- d. When COBRA Ends--COBRA coverage will end on the earlier of:
  - i. the day the individual becomes covered under any other group health plan (after COBRA election) which does not exclude or limit any pre-existing conditions or to whom such an exclusion does not apply, due to creditable coverage;
  - ii. the day a covered person is entitled to benefits under Medicare (after COBRA election);
  - iii. the day health coverage has been continued for the maximum period of time allowed (18, 29 or 36 months);
  - iv. when COBRA premium is not received within the required time period.
- e. Continuation of Coverage After COBRA--At the end of the COBRA eligibility period, an individual may transfer to a BCBS non-group plan. The application will be subject to medical underwriting and approval. The BCBS Plan in the state where the person lives should be contacted for enrollment information. If you are a GPS employee covered by BCBS, you have a right to choose this continuation coverage if you lose your group health coverage because of a reduction in your hours of employment or the termination of your employment. In the event of termination for gross misconduct, continuation coverage is not provided. Under the law, the employee or a family member, has the responsibility to inform the GPS Human Resource Department and the BCBS Administrator of a divorce, legal separation, or a child losing dependent status under BCBS within 30 days of the date of the event or date coverage would end under the plan because of the event, whichever is later. GPS has the responsibility to notify the BCBS Plan Administrator of the employee's death, termination, and reduction in hours of employment or Medicare entitlements. When the GPS Payroll Office is notified that one of these events has happened, the Payroll Office will in turn notify you that you have the right to choose continuation coverage. Under the law, you have at least 60 days from the date you would lose coverage because of the event described above, or the date notice of your election rights are sent to

you, to inform the BCBS Administrator that you want continuation coverage. If you do not choose continuation of coverage, your group health insurance will end. If you choose continuation coverage, GPS is required to give you coverage which, as of the time coverage is being provided, is identical to the coverage provided under the plan to similarly situated employees or family members. However, the law also provides that your continuation coverage may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- i. GPS no longer provides group health insurance coverage to any of its employees.
- ii. The premium for your continuation coverage is not paid on time.
- iii. You become covered by another group plan, unless the plan contains any exclusions or limitations with respect to any pre-existing conditions you or your covered dependents may have.
- iv. You become enrolled in Medicare.
- v. You extend your coverage for up to 29 months due to your disability and there has been a final determination that you are no longer disabled.

If you have any questions about the law, please contact the Payroll Department.

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## **Section 6-C**

## **Section-125 Flexible Benefits Plan**

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### Definition of Section 125 Flexible Benefit Plan

GPS has established a Flexible Benefit Plan to allow eligible employees (see below) to select among certain benefits on a tax preferred basis in exchange for a reduction in cash compensation that would otherwise be payable to the eligible employee. The Plan allows the eligible employee to pay for health and dental insurance plans and cancer insurance paid by employer payroll deduction on a pre-tax basis, and also allows the eligible employee a portion of their otherwise taxable compensation to either or both of a medical reimbursement account or a dependent care assistance account. The eligible employee then can receive reimbursements for eligible medical expenses or dependent care expenses, respectively, on a pre-tax basis.

### Selection of Benefits

A Participant may elect under this Plan to receive his or her full Compensation for any Plan Year in cash or may agree with the Employer to reduce his or her Compensation and to have the amount of the reduction applied by the Employee toward the cost of Account Plans or Premium Expense Plans, subject to the requirements in subsection (c):

1. Account Plans – Each Participant may elect to participate in one or more of the following Account Plans:
  - a. Adoption Assistance Plan
  - b. Dependent Care Assistance Plan
  - c. Medical Reimbursement Plan
2. Premium Expense Plans – Each Participant may elect to participate in one or more of the following Premium Expense Plans:
  - a. Group Health Insurance Plan
  - b. Group Dental Insurance Plan
  - c. Group Term-Life Insurance Plan
  - d. Cancer Insurance Policy
  - e. Accident Insurance Policy

f. Short-Term Disability Insurance Policy

AMENDMENTS TO MEDICAL REIMBURSEMENT AND DEPENDENT CARE

1. Grace Period--For amounts contributed to the Account Plans, if any, sponsored by the employer, a Participant may use amounts remaining in his or her Account Plans at the end of the Plan Year for reimbursement of qualified expenses incurred in the "Grace Period". The Grace Period begins on the first day of the following Plan Year (September 1) and ends on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the third month of the following Plan Year (November 15). Amounts remaining in the Participant's account at the end of the Grace Period are forfeited. Amounts remaining in the Participant's account at the beginning of the Grace Period may not be converted to cash or used to pay any other taxable or nontaxable benefit. The Plan Administrator will establish procedures that first apply unused amounts in the Participant's account at the beginning of the Grace Period to qualifying expenses incurred during the Plan Year for the Prior Plan Year Grace Period, followed by amounts in the Participant's account for the Plan Year in which the Grace Period occurs. Claims for reimbursement for expenses incurred under Account Plans during the Plan Year of the Grace Period must be submitted on or before November 30 of the Plan Year in which the Grace Period occurs.

Election of Benefits

When eligible employees begin participation in the Flexible Benefit Plan, they will be given an enrollment form on which they can elect the benefits that they desire under the Plan. When eligible employees return the enrollment form to the Human Resources Department, it constitutes their agreement with the employer for the balance of the Plan Year (which is the 12 month period commencing September 1<sup>st</sup> and ending on August 31<sup>st</sup>) that the employer should provide the eligible employee the applicable benefits that they have elected. IF THE ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEE FAILS TO RETURN THE ELECTION FORM TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1, THEY ARE ELECTING NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEDICAL REIMBURSEMENT AND DEPENDENT CARE ASSISTANCE PLANS.

Employees are responsible for submitting their claims to:

Submit all claims to: Mailing Address: Regional Care Inc.  
905 West 27<sup>th</sup> Street  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
Phone No: 308-635-2260  
Fax No: 308-635-2018  
Online: <http://www2.regionalcare.com/claims.html>

Reimbursement for the Flexible Benefits Plan will be directly deposited to the participant's bank account or a check will be mailed.

Debit Cards:

Beginning in 2009/2010, Flexible Benefit Plan participants will be able to use the "Benny" Card to access their Flexible Benefit Account.

## Section 6-D

## Worker's Compensation

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All GPS employees of the school district are covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance.

To be eligible for Worker's Compensation, the injury to an employee must arise from and in the course of employment with GPS. Employees injured during the course of employment are required to report ALL accidents or injuries to their supervisor immediately. An Incident Report must be completed and forwarded to the Business Manager. Failure on the part of the employee to report an injury within twenty-four (24) hours may prejudice and defeat a claim for compensation. Employees who see a medical care provider following an injury at work are reminded to inform the provider that the injury was received at work.

A certified employee who is off work for the first seven (7) days due to their injury must use their accumulated sick leave to be paid for the absence. If the employee is off work six (6) weeks or longer, the first seven (7) days are paid by Worker's Compensation retroactively.

Worker's Compensation benefits are not taxable.

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## Section 6-E

## Long-Term Disability Insurance

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Long Term Disability Insurance is provided for certified employees with a .50 FTE or more. After exhaustion of accumulated sick leave, employees are eligible to apply for Long Term Disability. Please contact the Human Resources Department for information and to complete an application.

The Long Term Disability policy pays 66 2/3% of what the employee would have earned at work.

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## Section 6-F

## Voluntary Group Life Insurance

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Starting in the fall of 2009, Gering Public Schools made available to employees at the start of their employment who worked at least 20 hours per week the opportunity to purchase group life insurance. Information regarding the group life insurance benefit can be obtained from the Human Resources office.

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## Section 6-G

## Nebraska School Employees Retirement System

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All certified employees, who work for GPS at least 20 hours per week on an ongoing regular basis, are *required* to join the Nebraska School Employees Retirement System, (hereinafter "NPERS".)

Contributions/Funding

Your retirement benefit is based on a statutory formula and is guaranteed by the state. Your benefit is funded from three sources: 1) Your member account (contributions and interest earned), 2) Your employer (Gering Public School District) contributions and interest, and 3) The State of Nebraska.

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025:

- As a MEMBER of NPERS, you are required by law to contribute 8.00% of your gross compensation.
- Your EMPLOYER is required by law to match your contributions at the rate of 101% (8.08%). The employer's contributions are not credited to your individual retirement account, but provide funding for your benefit at retirement.
- The STATE OF NEBRASKA annually contributes 1% of total members' compensation and may contribute an additional amount if recommended by the actuary to fund the Plan. These funds are appropriated by the Legislature from the state's general fund.
- Your retirement benefit is not based on the contributions made, but is based on a *formula*. (See "Formula Annuity Benefit Calculation.") The contributions help to fund your retirement benefit *for life*.

Benefit Statement

Each fall, NPERS will mail to all Public School employees a Benefit Statement to their home address. This statement will provide information on your benefit calculation, your total reported years of service, as well as your member contributions and the accumulated interest. Employer contributions are used for funding the retirement benefit and are not part of your individual account. Therefore, they do not appear on the statement. To ensure you receive your annual Benefit Statement, always inform the Human Resources Department of any address changes.

All School Plan assets are held by NPERS in trust. Money held by the Plan is immune from execution, garnishment, attachment, the operation of bankruptcy or insolvency laws, or any other process of law.

The assets cannot be paid out because of any legal actions (except through a qualified domestic relations order in a divorce case.) In addition, you cannot use your Plan assets as loan collateral since they are not assignable. Plan assets can only be paid to another entity in two situations:

- Through a qualified domestic relations order under the Spousal Pension Rights Act
- Through an IRS tax lien

Address Changes

It is important you keep your address current through the Human Resources Department. GPS will inform NPERS of any address changes you report to them. If you terminate employment and leave your money in the Plan, you should report any address changes directly to NPERS to ensure you receive your Benefit Statement and other items mailed to you.

Beneficiary Designation

Your beneficiary is the person or persons you designate to receive your benefits when you die. At the time you join the Plan, you will be provided a Beneficiary Designation Form to complete. Keeping your beneficiary designation at NPERS up to date will ensure benefits are paid promptly and properly. You should review your choice of beneficiaries if:

- you or a beneficiary marries or becomes divorced;
- a beneficiary dies;
- you have a child;
- you return to public school employment after having received a refund of your account; or
- you return to public school employment after retiring. (See "Reemployment".)

You may request a Beneficiary Designation Form from the Human Resources Department or from NPERS, or download from their website at [www.npers.ne.gov](http://www.npers.ne.gov). When NPERS receives your properly completed form, it will cancel any previous beneficiary designation. If a beneficiary has not been named or your beneficiary has predeceased you, your benefits will be paid to your estate.

### Terminating Service Before Retirement

When you terminate service in a Nebraska public school before you become eligible for monthly retirement benefits (see “Retirement Eligibility”), you have the following choices:

**Withdrawal:** You may withdraw your accumulated contributions and interest in a lump sum refund. To apply, you must request an Application for Refund from NPERS. You are eligible to receive a refund approximately four (4) months after your termination of employment, or three (3) days after receipt of your completed Application for Refund, whichever is later.

**NOTE:** A refund cannot be paid to anyone who is not working during summer months but who will return to work the following school year. Furthermore, you may not receive a refund if you terminate your employment and, within 180 days of your termination, you subsequently provide service on a regular basis in any capacity to an employer who participates in the School Plan. If you return to work prior to the end of your 180 break, you will be required to repay the total amount of your refund.

**Deferral:** You may leave your account on an inactive basis and continue to earn regular interest until such time as you become eligible for a benefit. You may defer receipt of your benefit until no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> following the year you reach age 70 ½.

**Termination of Employment:** Termination of employment occurs on the date on which the member’s employer determines that the member’s employer-employee relationship with the employer is dissolved. The employer must notify NPERS of the date on which such a termination has occurred. Termination of employment does not include ceasing employment at the end of the school year if the member subsequently provides service on a regular basis in any capacity for any school district other than a Class V school district within 180 calendar days after ceasing employment, or if the PERB determines that a purported termination was not a bona fide separation from service with the employer. [§79-902(38)]. After 180 days, you may return to public school employment under all circumstances

If you have questions, please write or call:

Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems, P.O. Box 94816, Lincoln, NE 68509-4816

Phone: 402-471-2053 or 800-245-5712. You may schedule an appointment to visit NPERS at 1526 K Street, Suite 400 in Lincoln. For Plan information and to use the Benefit Estimator, visit their website at [www.npers.ne.gov](http://www.npers.ne.gov).

Certified employees may request a paid day to attend a retirement seminar sponsored by NPERS.

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## Section 6-H

## Tax Sheltered Annuities

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Gering Public Schools offers employees the opportunity to contribute to a tax-sheltered annuity through the GPS 403(b) Plan. In response to the regulations governing the administrations of 403(b) plans, the District has selected 403(b) Consultants Inc. to provide common remitting and Plan compliance services for our plan. As part of the

Plan Solutions Program, the district will begin working with a third party administrator (TPA), Aspire. They will provide all common remitting of contributions to participating investment providers offered within the Plan as well as providing compliance oversight on behalf of the District for the Plan.

Employees who would like to start or stop a contribution should use the forms available for the 403(b) Plan at the Human Resources Office, or at the website <http://aspireonline.com>. All forms and the handbook are available at this website.

## ***Chapter 7 - Employee Leaves***

Section 7-A	FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)
Section 7-B	EMPLOYEE JURY DUTY LEAVE
Section 7-C	LEAVES
Section 7-D	LEAVE REQUEST CHANGES

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### **Section 7-A**

### **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

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Unpaid family and medical leave will be granted up to 12 weeks per year to assist employees in balancing family and work life. For purposes of this policy, a year is defined as the employee contract year. Requests for family and medical leave shall be made to the Superintendent.

Employees may be allowed to substitute paid leave for unpaid family and medical leave by meeting the requirements set out in the family and medical leave administrative rules. Employees eligible for family and medical leave must comply with the family and medical leave administrative rules prior to starting family and medical leave. The requirements stated in the Negotiated Contract between employees in that certified collective bargaining unit and the board regarding family and medical leave of such employees shall be followed.

#### **Maternity Leave**

1. All policies, rules, and regulations applicable to employees who are granted sick leave shall be applicable to employees applying for maternity leave.
  2. Written notification for maternity leave shall be submitted to the building principal where the employee is assigned early enough so that arrangements can be made for a long term substitute. The employee will meet with the Payroll Office to complete any required paperwork.
  3. Sick leave benefits for maternity shall begin when the doctor certifies that the employee is no longer able to perform her duties. The paid leave ends when the doctor certifies that the employee is fully recovered from disability resulting from delivery and recovery there from.
  4. When the doctor certifies that the employee has fully recovered from the temporary disability, the employee is expected to return to employment, unless the employee requests to take unpaid leave entitled to them under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. If the employee chooses to take FMLA leave, she will be entitled to unpaid leave for no more than a total of 12 weeks, accumulated between the above paid leave and unpaid leave.
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### **Section 7-B**

### **Employee Jury Duty Leave**

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Any employee who is summoned to serve on jury or election board duty, or who is subpoenaed to provide testimony, shall not be subject to discharge from employment, loss of pay, loss of sick leave, loss of vacation time, or any other form of penalty, as a result of his or her absence from work due to such service provided the employee submits a copy of the summons, in advance, to the employee's supervisor. Certificated employees will receive their

regular salary. Any payment for jury duty shall be paid to the school district. The employee will report to work within one hour on any day when the employee is excused from jury duty during regular working hours. The requirements stated in the Negotiated Contract between employees in that certified collective bargaining unit and the board regarding Jury Duty Leave of such employees shall be followed.

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## **Section 7-C                      Leaves**

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All leaves not discussed in this section shall be governed by the requirements in the Negotiated Contract between employees in that certified collective bargaining unit and the board shall be followed.

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## **Section 7-D                      Leave Request Changes**

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Requests for a change of a personal, professional, sick, or other leave day already used must be approved by the Superintendent within 30 days following the date of leave.

## Chapter 8 - Employee Expectations

Section 8-A	PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES CRITERIA (RULE 27)
Section 8-B	CONDUCT
Section 8-C	EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR AS A MODEL TO STUDENTS
Section 8-D	EMPLOYEES WITH TATTOOS AND/OR BODY PIERCINGS
Section 8-E	ASSESSMENT SECURITY
Section 8-F	TUTORING
Section 8-G	ANTI-BULLYING
Section 8-H	EMPLOYEE DRESS
Section 8-I	STUDENT DISCIPLINE
Section 8-J	STUDENT RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION
Section 8-K	KEY SECURITY PROCEDURES
Section 8-L	LESSON PLANS
Section 8-M	SUBSTITUTE TEACHER PREPARATION
Section 8-N	PURCHASING PROCEDURES
Section 8-O	COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS
Section 8-P	INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE
Section 8-Q	STAFF USE OF COMPUTERS, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE INTERNET
Section 8-T	Transportation Supervision
Section 8-U	Meal Charges

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### Section 8-A

### Professional Practices Criteria (Rule 27)

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Gering Public Schools follows the professional practices criteria as set forth by the Nebraska Department of Education in Rule (chapter) 27 establishing standards of professional Practices in areas including, but not limited to:

1. Ethical and Professional Performance
2. Competency
3. Continuance in Professional Service
4. Contractual Obligations

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### Section 8-B

### Conduct

(Board Policy 401)

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#### **Employee Behavior**

Each employee plays a vital role in providing an equal opportunity for a quality education for students commensurate with the students individual needs. While teachers have the most direct impact on the formal instruction of students, all employees have an impact on the school environment by their dedication to their work and their actions. As role models for their students, employees shall promote a cooperative, enthusiastic and supportive learning environment for the students.

Employees are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a positive manner in order to promote the best interests of the district. **Appropriate employee conduct includes:**

1. Treating all visitors and co-workers in a courteous manner
2. Refraining from behavior or conduct that is offensive or undesirable.
3. Reporting to administration suspicious, unethical or illegal conduct.
4. Reporting to administration any threatening or potentially violent behavior by co-workers.
5. Wearing clothing appropriate for the work being performed.
6. Performing assigned tasks efficiently and in accord with established quality standards.
7. Reporting to work punctually as scheduled and being at the proper work station, ready for work, at the assigned start time and throughout the work day.
8. Giving proper advance notice whenever unable to work and reporting absence according to established procedures.
9. Adhering to the district-wide no tobacco restriction.
10. Maintaining cleanliness and order in the workplace.

**The following conduct is prohibited,** and individuals engaged in it will be subject to discipline up to and including termination: Engaging in or threatening acts of workplace violence including, but not limited to:

1. Harassment; GPS Board Policy 404.06. Harassment of employees, students, volunteers or visitors will not be tolerated in the school district. School district includes school district facilities, school district property, or property within the jurisdiction of the school district; while on school-owned or school-operated transportation; while attending or engaged in school activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the district. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, racial, religious, national origin, marital status, disability and sexual harassment. Harassment by board members, administrators, employees, parents, vendors, and others doing business with the school district is prohibited. (Reference Board of Education Policy 404.06)
2. Possessing firearms or other weapons on district property.
3. Fighting or assaulting a co-worker, visitor, or student.
4. Threatening or intimidating a co-worker, visitor or student.
5. Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or narcotics, or using, selling, dispensing, or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs or narcotics on district property.
6. Disclosing confidential information.
7. Falsifying or altering any district record or report, such as an employment application, medical report, time records, expense accounts, or absentee reports.
8. Stealing, destroying, defacing, or misusing district property or another employee or student's property.
9. Misusing district communications systems, including district mail, electronic mail, computers, internet access and phones.
10. Refusing to follow administration's or management's instructions concerning a job-related matter, or being insubordinate.
11. Failing to wear assigned safety equipment or failing to abide by safety rules and policies.
12. Soliciting or distributing in violation of district policies.
13. Using tobacco on district property.
14. Using profanity or abusive language.

15. Allowing unsupervised access to school facilities and resources.
16. Allowing access to school facilities and resources for reasons not related to school purposes.

These examples of impermissible behavior are not intended to be an all-inclusive list. At administration/management's discretion, any violation of the district's policies or any conduct considered inappropriate or unsatisfactory may subject the employee to disciplinary action.

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## **Section 8-C                      Employee Behavior as a Model to Students**

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Employees are instructed to avoid situations where an employee's behavior could be open to allegations, such as being alone with a student behind closed doors, in bathrooms or locker rooms. Employees are advised and directed to conduct themselves above reproach when working with or around students. Employees are advised to conduct themselves as role models in the use of social media and cell phone cameras.

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## **Section 8-D                      Employee With Tattoos and/or Body Piercings**

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Body markings, as with messages or depictions on clothing, must avoid subjects not suitable to an educational environmental environment. Body jewelry, piercings, or accessories shall not present a health or safety hazard to others, or substantially interfere with the educational process. The supervisor of the employee will determine the appropriateness of the tattoo and/or body piercings.

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## **Section 8-E                      Assessment Security**

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Any employee who performs the responsibility of student assessment is expected to adhere to Nebraska's Security Procedures and report breaches in security to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee for report to the Nebraska Department of Education. Other assessment requirements and regulations must also be followed. Professionalism, common sense, and practical procedures provide the framework for testing ethics.

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## **Section 8-F                      Tutoring** (Board Policy 409.05)

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The following rules related to tutoring shall be followed:

1. A teacher may not accept payment to tutor any child enrolled in his/her class.
2. No tutoring for which a teacher receives a fee will be carried on in a school building.

3. Teachers who accept outside tutoring engagements make their own arrangements with the parents for the fees to be assessed.
  4. Reference Staff Conduct with Students (Board Policy 402.15)
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## **Section 8-G                      Anti-Bullying**

(Board Policy 504.20)

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The board recognizes the negative impact that bullying has on student health, welfare, safety, and the school’s learning environment and prohibits such behavior. Bullying is defined as any ongoing pattern of physical, verbal, or electronic abuse on school grounds, in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted by a school being used for a school purpose by a school employee or his or her designee, or at school sponsored activities or school-sponsored athletic events.

Bullying may constitute grounds for long-term suspension, expulsion or mandatory reassignment, subject to state and federal statutes and the district’s student discipline and due process procedures.

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## **Section 8-H                      Employee Dress**

It is the expectation of the district that each employee’s dress, grooming, and personal hygiene should be appropriate to the work setting and not detrimental to the education process.

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## **Section 8-I                      Student Discipline**

(Board Policy 505.06)

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Disciplinary procedures shall be in accordance with state law and Board policy.

Corporal punishment is defined as the intentional physical punishment of a student and is expressly prohibited.

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## **Section 8-J                      Student Restraint & Seclusion**

(Board Policy 505.07)

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The board prohibits the use of seclusion and restraint by school personnel except as implemented consistent with this policy. Restraint or seclusion of students will not be used solely as a disciplinary consequence or when a known medical or psychological condition makes its use inadvisable. Except in the case of an emergency, only school personnel who have received systematic training in the use of restraint and seclusion in accordance with the

district's policy will implement physical restraint or seclusion with a student. In an emergency, a district employee may use physical restraint or seclusion as necessary to maintain order or to prevent a student from causing physical harm to self, other students, and school staff or property. School personnel will continuously monitor a student's status during any physical restraint or seclusion.

### **1. PHYSICAL RESTRAINT**

Physical restraint means the use of physical force to restrict the free movement of all or a part of a student's body. Physical restraint will be considered to be a reasonable use of force when used in the following circumstances:

1. as reasonably needed to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person or within the control of a student;
2. as reasonably needed to maintain order or to prevent or break up a fight;
3. as reasonably needed for self-defense;
4. as reasonably needed to ensure the safety of any student, employee, volunteer, or other person present;
5. as reasonably needed to teach a skill, to calm or comfort a student, or to prevent self-injurious behavior;
6. as reasonably needed to escort a student safely from one area to another;
7. if used as provided for in an IEP, Section 504, or behavior intervention plan; or
8. as reasonably needed to prevent imminent destruction to school or another person's property.

### **2. MECHANICAL RESTRAINT**

Mechanical restraint means the use of any device or material attached or adjacent to a student's body that restricts freedom of movement or normal access to any portion of the student's body and that the student cannot easily remove. Mechanical restraint includes the tying down, taping, or strapping down of a student. Mechanical restraint of a student by school personnel is permissible only in the following circumstances:

1. when properly used as an assistive technology device included in the student's IEP, Section 504, or behavior intervention plan or as otherwise prescribed by a medical or related service provider;
2. when using seat belts or other safety restraints to secure students during transportation;
3. as reasonably needed to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person or within the control of a student;
4. as reasonably needed for self-defense;
5. as reasonably needed to ensure the safety of any student, employee, volunteer, or other person.

### **3. SECLUSION**

Seclusion means the confinement of a student alone in an enclosed space from which the student is (a) physically prevented from leaving or (b) incapable of leaving due to physical or intellectual capacity. Seclusion is different from in-school suspension in which other students or adults may be present but in which students are not physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion of a student by school personnel may be used in the following circumstances:

1. as reasonably needed to respond to a person in control of a weapon or other dangerous object;
2. as reasonably needed to maintain order or prevent or break up a fight;
3. as reasonably needed for self-defense;
4. as reasonably needed when a student's behavior poses a threat of imminent physical harm to self or others or imminent substantial destruction of school or another person's property; or
5. when used as specified in the student's IEP, Section 504, or behavior intervention plan; and

- a. the student is constantly monitored by an adult in close proximity who is able to see and hear the student at all times;
- b. the student is released from seclusion upon cessation of the behaviors that led to the seclusion or as otherwise specified in the student's IEP, Section 504, or behavior intervention plan;
- c. the confining space has been approved for such use by the local education agency;
- d. the space is appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated or cooled; and
- e. the space is free from objects that unreasonably expose the student or others to harm.

#### **4. ISOLATION**

Isolation means a behavior management technique in which a student is placed alone in an enclosed space from which the student is not prevented from leaving. Isolation is different from seclusion. Isolation is permitted as a behavior management technique provided that:

1. the isolation space is appropriately lighted, ventilated and heated or cooled;
2. the duration of the isolation is reasonable in light of the purpose for the isolation;
3. the student is reasonably monitored; and
4. the isolation space is free from objects that unreasonably expose the student or others to harm.

#### **5. NOTICE, REPORTING AND DOCUMENTATION**

1. A district Restraint or Seclusion Report must be completed for each incident of restraint or seclusion other than normal use of mechanical restraint for transportation safety. Each record shall include:
  - a. Name of the student
  - b. Name of the staff member(s) administering the physical restraint or seclusion;
  - c. Date of the incident and the time the restraint or seclusion began and ended;
  - d. Location of the restraint or seclusion;
  - e. A description of the restraint or seclusion;
  - f. A description of the student's activity immediately preceding the behavior that prompted the use of restraint or seclusion;
  - g. A description of the behavior that prompted the use of restraint or seclusion;
  - h. Efforts to de-escalate the situation and alternatives to restraint or seclusion that were attempted; and
  - i. Information documenting parent contact and notification
2. Notice to Administrators--The principal or designee shall be notified of the incident as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the same school day.
3. Notice to Parents--When a principal or designee has personal or actual knowledge of any of the events listed above, he or she shall promptly notify the student's parent or guardian and shall provide the name of the school employee whom the parent or guardian may contact regarding the incident.
4. Written Report to Parents--Within a reasonable period of time not to exceed 30 days after the incident, the principal or designee shall also provide the parent or guardian with a written incident report. This report must include the following:
  - a. the date, time of day, location, duration, and description of the incident and interventions;
  - b. the events or events that led up to the incident;
  - c. the nature and extent of any injury to the student; and
  - d. the name of a school employee the parent or guardian can contact regarding the incident.

## Section 8-K

## Key Security Procedures

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The purpose of the Gering Public Schools Key Procedure is to improve and maintain the security of GPS property and to ensure the safety and security of GPS students and staff. The procedure will provide guidelines for a tracking system for all GPS keys. For the purposes of this section, keys shall mean physical keys and electronic access cards.

1. It is the responsibility of each person who has been issued a key to be vigilant in the use of that key in order to maintain security. The safety and security of students, staff and property take priority over the convenience of the key holder.
2. All building keys are the property of Gering Public Schools. Improper or unauthorized use, such as reproduction, lending, or use for entry into unauthorized areas may result in the revocation of the key and may include disciplinary actions.
3. Building keys will only be made or duplicated by the Buildings and Grounds Department. All building keys are to be marked “do not duplicate” or “duplication prohibited.”
4. Employees shall not loan or transfer keys to anyone. The person to whom a key has been issued will be held responsible for the use of that key until it has been properly returned to the building administrator. If a key is stolen, the theft should be reported to the immediate supervisor.
5. Keys are issued only to persons employed by Gering Public Schools and to authorized contractors for a specific contract period. Any exceptions will need to be approved by the Director of Building and Grounds. All keys issued will be recorded on the proper key issuance form.
6. For emergency purposes each building is to have a key box that includes a copy of each building key.
7. Individuals who are assigned keys are responsible for the security of these keys. Lost or stolen keys must immediately be reported to the building administrator. A replacement charge reflecting the time and expense of the key replacement will be assessed for each lost or stolen key. Requests for keys lost due to theft must be accompanied by a police report. Damaged or worn keys will be replaced at no charge provided the old key is returned to the building administrator and shows no signs of intentional abuse.
8. Any person found to be in possession of an unauthorized key shall be liable for its use and subject to disciplinary and legal action.
9. Employees not actively on the job for longer than four (4) months will be required to return keys issued to them. Keys will be re-issued at the time of their return to work.
10. All keys must be returned to the building administrator or their designee when the employee’s duties no longer necessitate the need for a key. The employee cannot pass on a key to another or new employee. The employee must sign their Key Issuance Form. The employee will be given a copy of the form and a copy will be retained in their employment file.

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## Section 8-L

## Lesson Plans

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Lesson plans are to be completed for all classes and should, at a minimum, be prepared at least one week in advance. Copies of lesson plans may need to be turned in to the Principal, and should be available upon request.

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## Section 8-M

## Substitute Teacher Preparation

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A packet for substitute teachers should be prepared by each faculty member, containing current seating charts, special instructions, classroom procedures, emergency procedures, class schedule, bell schedule, student helpers, substitute follow-up reports and any other items which would be helpful. The packet must be readily available for use when the teacher is unable to be in attendance at school.

In addition, all lesson materials will be prepared and “ready to go” for the substitute teacher. This includes fully prepared and written lesson plans, and sufficient copies of student materials. The office staff and substitute teachers are not to be given lesson plans over the phone nor be asked to duplicate material for the classroom.

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## Section 8-N

## Purchasing Procedures

(Board Policy 706.01)

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All Purchasing for the district will adhere to an approved purchasing process that clearly establishes the contractual arrangement between the supplier and the school district.

### **Purchase Orders:**

1. No student, teacher, or employee of the Board shall have power to purchase, or agree to purchase, any supplies or materials for use in the public schools, whether or not to be sold to students or used in any department whatsoever, except by a proper requisition for a purchase order through the appropriate office. This also applies to purchase of services, such as printing, etc.
2. When ordering supplies or materials through the central supply catalog, a requisition form signed by the principal/supervisor must be submitted to the Central Office for processing. The requisitioner should specify item number and description and keep a copy for his/her records. Be sure to include a budget code number on the requisition.

### **Requisitions:**

1. Supplies and materials may be requisitioned through the principal. When ordering from the central supply catalog, specify item number and description.
  2. Requisitions are to be made on regular requisition forms, and must be signed by respective principals. The requisitioner should keep a copy. The building principal will assign the purchase order number and send a copy to the Director of Business Services.
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## Section 8-0

## Communication Systems

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1. Email - Each teacher will be assigned a school email address for purposes of intra-school and inter-school email correspondence. Teachers should check for email at least once in the morning, once around lunch time, and once in the afternoon, and should respond to emails which require a response in a timely fashion,

but should avoid checking and responding to emails during instructional time. Use of the district's email system for personal communications should be limited, and is subject to the rules governing overall computer usage found in Board Policy and this handbook.

2. Teacher Mailbox - Each teacher will be assigned a mailbox. Teachers should check for mail each morning and also later in the school day, if possible. If something requires an answer teachers are responsible for responding promptly. Teacher mailboxes are to be limited to communications regarding school business.
3. Use of School Telephone - Personal telephone calls shall not be made nor accepted during times when the teacher is responsible for students except in the event of an emergency.
4. Use of Cell Phones - **Teachers shall not use personal cell phones for non-school purposes when the teacher is responsible for students.**
5. Use of Personal Electronic Devices While Driving a School Vehicle - The use of personal electronic devices - even those equipped with hands-free devices - while driving a school vehicle with or without student passengers is strictly prohibited except in the case of extreme emergency.

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## Section 8-P

## Internet Acceptable Use

(Board Policy 402.14, 606.06)

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Gering Public Schools recognizes the value of computers and other electronic resources to improve student learning and enhance the administration and operation of its schools. To this end, Gering Public Schools encourage the responsible use of computers, computer networks (including the Internet), and other electronic resources in support of the mission and goals of the Gering District.

It is the policy of Gering Public Schools to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

It is the policy of Gering Public Schools to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible conduct in all online network activities by staff and students. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee, student, or other individual to engage in any activity that does not conform to the established purpose and general rules and policies of the network. Within this general policy, Gering Public Schools recognizes its legal and ethical obligation to protect the well-being of students in its charge.

The following uses of school-provided electronic resources, including Internet and email, are not permitted:

- To access, upload, download, or distribute pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material;
- To transmit obscene, abusive, sexually explicit, or threatening language;
- To violate any local, state, or federal statute;

- To vandalize, damage, or disable the property of another individual or organization;
- To access another individual's materials, information, or files without permission;
- To violate copyright or otherwise use the intellectual property of another individual or organization without permission.;
- To intentionally distribute or forward "chain letters" via email.;
- To intentionally distribute or forward embedded messages (viruses) or the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs, data or equipment.

Any violation of District policy and rules may result in loss of District-provided access to the Internet. Additional disciplinary action may be determined in keeping with existing procedures and practices regarding inappropriate language or behavior. When and where applicable, law enforcement agencies may be involved.

Students may...

- Design and post web pages and other material from school resources.
- Use direct communications such as email, online chat, or instant messaging with a teacher's permission.
- Use the resources for any educational purpose.

Consequences for Violation: Violations of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including the loss of a student's privileges to use the school's information technology resources.

Supervision and Monitoring: School and network administrators and their authorized employees monitor the use of information technology resources to help ensure that uses are secure and in conformity with this policy. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use, and disclose any data found on the school's information networks in order to further the health, safety, discipline, or security of any student or other person, or to protect property. They may also use this information in disciplinary actions and will furnish evidence of crime to law enforcement.

Enforcement of policy

- To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information.
- Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors.
- Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.
- A Gering Public School staff member may override the technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access for a student to access a site with legitimate educational value that is wrongly blocked by the technology protection measure that blocks or filters Internet access.
- Gering Public School staff will monitor students' use of the Internet by either direct supervision or by monitoring Internet use history to ensure enforcement of policy.

Inappropriate Network Usage: To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of Gering Public Schools online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by the Children’s Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called “hacking”, and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and the dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

Education, Supervision and Monitoring: It shall be the responsibility of all members of Gering Public Schools staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children’s Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children’s Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the Director of Technology or designated representatives.

The Building Principal or designated representatives will provide age appropriate training for students who use Gering Public Schools Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote Gering Public School’s commitment

to:

- A. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in the Gering Public Schools Network Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy;
- B. Student safety with regard to:
  - a. safety on the Internet;
  - b. appropriate behavior while on online, on social networking Websites, and in chat rooms; and
  - c. cyberbullying awareness and response.
- C. Compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children’s Internet Protection Act (“CIPA”).

Following receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the Gering Public Schools Network Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy. Curriculum materials and a Scope and Sequence can be found at Common Sense Media: [www.commonensemedial.org](http://www.commonensemedial.org)

#### Disclaimers

- Gering Public Schools and its individual schools, administrators, faculty, and staff thereof, make no warranties of any kind for the service provided and will not be held responsible for any damage suffered by users. This includes the loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, and intrusion by computer virus or service interruption.
- Use of any information obtained via network access is at the risk of the user, and Gering Public Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained.
- Gering Public Schools cannot guarantee complete protection from inappropriate material. Furthermore, it is impossible for the district or content filter to reflect each individual or family’s opinions of what constitutes “inappropriate material”. If a student mistakenly accesses inappropriate information, he/she should immediately notify a district staff member.
- Gering Public Schools is not liable for an individual’s inappropriate use of the district’s electronic communications systems, for violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, and for other costs incurred by users through use of Gering Public Schools electronic communication systems.
- The district will Reganate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the district’s electronic communication systems.

MINOR: The term “minor” means any individual who has not attained the age of 17 years.

TECHNOLOGY PROTECTION MEASURE: The term “technology protection measure” means a specific technology that blocks or filters Internet access to visual depictions that are:

1. OBSCENE, as that term is defined in section 1460 of title 18, United States Code;
2. CHILD PORNOGRAPHY, as that term is defined in section 2256 of title 18, United State Code; or
3. Harmful to minors.

HARMFUL TO MINORS: The term “harmful to minors” means any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction that:

1. Taken as a whole and with respect to minors, appeals to a prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
2. Depicts, describes, or represents, in a patently offensive way with respect to what is suitable for minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual acts, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals; and
3. Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors.

SEXUAL ACT; SEXUAL CONTACT: The terms “sexual act” and “sexual contact” have the meaning given such terms in section 2246 of title 18, United States Code.

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## Section 8-Q

## Staff Use of Computers, Technology & the Internet

(Board Policy 06.06R2)

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### **Acceptable Use**

The use of computers, technology and the Internet must be consistent with the educational objectives of the School District. All School District electronic resources must be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner. Failure to adhere to these regulations will result in loss of user privileges, disciplinary action, dismissal and/or appropriate legal action.

### **Privileges**

The use of the District's electronic networks is a privilege, not a right. The Building Principal will make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated this authorization and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time.

### **Unacceptable Use**

The user is responsible for his or her actions and activities involving electronic resources.

Some examples of unacceptable uses are:

1. Using the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts, or transmitting any material in violation of any U.S. or State law.
2. Unauthorized loading or downloading of software, games or files, regardless of whether they are copyrighted or devirused.
3. Downloading copyrighted material for other than personal use.
4. Commercial or for-profit uses.

5. Wastefully using resources, such as file space.
6. Destroying, modifying or abusing hardware or software.
7. Gaining unauthorized access to resources, files, passwords or other users' accounts.
8. Accessing the Internet from a School District access point using a non-school district Internet account.
9. Accessing fee services via district technology without specific permission from the Building Principal.
10. Accessing, receiving, transmitting or re-transmitting material regarding students, parents/guardians or district employees that is protected by confidentiality laws. If material is not legally protected but is of a confidential or sensitive nature, great care shall be taken to ensure that only those with a "need to know" are allowed access to the material. Staff members shall handle all employee and student records in accordance with School District policies and regulations.
11. Invading the privacy of individuals.
12. Disrupting the work of others.
13. Posting material authorized or created by another without his/her consent.
14. Impersonation of another user, anonymity and pseudonyms.
15. Sending or accessing encrypted information.
16. Commercial or private advertising, or political lobbying.
17. Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, discriminatory, offensive, harassing, or illegal material.
18. Using or attempting to use the resources while access privileges are suspended or revoked.

### **No Expectation of Privacy**

Use of the District's electronic resources, including email, is not private. The District reserves the right to log, monitor, examine, evaluate, and disclose solely at its discretion, the contents of all files, communications, or other usage on or conducted through these resources despite any designation of privacy by either the sender or recipient.

### **No Warranties**

The District makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The District will not be responsible for any damages the user suffers. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its negligence or the user's errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

## **Section 8-R**

## **Professional Boundaries & Professional Conduct**

(Board Policy 403.9 & 403.11)

School district employees are responsible for conducting themselves professionally and for teaching and modeling high standards of behavior and civic values, both at and away from school. Employees are required to establish and maintain professional boundaries with students. They may be friendly with students; but they are the students' teachers, not their friends, and they must take care to see that this line does not become blurred. This applies to employees' conduct and interactions with students and to material they post on personal websites and other social networking sites including, but not limited to, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. The posting or publication of messages or pictures or other images that diminish an employee's professionalism or ability to maintain the respect

of students and parents may impair his or her ability to be an effective employee. Employees are expected to behave at all times in a manner supportive of the best interests of students.

Staff members are required to be educators and adult authority figures to children and students. The relationship with students is not as peers, social equals, or friends.

Even the appearance of inappropriate boundaries may significantly damage an educator's reputation. The best way for educators to protect themselves from false accusations is to avoid behavior that can be misconstrued.

Observing the following professional boundaries will help protect students, staff members, and the school.

- Private meetings with students
  - Never remain alone with a student behind a closed door;
  - Never remain alone with a student in a classroom outside of the regular school day without informing the principal;
  - Do not permanently cover classroom windows in a way that restricts viewing from the outside. All school rooms in which staff and students interact should have unobstructed windows allowing clear views of the room;
  - Coaches should never meet alone with students behind closed doors – especially if the room lacks windows or has covered windows;
  - If you must have a difficult conversation with a student – and you are concerned that a student may misinterpret or misrepresent what occurred in your meeting – ask a fellow staff member to be present for the meeting.
  
- Guidelines for Staff Members, Coaches, and Extra-Curricular Program Managers
  - Staff members should avoid driving individual students to or from games, practices, or events unless there is some type of medical or weather emergency;
  - When traveling with a team, a coach or other adult school representative should never be alone in a room with a student;
  
- Fraternization with Students – In general, the role of the school staff member is that of an authority figure rather than that of a peer or friend.
  - Avoid counseling students in non-school matters;
  - Avoid meeting students away from school grounds unless part of a school-sponsored event;
  - Do not regularly transport students in your personal car or ride with them in their car;
  - Never allow students to have access to your personal vehicle;
  - Do not tell sexually-themed jokes, make sexual comments or provide students with access to sexually-oriented material;
  - Do not make comments about a student's body;
  - Do not have any discussions with students regarding romantic or sexual activities;
  - Never invite students to your home unless it is a school sponsored activity and another adult staff member is present at all times; and
  - Never touch a student in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate.
  
- The Growing Role of Personal Technology
  - Social Networking – remember that the role of school staff members is an adult authority figure to minors, not as a friend or social peer. Do not “friend” or “follow” students on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.

- Telephone, Texting, and Email – do not provide your home phone number or cell phone number to students. If you must communicate electronically with students, make conversations brief and limit the content to school matters only. Avoid corresponding with students via email or text, especially one-on-one. If students have your email or phone number, students (or the school provides a school email), limit communications to school matters only, and only communicate with groups and include other adults, like colleagues, administrators, and parents into the conversations.

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## **Section 8-S      Staff & District Social Media Use**

(Board Policy 403.10)

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### **A. General Use and Conditions**

1. Staff must comply with all board policies, contract provisions, and applicable rules of professional conduct in their social media usage. They must comply with the board's policy on professional boundaries between staff and students at all times and in both physical and digital environments.
2. Staff must obtain the consent of their building principal or the Superintendent prior to posting any student-related information in order to make sure that the publication does not violate the Federal Education Records Privacy Act or any other laws. Staff must also comply with all applicable state and federal record retention requirements, even with regard to personal social media usage.
3. Staff must comply with all applicable laws prohibiting the use or disclosure of impermissible content, such as copyright laws, accountability and disclosure laws, and any other law governing the use of resources of a political subdivision. Questions about appropriate content should be referred to the staff member's supervising administrator.

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## **Section 8-T      Transportation Supervision**

Coaches and activity sponsors will travel to and from all away events on school-provided transportation. Coaches/Sponsors should not drive their own vehicles to any event unless adequate supervision (another coach/sponsor) is provided for the bus also going. This should only be done for unusual circumstances and will need to be pre-approval by the Activities Director.

The buses and other transportation vehicles should be recognized as a part of the entire activity system and no conduct should be allowed that reflects adversely on the individual, team, or school. Team members should never stick or throw anything out of the windows of a bus used to transport activity participants. When a bus or other school transportation vehicle returns after an away event, the team should remove any garbage that they bring onto or find on the transportation vehicle. Coaches/sponsors are required to check the condition of the transportation vehicle before it leaves or is parked for the evening.

All players are to use school-provided transportation. If a parent wishes to take a student-athlete home from an away event, he/she must follow the proper protocol established in the student handbook and supported by the activities department. Under no circumstances is a student to ride home with another student.

In the case of both female and male participants riding together to or home from an event, coaches/sponsors will designate the front of the transportation vehicle for one group and the back for the other. Coaches/sponsors are expected to be seated between the two groups. On the return trip home from the event, coaches/sponsors may allow the groups to switch places.

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## **Section 8-U**

## **Meal Charges**

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The Gering Public School food service department utilizes a computerized point-of-sale system, Infinite Campus. Staff is provided an account through the enrollment process. Money deposited into this account can be used for the purchase of breakfast, lunch, milk and ala carte items.

Gering Public Schools expects all staff members to be responsible for monitoring their individual Café account and maintaining a positive balance. The building Principal's office will notify the individual staff member of negative account balances. In the event a staff member's account reaches a negative balance of \$10, no extra meals or ala carte items can be charged.

## Chapter 9 - Grievance & Complaint Procedures

Section 9-A

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

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### Section 9-A

### Grievance Procedure

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The purpose of this grievance procedure is to secure, at the lowest level, an equitable solution to the problems which may from time to time arise concerning the interpretation, application, and meaning of the terms and conditions of employment in this school district. An underlying principle of the grievance procedure is to ensure fair and equitable treatment to the district's employees.

#### 1. DEFINITIONS

- a. Grievance: A cause of distress, based upon an event or condition which affects the welfare and/or terms and conditions of employment of a certificated person, a group of certificated people, or others; or the interpretation and/or application of the Board of Education policies, administrative regulations, building level policies, negotiated agreements and other contractual obligations.
  - b. Grievant: An individual or group of individuals who submits a grievance for arbitration through established procedures.
  - c. Party of Interest: Person or persons making the claim, any person who might be required to take action, any person against whom action might be taken.
  - d. Time Limits: All time limits herein shall consist of teacher working days except when a grievance is submitted after the end of the school year. The number of days indicated at each level should be considered maximum and every effort shall be made at all levels to expedite the process. Failure of the Board or its representatives to comply with the time limits at any level shall permit the grievant to appeal the grievance to the next level.
  - e. Grievance Meetings or Hearings: All meetings and hearings under this procedure up to and including Step 2 of Level II shall be conducted in private and shall include only the administration's representative(s). All parties shall have the right to record the proceedings of any hearing or meeting at all formal levels of the grievance procedure.
2. Association Representation--A grievant shall have the right to have the Association representatives present to represent the grievant at each level of the grievance procedure. Nothing herein shall be construed as limiting the right of any teacher to discuss their grievance informally with their immediate supervisor and having the grievance adjusted informally. The settlement shall not be inconsistent with the terms of the negotiated agreement.
  3. Reprisals--No reprisals of any kind shall be taken by the Board of Education, the grievant, and the administrator or parties of interest, against any individual or group because of participation in this due process procedure.
  4. Withdrawal of a Grievance--A grievance may be withdrawn at any level without prejudice.
  5. Timeliness of the Grievance--If the written grievance is not filed within twenty-one (21) calendar days after the individual or group knew, or should have known, of the set of conditions on which the grievance is based then the grievance shall be waived.
  6. Advanced Step Filing--The grievance shall be initially filed at the level where the decision or action resulting in the grievance was made.
  7. The Procedure:
    - a. Level I (Informal)

- i. Initiating Claim: Any certified employee of the school system who feels that he/she has a concern may initiate the process by discussing the matter with the building principal or immediate supervisor. A representative of the association may assist the employee in this resolution. If a resolution to the concern is not obtained through this discussion, the item should then be taken to the Superintendent of Schools. Every attempt should be made to resolve the problem at the informal level.
- b. Level II (Formal)
  - i. Step 1: Any concern that is not resolved at the informal level may be submitted as a formal grievance. If the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her problem, or if no decision has been rendered following five (5) working days after stating the problem in the informal procedure, he/she may submit the problem as a formal grievance in writing to his/her principal or supervisor.
  - ii. Step 2: If a grievance is not resolved at the building level to the satisfaction of the aggrieved person, or if no decision has been rendered within three (3) working days after the presentation of the grievance in writing, the individual may appeal the written grievance to the Superintendent. The appeal to the Superintendent must be carried out within three (3) working days after the written response from the building administrator or when that action was in order. Within five (5) working days the Superintendent shall meet with the aggrieved person for the purpose of hearing and resolving the grievance. A record of such a meeting shall be kept by the Superintendent. Within five (5) working days following the meeting with the aggrieved, the decision and reasons therefore shall be submitted to the aggrieved in writing.
  - iii. Step 3: If the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance by the Superintendent of Schools or if no decision has been rendered within three (3) working days after the appeal meeting with the Superintendent, the aggrieved may appeal the grievance to the Board of Education. The appeal to the Board of Education must be carried out within six (6) working days after receiving the Superintendent's written decision or when that action was in order. Within twenty-five (25) working days after receiving the written appeal, the Board of Education shall meet with the aggrieved person for the purpose of hearing and resolving the grievance. Within ten (10) working days following the meeting with the aggrieved, the Board of Education shall render a decision with reasons therefore in writing. Extenuating circumstances (such as illness or being out-of-town) may prohibit strict adherence to the above timeliness specified in Steps 1, 2 and 3. Every attempt shall be made by all parties involved to adhere to the timeliness as established. Certain restrictions must apply at this level (Level II, Step 3) which are listed below:

The grievance may be placed on the agenda of the Board of Education to be heard at their regular or special meetings, or a date may be set by the Board of a particular time and/or place. A majority of the Board of Education must be present to hear the grievance. A grievance shall be heard in open session. The grievance may be held in closed session by consent of both parties. All grievances shall be recorded (agreed upon by both parties). Individual Board members may not act as a surrogate for the aggrieved. The Board's decision shall be rendered only after all the evidence is weighed, such as: Tape recordings or memos of meetings held prior to the Board hearing. Private discussion(s) with the Superintendent and/or Principal concerning their disposition of the original problem. The Board of Education may call for a hearing on the grievance involving all parties as witnesses. The decision of the Board of Education will be final. Additional recourse may be sought through the legal system.

## ***Chapter 10 - Workplace Procedures***

Section 10-A	SCHOOL FUNDS
Section 10-B	CREDIT CARDS
Section 10-C	CHECKING IN AND OUT
Section 10-D	DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION
Section 10-E	INVENTORIES
Section 10-F	PERSONAL PROPERTY
Section 10-G	POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND ISSUES
Section 10-H	TOBACCO-FREE WORKPLACE

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### **Section 10-A**

### **School Funds**

Gering Public Schools employees who deal with district and school funds (student fees, athletic fees, art fees, magazine fees, workbook fees, fundraisers, construction projects, etc.) have additional exposure for claims of impropriety. It is therefore incumbent upon individual staff members to adhere to a standard set of expectations and procedures when handling funds. These procedures are as follows:

1. All funds collected are receipted, with a copy for the students, and a copy for the school's records.
2. All money collected is turned into the office in a timely fashion; daily, if possible, but certainly at the end of each week.
3. All money turned in to the office shall be receipted with a copy to the teacher. Teachers should save their receipts for future reference.
4. No separate checking accounts, personal or otherwise, are to be used that involve student money. If necessary, specific activity accounting will be created to track targeted funds.

Any deviation from the above standards opens all of us up to potential claims of misconduct. Therefore, deviations to the above criteria are not allowable.

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### **Section 10-B**

### **Credit Cards**

Employees may use school district credit cards for the actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of work-related duties. Actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of work-related duties include, but are not limited to, fuel for school district transportation vehicles used for transporting students to and from school and for school-sponsored events, payment of claims related to professional development of the board and employees, and other expenses required by employees. Employees and officers using a school district credit card must submit a detailed receipt in addition to a credit card receipt indicating the date, purpose and nature of the expense for each claim item. Failure to provide a proper receipt shall make the employee responsible for expenses incurred. Those expenses shall be reimbursed to the school district no later than ten (10) working days following use of the school district's credit card. In exceptional circumstances, the Superintendent or board may allow a claim without proper receipt. Written documentation explaining the exceptional circumstances shall be maintained as part

of the school district's record of the claim. The school district may maintain a school district credit card for actual and necessary expenses incurred by employees and officers in the performance of their duties.

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## Section 10-C                      Checking In & Out

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Teachers may leave their buildings during their scheduled lunch time without checking out. Teachers must secure the verbal permission of their building principal to leave the building during duty hours.

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## Section 10-D                      Distribution of Information

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Reganation with community service and youth serving agencies through assisting these agencies in the distribution of information of value to students and their families shall be as follows:

1. Each distribution must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
  2. Principals shall be notified through the administrative bulletin. Principals shall notify teachers of the distribution.
  3. Representatives of agencies wishing to distribute information through the schools shall:
    - a. Package and label by building and by classroom enough materials to go to each child or family as targeted for distribution.
    - b. Deliver material to the central administrative office at least one day prior to mail delivery or, after approval, deliver directly to the buildings.
  4. Material with political, commercial, or religious content will not be approved for distribution, nor will materials containing art or composition which is in bad taste or otherwise inappropriate for distribution to students.
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## Section 10-E                      Inventories

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At the close of the school year, each instructor or department will make and certify a complete inventory of materials and equipment on respective forms. A copy of this inventory shall be emailed to the principal of the building. At the close of the school year, or when a teacher terminates employment, the final inventory shall be sent to the principal's office. Any irregularities will be reported to the Director of Business Services at once.

**ADMINISTRATORS - PLEASE NOTE: Building principals will personally check the inventory sheets.**

Building and room inventories

1. Inventories should be completed by rooms as well as buildings. It is very important that our inventories of furniture and equipment are up-to-date. This is important not only because we need to know exactly what we have in each building, department, and room so that we will know at all times whether we are adequately equipped; but also for insurance purposes. If we were to have a loss through fire, tornado, or

some other catastrophe, we would need to prove what we have in the building. **IT IS NECESSARY, THEREFORE, THAT EACH BUILDING PRINCIPAL MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE INVENTORY SHEETS ARE UP-TO-DATE.** If at all possible, specify the type of furniture. For example, it would be helpful to know that desks in a certain room are American Seating, Heywood-Wakefield, Artcobell, or another make.

2. The transfer of furniture and/or equipment from one building to another is allowed to take place only when the loaning principal and borrowing principal are aware of such a transfer. It is the responsibility of the borrowing principal, through the Director of Maintenance or one of his workers, to be certain the loaning principal is informed of the specific furniture and/or equipment borrowed, which building will house the material, and the duration of the transfer. Both principals will be asked to sign a Furniture/Equipment Checkout whenever such transfer occurs.
3. The athletic director will check athletic inventories with each coach before the coach will be permitted to check out in the spring.
4. Principals will check rooms and teachers' inventories very carefully before signing "check out" sheets.

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## Section 10-F

## Personal Property

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Personal property is not covered by Gering Public School insurance. If you bring your personal property to school, you do so at your own risk.

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## Section 10-G

## Political Campaigns & Issues

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Political office campaigns or issue campaigns may not be conducted within school facilities or on school premises, nor may materials relating to them be distributed. An exception to this is when such is part of an instructional unit where both sides of the issue, or both candidates, are treated fairly. Students or student groups may not participate or perform on occasions which are strictly partisan or sectarian in character or purpose except if requested by the President of the United States on a political visit to Gering. Bond issues, referendums, initiatives, and legislative issues may be discussed and materials distributed at Board approved meetings on school property and at the invitation of organizations or school groups using school facilities. Public schools may be used as a public polling place where all election laws will be observed. Political candidates and issues may be discussed at employee organization meetings held on school premises.

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## Section 10-H

## Tobacco-Free Schools

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It is the policy of the Gering Public Schools' Board of Education that, out of concern for the health and well-being of all students, staff, and patrons, and the belief that all tobacco products are harmful, a totally tobacco-free environment is instituted for the School District of Gering. Use of smoking and chewing tobacco products (including e-cigarettes, vaping devices, and other vapor products) will be prohibited in all school buildings, structures, vehicles, and on all school property.

## ***Chapter 11 - Anti-Harassment***

Section 11-A

HARASSMENT BY EMPLOYEES

Section 11-B

HARASSMENT INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING

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### **Section 11-A**

### **Harassment By Employees**

(Board Policy 404.06-F1 & F2)

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The Gering Public School District hereby gives this statement of compliance and intends to comply with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination and harassment. The district intends to take any and all necessary measures to assure compliance with such laws against any prohibited forms of discrimination and harassment.

Harassment of employees, students, volunteers or visitors will not be tolerated in the school district. School district includes school district facilities, school district property, or property within the jurisdiction of the school district; while in school-owned or school-operated transportation; while attending or engaged in school activities; and while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the district.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, racial, religious, national origin, marital status, disability and sexual harassment. Harassment by board members, administrators, employees, parents, vendors, and others doing business with the school district is prohibited. Employees whose behavior is alleged to be in violation of this policy will be subject to the investigation procedure which may result in discipline, up to and including, discharge or other appropriate action. Other individuals whose behavior is alleged to be in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by the Superintendent or board.

Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, education, or participation in school programs or activities;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting such individual's employment or education; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

Sexual harassment as set out above, may include, but is not limited to the following:

- verbal or written harassment or abuse, or unwelcome communication implying sexual motives or intentions;
- pressure for sexual activity; repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications;
- unwelcome touching;
- unwelcome and offensive public sexual display of affection;
- suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's job, promotions, recommendations, etc.

Harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, marital status or disability means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble individuals when:

- submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of an individual's participation in school programs, activities or employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, offensive or hostile learning or work environment.

Harassment as set forth above may include, but is not limited to the following:

- verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse;
- repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, etc.;
- demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at an individual.

Employees, students, volunteers or visitors who believe they have suffered harassment shall report such matters to the investigator for harassment complaints. However, claims regarding harassment may also be reported to the alternate investigator for harassment complaints.

Upon receiving a complaint, the investigator shall confer with the complainant to obtain an understanding and a statement of the facts. It shall be the responsibility of the investigator to promptly and reasonably investigate claims of harassment and to pass the findings on to the Superintendent who shall complete such further investigation as deemed necessary and take such final action as appropriate. Information regarding an investigation of harassment shall be confidential to the extent possible, and those individuals who are involved in the investigation shall not discuss information regarding the complaint outside the investigation process.

No one shall retaliate against an employee or student because they have filed a harassment complaint, assisted or participated in a harassment investigation, proceeding, or hearing regarding a harassment charge or because they have opposed language or conduct that violates this policy. This policy should be used when an employee is the alleged harasser or the alleged victim. It is strongly recommended the investigator and alternate investigator be of opposite sexes.

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## **Section 11-B**

## **Harassment Investigating & Reporting**

(Board Policy 404.06R1)

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Harassment of employees and students will not be tolerated in the school district.

Harassment is a violation of school district policies, rules and regulations and, in some cases, may also be a violation of criminal or other laws. The school district has the authority to report students violating this rule to law enforcement officials.

Employees whose behavior is alleged to be in violation of this policy will be subject to the investigation procedure which may result in discipline, up to and including, discharge or other appropriate action. Other individuals whose behavior is alleged to be in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate sanctions as determined and imposed by the Superintendent or board.

Individuals who feel that they have been harassed by employees, board members, administrators, parents, vendors or others doing business with the school district should communicate to the harasser that the individual expects the behavior to stop, if the individual is comfortable doing so. If the individual needs assistance communicating with the harasser, he/she should ask a teacher, counselor or principal to help.

### Complaint Procedure

An employee or student who believes that they have been harassed shall notify the principal who shall serve as the designated investigator. The alternate investigator is the Director of Student Services. The investigator may request that the employee or student complete the Harassment Complaint form and turn over evidence of the harassment, including, but not limited to, letters, tapes, or pictures. Information received during the investigation shall be kept confidential to the extent possible.

The Superintendent, or the investigator with the approval of the Superintendent, has the authority to initiate a harassment investigation in the absence of a written complaint.

### Investigation Procedure

The investigator shall reasonably and promptly commence the investigation upon receipt of the complaint. The investigator shall interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The alleged harasser may file a written statement refuting or explaining the behavior outlined in the complaint. The investigator may also interview witnesses as deemed appropriate.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator shall report to the Superintendent. The investigator will outline the findings of the investigation to the Superintendent.

### Resolution of the Complaint

The Superintendent will complete the next step in the investigation reasonably and promptly upon receipt of the investigator's report. Following the investigator's report, the Superintendent may investigate further, if deemed necessary, and make a determination of the appropriate next step which may include discipline, up to and including, discharge.

Prior to the determination of the appropriate remedial action, the Superintendent may, at the Superintendent's discretion, interview the complainant and the alleged harasser. The Superintendent shall file a written report closing the case and documenting any disciplinary or other action taken in response to the complaint. The complainant, the alleged harasser and the investigator shall receive notice as to the conclusion of the investigation.

Points to Remember in the Investigation

- Evidence uncovered in the investigation is confidential.
- Complaints must be taken seriously and investigated.
- No retaliation will be taken against individuals involved in the investigation process.
- Retaliators will be disciplined up to and including discharge.

## ***Chapter 12 - Employee Relations***

Section 12-A

NEPOTISM

Section 12-B

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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### **Section 12-A**

### **Nepotism**

(Board Policy 402.04)

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The Gering Public Schools standards for employment decisions such as hiring, promoting, reappointing, evaluating, awarding salary, disciplining, and terminating employees are based upon an individual's qualifications for the position, ability and performance. The District attempts to avoid favoritism, the appearance of favoritism, and conflicts of interest in employment, and reserves the right to take appropriate action when relationships or associations of employees negatively affect the District's mission and goals.

Employees and applicants for employment shall not be denied employment or advancement opportunities because of their status as a family or household member of another employee. However, no person shall be employed, promoted, or transferred to a permanent position in a school or department where they would be the immediate supervisor of or receive direct supervision or be in the line of authority from a

- spouse, domestic partner or cohabitant;
- child, including adopted, in-laws and step- or half-parent;
- grandchild, including in-laws and step- or half-; or
- any other member of an employee's household whether or not related by blood or marriage.

In addition, a person serving in a supervisory position may not participate in decisions regarding hiring, appointment, placement, evaluation, rate of pay, salary increases, promotion, monetary awards, or other personal interest for a relative or household member employed by the District, even when the supervisor is not in the line of authority.

Furthermore, to avoid the risk of sexual harassment or any appearance of impropriety, employees shall not be allowed to retain supervisory responsibilities over subordinate employees whom they are dating. A supervisor who becomes involved in a relationship covered by this policy shall notify the Superintendent within ten working days after the start of the relationship. Upon receiving notification of such a relationship from the supervisor, the Superintendent shall immediately assign to another supervisor all responsibilities for employment decisions affecting the subordinate employee and shall make arrangements to transfer one of the employees to another position in the district within a reasonable amount of time.

In exceptional circumstances, a direct supervisory relationship may exist between employees who are family or household members. Such circumstances may be necessitated by factors such as the unique qualifications or responsibilities of the individuals involved or the lack of other available appropriate supervisory personnel.

Exceptions involving the Superintendent and the Superintendent's family or household members must be approved by the Board of Education.

## **Section 12-B**

## **Conflict of Interest**

(Board Policy 402.03)

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Employees' use of their position with the school district for financial gain shall be considered a conflict of interest with their position as employees and may subject employees to disciplinary action.

## Chapter 13 - Expenses

Section 13-A

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT: TRAVEL

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### Section 13-A

### Travel

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Specific Guidelines for travel reimbursement for employees are as follows:

- The Superintendent or his/her designee may allow travel expenses for personnel under their supervision according to the guidelines set forth in this regulation. If a school credit card is needed personnel must understand and comply with the GPS credit card policy. The In-service/Conference/Meeting Request Form must be completed prior to their travel. Building principals are responsible for explaining these regulations to personnel before departure.

Meals--In-state claims will be paid at a maximum daily rate of \$47.00. \$10.00 for breakfast and \$14.00 lunch if not provided by the conference or hotel, and \$23.00 for dinner. Out-of-State daily rate is determined by the Government Services Administration guidelines. If an employee exceeds the daily rate, he/she is responsible to pay the difference personally. If an employee chooses to forfeit a meal, costs cannot be combined. No exceptions. Reimbursement will not be made for any alcoholic beverages. Detailed *Receipts are required*.

Mileage--Within district travel, mileage will be reimbursed at the IRS allowable rate. Out of district mileage rate is \$0.70/mile (private car) if no district vehicle is available and \$0.47/mile (private car) if a district vehicle is available.

Air Transportation--If travel by plane is used, the most economical fare available will be allowed for reimbursement. *Receipts are required*.

Lodging--When overnight lodging is required, reimbursement will be for actual costs at a lodging facility approved by the supervisor prior to travel. *Receipts are required*. Rates for lodging will be divided equally between the parties when facilities are shared as may be appropriate. Direct bill for lodging will need to be arranged if possible at the time of reservation.

Miscellaneous Expenses--Registrations, taxi fares, parking fees, and car rentals may be allowed. *Receipts are required*. Expense claims for spouses and/or other family of employees are prohibited.

Special Note--Arrangements for reimbursement must comply with one or more of the categories above to be approved by the supervisor, business manager or the Superintendent.

## **Chapter 14 - Safety Procedures**

Section 14-A	WORKPLACE SAFETY
Section 14-B	EMPLOYEE ID BADGES
Section 14-C	WORKERS COMPENSATION/WORKPLACE INJURIES
Section 14-D	PERSONAL PROPERTY DAMAGE
Section 14-E	CHEMICAL USE
Section 14-F	EMPLOYEE PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS
Section 14-G	COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
Section 14-H	ASBESTOS
Section 14-I	EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
Section 14-J	BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

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### **Section 14-A**

### **Workplace Safety**

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The school district is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthful work environment. This school district recognizes its responsibility in protecting and conserving its human and financial resources. Each employee of the school district should show concern for the safety of fellow employees, students, and members of the public, to prevent losses of these resources.

Safety and health management is the ultimate responsibility of the Board of Education, during the hours an employee is working for the school district. Functional authority for continued development and implementation of health and safety is hereby delegated to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee is further hereby directed to establish the Committee or Committees as required by 48-443, R.R.S. or other laws. The Safety Committee(s) established shall adopt for this school district and maintain an effective written Injury Prevention Program. Management shall participate in the Safety Committee(s) and in safety education and training, and establishment of safety rules, policies, and procedures as provided in this policy, the school district's written Injury Prevention Program or as otherwise provided by law or the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee.

The Safety Committee(s) shall perform such functions, be made up of members, and meet as required by law. The school district shall develop and maintain a written Injury Prevention Program as required by law and the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee is hereby delegated authority and responsibility as required or allowed by law over such Injury Prevention Program.

Safety and health training, accident investigation, record keeping procedures, safety rules, and policies and procedures shall be implemented as required by law.

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### **Section 14-B**

### **Employee ID Badges**

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All GPS employees are required to wear GPS identification badges. These ID badges help ensure that only authorized personnel have access to district buildings. ID badges need to be worn during work hours. Visitors to

buildings should be directed to the school office to obtain a visitor's badge. Having identified and authorized personnel in our buildings helps to protect staff and students.

If an ID badge is damaged or lost, please contact Central Administration for a replacement.

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## **Section 14-C**

## **Workers Compensation/Injuries**

(Board Policy 404.02, 407.05, 905.06)

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When a staff member or student is injured, it is important and necessary for an accident report to be completed. The accident report is available at each building office. It shall be the responsibility of the employee injured on the job to inform the Superintendent within one business day of the occurrence. It shall be the responsibility of the employee's immediate supervisor to file an accident report within one business day after the employee reported the injury. It shall be the responsibility of the employee to file claims, such as worker's compensation through the central administration office.

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## **Section 14-D**

## **Personal Property Damage**

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To avoid damage to personal property, staff members are urged not to bring personal property to work.

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## **Section 14-E**

## **Chemical Use**

(Board Policy 404.05)

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Gering Public Schools is committed to minimizing hazardous chemical use and waste and to providing a healthy and safe environment for its students, faculty and staff. In order to achieve these goals, the school believes that proper chemical management and training are essential to make students and employees aware of potential hazards related to chemical use. An important step in creating a chemically safe school environment is to reduce the amount and toxicity of chemicals coming into it.

It is the policy of Gering Public Schools that no chemicals, hazardous or nonhazardous, are to be used in any district facility that was not purchased by the district or approved for use by the building administrator. GPS will not accept donations of chemicals, including paint, without written approval by the Superintendent or his/her designee. There is to be a Material Safety Data Sheet on file for each chemical stored in the building.

All buildings will restrict the purchase of hazardous chemicals, and purchasing procedures will be followed by all faculty and staff to minimize large quantities of chemicals and/or extremely hazardous chemicals from entering the school. Purchasing will limit surplus/bulk to a two-year supply, or less depending on the chemical properties and hazard information.

All school laboratories and shops that store chemicals are to do a yearly chemical inventory, give this list to the building administrator who will make the information available to local fire authorities.

Staff training will focus on the identification of hazardous and non-hazardous chemicals, the proper storage of chemicals, and safety issues related to the use and disposal of chemicals.

Employees have the responsibility to know and follow these policies and procedures, to participate actively in training programs, and to conduct their work activities in a manner which minimizes chemical waste generation and disposal.

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## **Section 14-F                      Employee Physical Examinations**

(Board Policy 404.01)

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Good health is important to job performance. All offers of employment may be made contingent on medical examination results. Employees whose physical or mental health, in the judgment of the administration, may be in doubt shall submit to an examination, when requested to do so, at the expense of the school district. Medical examinations will be conducted by a medical doctor selected by the district.

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## **Section 14-G                      Communicable Diseases**

(Board Policy 404.04)

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Employees with a communicable disease will be allowed to perform their customary employment duties provided they are able to perform the essential functions of their position and their presence does not create a substantial risk of illness or transmission to students or other employees. The term "communicable disease" shall mean an infectious or contagious disease spread from person to person, or animal to person, or as defined by law.

Health data of an employee is confidential and it shall not be disclosed to third parties. Employee medical records shall be kept in a file separate from their personal file.

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## **Section 14-H                      Asbestos**

(Board Policy 905.05)

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The Gering Public Schools has conducted asbestos inspections in all of its facilities as required by Section 203 of Title 2 of the Toxic Substance Control Act, 15 U.S.C. 2643. Management plans requiring those inspections are available for your review in the principal's office and in the Central Administration Office during regular business hours.

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## **Section 14-I                      Emergency Procedures**

(Board Policy 508.05, 905.02)

Emergency Management Plan: Gering Public Schools has developed an Emergency Management Plan in order to be prepared for such events as fires, tornadoes, bomb threats, hazardous materials, suicides, abductions, staff/student deaths, intruders, and medical emergencies. Please familiarize yourself with these procedures.

Fire Drills: Approximately once each month, drills will be held to ensure that the building can be emptied in an efficient and orderly manner. Fire drill instructions should be plainly posted in every room by the exit door. Windows and doors should be closed as you leave and each teacher should have a grade book containing a current class roster. Students should be moved away from the building thereby clearing exits and roll should be taken to determine that all students are accounted for and clear of the building.

Tornado Drills: In the event of a severe weather warning all classes will proceed to the assigned areas in their building. Here, the students will be seated on the floor, facing the center of the hallway or classroom. If the weather is so severe that a tornado could hit the immediate vicinity, students will place their hands and arms over their heads with their heads down between their knees and remain in that position until further notice. Under no circumstances will a student be released from school to any person other than his parents or guardian without prior written permission from the parent. Teachers will take roll when all students are in their alert areas. Students and teachers will be given further instructions as necessary. Tornado Drills shall be conducted at least twice each school year.

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## Section 14-J

## Bloodborne Pathogens

(Board Policy 404.04, 508.03)

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The following guidelines are meant to provide simple and effective precautions against transmission of disease for all persons.

- **HAND WASHING PROCEDURES:** Hand washing is considered to be the most important procedure in preventing the spread of infections. Proper hand washing requires the use of soap and water and vigorous washing under a stream of running water for approximately 10 seconds. Soap suspends easily removable soil and microorganisms, thus allowing them to be washed off. Running water is necessary to carry away dirt and debris. Use paper towels to thoroughly dry your hands. The proper handwashing procedure is:
  - a. Wet hands with warm water.
  - b. Apply soap; lather hands and wrists.
  - c. Apply friction to all surfaces of fingers, including between fingers and fingernails; apply friction to the rest of the hands, keeping hand and fingers pointed down.
  - d. Rinse hands and wrists thoroughly with warm water, allowing water to flow from wrists to fingertips.
  - e. Dry hands well. NOTE: if paper towels are used, turn off faucet using paper towel to protect clean hands.
  - f. Discard paper towels.

Situations in which good personal hygiene must be practiced include but are not limited to:

- a. Whenever your hands are soiled.
- b. Before handling or preparing food products.
- c. Before eating.

- d. After blowing or wiping your nose.
  - e. Use of the toilet.
- **HANDLING BODY FLUIDS IN THE SCHOOL:** The body fluids of all persons should be considered to contain potentially infectious agents (germs). The term "body fluids" includes; blood, semen, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomitus, respiratory secretions (e.g., nasal discharge) and saliva.
    - a. Use Disposable Gloves--When possible, direct skin contact with body fluids should be avoided. Disposable gloves will be available in the office. Gloves are recommended when direct hand contact with body fluids is anticipated (e.g., treating bloody noses, handling clothes soiled by incontinence, cleaning small spills by hand). If extensive contact is made with body fluids, hands should be washed afterwards. Gloves for this purpose should be put in the plastic bag or lined trash can, secured, and disposed of daily.
    - b. Unanticipated Skin Contact--In many instances, unanticipated skin contact with body fluids may occur in situations where gloves may not be immediately available (e.g., when wiping a runny nose, applying pressure to a bleeding injury outside the classroom, helping a child in the bathroom). In these instances hands and other affected skin areas of all exposed persons should be routinely washed with soap and water after direct contact has ceased.
    - c. Handling Clothing and Non-Disposable Items--Clothing and other non disposable items (e.g., towels used to wipe up body fluid) that are soaked through with body fluids should be rinsed and placed in plastic bags. If presoaking is required to remove stains, (e.g., blood, feces), use gloves to rinse or soak the item in cold water prior to bagging. Clothing should be sent home with appropriate laundry instructions to parents and/or teachers (see below). Contaminated disposable items (e.g., tissues, paper towels, diapers) should be put in a plastic bag or lined trash can, secured, and disposed of daily.
    - d. Removing Spilled Body Fluids From the Environment--Place solid materials in a plastic bag, secure, and dispose of immediately. Disposable gloves should be worn when using these agents. The dry material is applied to the area, left for a few minutes to absorb the fluid, and then swept up. The sweepings should be disposed of in a plastic bag. Broom and dustpan should be rinsed in a disinfectant.
    - e. Disinfectants--An intermediate level disinfectant should be used to clean surfaces contaminated with body fluids. Such disinfectants will kill vegetative bacteria, fungi, tubercle bacillus and viruses. The disinfectant should be registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use as a disinfectant in medical facilities and hospitals. The disinfectant should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's directions for disinfecting. Hypochlorite solution (bleach, such as Clorox\*) is preferred for objects that may be put in the mouth.
    - f. Disinfection of Hard Surfaces and Care of Equipment--Disposable gloves should be worn. After removing the soil, a disinfectant is applied. Mops should be soaked in disinfectant after use and rinsed thoroughly or washed in a hot water cycle before rinse. Disposable cleaning equipment and water should be placed in a toilet or plastic bag as appropriate. Non Disposable cleaning equipment (dustpans, buckets) should be thoroughly rinsed in the disinfectant. The disinfectant solution should be promptly disposed down a drain pipe. Remove gloves and discard in appropriate receptacles.
    - g. Disinfection of Rugs--Disposable gloves should be worn. Apply sanitary absorbent agent and let dry. Remove with dustpan and broom, then apply disinfectant with a sprayer and allow to dry. Rinse the dustpan and broom in disinfectant. Dispose of non-reusable cleaning equipment and gloves as noted above. Vacuum if necessary after disinfectant is dry.

- h. Laundry Instructions for Clothing Soiled with Body Fluids--The most important factor in laundering clothing contaminated in the school setting is the elimination of potentially infectious agents by soap and water. Addition of bleach will further reduce the number of potentially infectious agents. Clothing soaked with body fluids should be washed separately from other items. Presoaking may be required by heavily soiled clothing. Otherwise, wash and dry as usual. If the material is bleachable, add 1/2 cup household bleach (Clorox™) to the wash cycle. If material is not colorfast add 1/2 cup non-clorox bleach (e.g., Clorox II\*, Borateem\*) to the wash cycle. Brand names used only for examples and should not be considered an endorsement of a specific product.
- All Gering Public Schools staff shall complete annual bloodborne pathogen training.

# Chapter 15 - Professional Growth

Section 15-A

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

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## Section 15-A

## Professional Growth

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Professional Growth Forms can be found on the Gering Public Schools website at <http://www.geringschools.net/>

All certificated staff members are encouraged to grow professionally by attending college classes/workshops, serving on professional committees, and participating in other approved activities. Each permanent certified staff member must complete 6 professional growth points in a six-year period to meet the requirements of the **Nebraska School Law** (see statutory reference 79-830) which states: “Every six (6) years permanent certificated employees shall give evidence of professional growth. Six (6) semester hours of college credit shall be accepted as evidence of professional growth or, in the alternative, such other activities as are approved by the school board which may include, but are not limited to, educational travel, professional publications, or work on educational committees.”

1. Each **tenured** employee must earn **6** professional growth points every **6 years**.
2. The professional growth period begins in the fall of the year in which tenure status was attained and each 6-year period thereafter shall constitute the applicable professional growth period.
3. The 6-year period goes from **September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>**. The exception is the newly tenured teacher who starts from the first day of the 4<sup>th</sup> school year rather than on September 1<sup>st</sup>.
4. Tenure officially begins at the **start of the 4<sup>th</sup> school year** (see statutory reference 79-824). For newly tenured teachers, Professional Growth starts on the first day of tenure so any activities completed during the summer months before do not count.
5. Professional growth points are granted from the list of professional growth activities, which was agreed to by the Board of Education. **Pre-approval is not needed** unless there is a question about an activity. Since activity #10 is subject to the discretion of the Superintendent/Designee, pre-approval is recommended if it is not a district-sponsored activity.
6. Graduate college credit classes can be used for both Professional Growth and Salary Movement; however, **two** SEPARATE and DIFFERENT forms must be filled out. Graduate courses for Salary Movement must have prior approval from the Central Office (in accordance with the Professional Agreement).
7. Upon completion of an activity, the certified employee must fill out a **Professional Growth Activity Form** and send the original form to the Central Office for approval. Some type of **written proof of verification** must be on the form or attached to it.
8. Once the 6-point requirement has been met, any **extra activities** will **not** be counted during the remainder of the 6-year period. No activities can be carried over to the next 6-year Professional Growth period.
9. Staff members who have not completed the Professional Growth requirement by the end of the six-year period will have no advancement on the salary schedule or any increase in salary for the next year.
10. Failure of a certificated employee to show evidence of sufficient professional growth at the end of his/her six-year cycle would be in violation of District policy (see File: 409.01) and also of the above-mentioned state statute. This could be considered as grounds for termination under the heading “just cause.”
11. Tenured employees will be informed once a year of the total number of Professional Growth points earned.
12. Principals will receive yearly notification of the status of the employees in the building. This will allow administrators to communicate with individuals regarding their professional growth requirements.

Professional Growth points are awarded for the following activities:

1. **COLLEGE COURSES** – Graduate or undergraduate courses relating to present position or in preparation for a different assignment.
  - a. 1 college credit = 1 professional growth point
  - b. 6 maximum professional growth points allowable
  - c. Proof: Copy of college report card or college transcript
  - d. **NOTE: Graduate courses must be approved by the Superintendent/Designee for advancement on the salary schedule.**
2. **AUDITING A COLLEGE CREDIT COURSE** – Class is attended but not taken for college credit
  - a. 1 credit (15 contact hours) = 1.0 professional growth point
  - b. 3 maximum professional growth points allowable
  - c. Proof: Class audit slip, certificate or permission note from instructor
3. **SUPERVISION OF STUDENT TEACHER**
  - a. 1 completed term (8 weeks) = 1 professional growth point
  - b. 2 maximum professional growth points allowable
  - c. Proof: Signature of building administrator or college supervisor
4. **DISTRICT EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE WORK**
  - a. Example: School Improvement Committee
  - b. 8 hours of work = 0.5 professional growth point
  - c. Must accumulate minimum of 4 hours to be counted
  - d. 2 maximum professional growth points allowable
  - e. Proof: Description of tasks, log of hours involved, and signature of committee chairperson
5. **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION OFFICER OR COMMITTEE MEMBER** – Must be related to educational field at the state or national level
  - a. 8 hours of work = 0.5 professional growth point
  - b. Must accumulate minimum of 4 hours to be counted
  - c. 1 maximum professional growth point allowable
  - d. Proof: Copy of program, agenda, minutes, or signature of chairperson/administrator
6. **CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSE** – Course must be relative to present teaching position
  - a. 8 hours of class work = 0.5 professional growth point
  - b. Must be a minimum of 4 hours to be counted
  - c. 2 maximum professional growth points allowable
  - d. Proof: Signature of instructor for successful course completion
7. **PRESENTER AT REGIONAL, STATE, OR NATIONAL CONFERENCE** – Presentation must be related to educational topic
  - a. 1 hour presentation = 1 professional growth point
  - b. 2 maximum professional growth points allowable
  - c. Proof: Copy of conference program with your name highlighted
8. **PRESENTER AT GERING PUBLIC SCHOOLS/REGIONAL SCHOOLS STAFF DEVELOPMENT** – Presentation must be related to educational topic
  - a. 1 hour presentation = 1 professional growth point
  - b. 2 maximum professional growth points allowable
  - c. Proof: Signature of Central Office administrator
9. **EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS** – Must be beneficial to present teaching field

- a. 8 hours/1 day participation = 0.5 professional growth point
- b. Must be a minimum of 4 hours/half day long to be counted
- c. 6 maximum professional growth points allowable
- d. Proof: Signature of workshop instructor or sponsoring administrator

10. **OTHER ACTIVITIES AS APPROVED** – Activity must have approval by the Superintendent/Designee

- a. Example: District staff development, accreditation teams
- b. Pre-approval by Superintendent/Designee is recommended if activity is not district-sponsored
- c. 8 hours/1 day participation = 0.5 professional growth point
- d. Must be minimum of 4 hours or accumulate to 4 hours, unless deemed differently by Superintendent
- e. 6 maximum professional growth points allowable
- f. Proof: Signature of Superintendent/Designee from Central Office, other form of verification as required by Superintendent/Designee

## ***Chapter 16 - Teacher Evaluation***

Section 16-A

CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

Section 16-B

CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEE EVALUATION FORMS

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### **Section 16-A**

### **Certificated Employee Evaluation**

(Board Policy 406.08, 406.08R)

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Evaluation of certificated employees on their skills, abilities, and competence shall be an ongoing process supervised by the building principal/supervisor and conducted by an approved evaluator. The goal of the formal evaluation of certificated employees, other than administrators, shall be to improve the educational program, to improve instruction, to maintain certificated employees who meet or exceed the board's standards of performance, to clarify the certificated employee's role, to ascertain the areas in need of improvement, and to develop a working relationship between the administrators and other employees.

Probationary teachers shall be formally observed and evaluated at least once each semester. Each formal observation shall be for an entire instructional period of at least 40 minutes.

Certified permanent employees shall be formally observed and evaluated at least once every three years. It shall be the responsibility of the building principal/supervisor to insure certificated employees are evaluated on a three year rotation plan. The specifics of the three year rotation plan are outlined in the administrative regulations. Each formal observation shall be for a minimum of 40 minutes. Additional evaluations shall be made in cases where there are major changes in assignments or noted changes in employee effectiveness. Evaluators may schedule additional evaluations when the evaluator feels it would be to the employee's and/or school district's benefit to conduct additional observations and evaluations, or at the employee's request.

The formal evaluation criteria shall be completed in writing. The formal evaluation shall provide an opportunity for the evaluator and the certificated employee to discuss the employee's performance and future areas of growth. The formal evaluation shall be completed by the evaluator, signed by the certificated employee and filed in the certificated employee's personnel file. This policy supports, and does not preclude, the ongoing informal evaluation of the certificated employee's skills, abilities and competence.

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### **Section 16-B**

### **Certificated Employee Evaluation Forms**

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Can be located at <http://www.geringschools.net/staff/evaluation-process.html>.

Preamble:

The educator shall believe in the worth and dignity of human beings. Recognizing the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, the devotion to excellence and the nurture of democratic citizenship, the educator shall regard as essential to these goals the protection of the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator shall accept the responsibility to practice the profession to these ethical standards. The educator shall recognize the magnitude of the responsibility he or she has accepted in choosing a career in education, and engages, individually and collectively with other educators, to judge his or her colleagues, and to be judged by them, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. The standards listed in this section are held to be generally accepted minimal standards for public school certificate holders in Nebraska with respect to ethical and professional conduct and are, therefore, declared to be the criteria of ethical and professional performance adopted pursuant to the provisions of Section 79-866 R.R.S. for holders of public school certificates. If the certificate holder is employed in a nonpublic school, that context shall be taken into account in the application of these standards.

Principle I

Commitment as a Professional Educator

Fundamental to the pursuit of high educational standards is the maintenance of a profession possessed of individuals with high skills, intellect, integrity, wisdom, and compassion. The educator shall exhibit good moral character, maintain high standards of performance and promote equality of opportunity.

Principle II

Commitment to the Student

Mindful that a profession exists for the purpose of serving the best interests of the client, the educator shall practice the profession with genuine interest, concern, and consideration for the student. The educator shall work to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

Principle III

Commitment to the Public

The magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the education process requires dedication to the principles of our democratic heritage. The educator bears particular responsibility for instilling an understanding of and confidence in the rule of law, a respect for individual freedom, and a responsibility to promote respect by the public for the integrity of the profession.

Principle IV

Commitment to the Profession

In the belief that the quality of the services to the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to improve service, to promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged, and to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education. The educator shall believe that sound professional relationships with colleagues are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.



Learners Today  
LEADERS TOMORROW

# **Classified Staff Handbook**

~~2025-26~~ 2026-27 School Year

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# Notice of Nondiscrimination

(Board Policies 103, 402.1, 501)

Gering Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, disability or other protected conditions or statuses in its educational programs, activities or employment policies as required by the Nebraska Equal Education Opportunity Act, Title VI and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies:

**Students:** Julie Siebke, Director of Student Services, 1519 10th Street, Gering, NE 69341  
(308) 436-3125 (jsiebke@geringschools.net).

**Employees and Others:** Stacy Rodriguez, Director of Business & Finance,  
1519 10th Street, Gering, NE 69341, (308) 436-3125 (srodriguez@geringschools.net).

The Superintendent of Gering Public Schools will coordinate compliance. Complaints or concerns involving discrimination or needs for accommodation or access should be addressed to the Superintendent of Schools.

Any person who believes she or he has been discriminated against, denied a benefit or been excluded may grieve such matters using the adopted grievance procedures of the Gering Public School District. Such procedure shall provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging acts of discrimination.

For further information about anti-discrimination laws and regulations, or to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (OCR), please contact OCR at One Petticoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street, #320, Kansas City, Missouri 64106, (816) 268-0550 (voice), or (877) 521-2172 (telecommunications device).

# Equal Employment Opportunity

(Board Policies 402.01, 406.02, 412.02)

The Gering Public School District shall provide equal opportunity to employees and applicants for employment in accordance with applicable equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws, directives and regulations of federal, state, and local governing bodies. Opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment includes hiring, placement, promotion, transfer or demotion, recruitment, advertising or solicitation for employment, treatment during employment, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and layoff or termination. The school district shall be non-discriminatory in major job categories where women, men, minorities, and persons with disabilities are underrepresented. Employees

will support and comply with the district's established equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination policies. Employees shall be given notice of this policy annually. The Director of Curriculum and Assessment and/or Director of Business Services shall serve as the non-discrimination compliance coordinator.

Individuals who file an application with the school district will be given consideration for employment if they meet or exceed the qualifications set by the board, administration, and the Nebraska Department of Education for the position for which they apply. In employing individuals, the district shall consider the qualifications, credentials, and records of applicants without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability.

Advertisements and notices for vacancies within the district shall contain the following statement: "The Gering Public School District is an equal employment opportunity (EEO/non-discrimination) employer." This statement shall also appear on application forms.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, shall be directed to the non-discrimination compliance coordinator by writing to ~~Kory Knight~~ **Crystal Palsler**, Non-Discrimination Compliance Coordinator, Gering Public Schools, 1519 10th Street, Gering, NE, 69431; or by phone 308-436-3125.

Inquiries by employees or applicants for employment regarding compliance with equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination laws and policies, including but not limited to complaints of discrimination, can also be directed in writing to the Director of the Kansas Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 10220 North Executive Hills Blvd, 8th Floor, Kansas City, MO, 64153, 816-880-4200; or the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission, State Office Building, 301 Centennial Mall South, 5th Floor, PO Box 94394, Lincoln, NE, 69509, 402-471-2024.

## ***Introduction***

Gering Public Schools serves approximately 2,000 students with an average student-to-teacher ratio of 18:1. The district believes that quality education begins with a quality staff and collaborative partnerships with local businesses and community agencies.

All three K-5 elementary schools offer both all-day and half-day early childhood programming. Gering Middle School serves students in grades 6-8 and Gering High School serves grades 9-12. The High Ability Learner (HAL) program serves intellectually gifted students in grades 3-12, and our comprehensive special education (SPED) program provides a wide variety of services for our students with special needs.

Career Academies and work-based learning opportunities are in place at the high school. In addition, LINKS is a specialized program that provides an alternative, flexible learning environment for high school students.

The representative for Nebraska's 3rd District, Adrian Smith, graduated from Gering High School in 1989. Since the first graduating class, Gering Public Schools, in cooperation with the community, has strived to prepare students to pursue their goals for the future.

## ***School Mission Statement***

### **Educational Philosophy of Gering Public School**

(Policy 102)

Gering Public Schools exist to equip today's learners with the skills necessary to be tomorrow's leaders. The vision of the district is to provide a collaborative community, inspiring excellence and innovation in teaching and learning to empower student growth and leadership in school and life.

The district seeks to satisfy this mission by developing and maintaining:

1. Qualified and competent administrative, teaching, paraprofessional, and other support staff;
2. A supportive learning environment which includes:
  - A welcoming and inviting structure that is emotionally safe, nurturing, supportive, and disciplined; respect, trust, integrity, and regard for self and others; and honors diversity;
  - Learning as the central purpose with students engaged in meaningful, relevant, and productive learning experiences; and
  - Implementation of policies and practices that result in an orderly environment with emphasis on consistent school-wide positive behaviors.
3. Safe, clean and supportive facilities and learning environments;
4. Comprehensive support programs and services that meet the diverse needs of all students;

5. Integrated, planned curriculum that:
- Prepares students to achieve state standards and such additional standards as are established by the Board of Education;
  - Is appropriate for the developmental level of the students;
  - Addresses diverse learning needs;
  - Instills a passion for learning and the importance of life-long learning;
  - Develops problem solving and critical thinking skills, decision making skills, data gathering, and critical use information;
  - Develops expected work ethics, as well as group participation and leadership skills;
  - Incorporates character education and multicultural education, including respect for diversity;
  - Provides for application of technology in all learning areas;
  - Provides access to advanced courses;
  - Implements an organized schedule that is functional and meets student needs in all curriculum areas.

## *Board of Education*

Members serve four-year terms, and receive no compensation for their work. Elections are held every two years. Board members act within the framework of rules set forth by the Nebraska State Board of Education and State and Federal laws. Current members are as follows:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Board Committee:</b>	<b>Service Details:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
Greg Trautman, <i>President</i>	Curriculum & Personnel, Policy, MSI	Elected in 2022; current term expires in 2026.	<a href="mailto:gtrautman@geringschools.net">gtrautman@geringschools.net</a>
Tracy Wiese, <i>Vice President</i>	Curriculum & Personnel	Elected in 2021; current term expires in 2028.	<a href="mailto:twiese@geringschools.net">twiese@geringschools.net</a>
Josh Lacy	Facilities & Finance	Elected in 2017; current term expires in 2028.	<a href="mailto:jlacy@geringschools.net">jlacy@geringschools.net</a>
<del>Brian Copsey</del> -Bryan Barrett	Facilities & Finance, MSI	Elected in 2015; current term expires in 2026.	<a href="mailto:bcopsey@geringschools.net">bcopsey@geringschools.net</a>
Matt Kautz	Facilities & Finance, Policy, MSI	Elected in 2024; current term expires in 2028	<a href="mailto:mkautz@geringschools.net">mkautz@geringschools.net</a>
John Maser	Curriculum & Personnel, Policy	Elected in 2022; current term expires in 2026.	<a href="mailto:jmaser@geringschools.net">jmaser@geringschools.net</a>

## *District Facilities*

<b>Building:</b>	<b>Address:</b>	<b>Phone Number:</b>	<b>Hours of Operation:</b>
Central Office	1519 10th Street	(308) 436-3125	7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Geil Elementary	1600 D Street	(308) 436-2545	8:05 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.
Lincoln Elementary	1725 13th Street	(308) 436-2350	8:05 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.
Northfield Elementary	1900 Flatten Ave.	(308) 436-5555	8:05 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.
Gering Middle School	800 Q Street	(308) 436-3123	8:00 a.m.-3:15 p.m.
Gering High School	1500 U Street	(308) 436-3121	8:00 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

## *Administrative Staff*

<b>Building:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Position:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
Central Office	<del>Dr. Nicole Regan</del> Dr. Kory Knight	<i>Interim Superintendent of Schools</i>	<a href="mailto:knight@geringschools.net">knight@geringschools.net</a>
	Jennifer Sibal	<i>Director of Communications</i>	<a href="mailto:jsibal@geringschools.net">jsibal@geringschools.net</a>
	Julie Siebke	<i>Director of Student Services</i>	<a href="mailto:jsiebke@geringschools.net">jsiebke@geringschools.net</a>
	<del>Kory Knight</del> Crystal Palser	<i>Interim Director of Curriculum</i>	<a href="mailto:cpalser@geringschools.net">cpalser@geringschools.net</a>
	Stacy Rodriguez	<i>Director of Business &amp; Finance</i>	<a href="mailto:srodriguez@geringschools.net">srodriguez@geringschools.net</a>
	David Ferreyra	<i>Payroll Administrator</i>	<a href="mailto:dferreyra@geringschools.net">dferreyra@geringschools.net</a>
	Richard Evans	<i>Director of Technology</i>	<a href="mailto:revans@geringschools.net">revans@geringschools.net</a>
	D'Angelo Murillo	<i>Director of Maintenance</i>	<a href="mailto:dmurillo@geringschools.net">dmurillo@geringschools.net</a>
Geil Elementary	Angela Morris	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:amorris@geringschools.net">amorris@geringschools.net</a>
Lincoln Elementary	Jesse Neugebauer	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:jneugebauer@geringschools.net">jneugebauer@geringschools.net</a>

Northfield Elementary	Wendee Powell	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:wpowell@geringschools.net">wpowell@geringschools.net</a>
Gering Middle School	John Wiedeman	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:jwiedeman@geringschools.net">jwiedeman@geringschools.net</a>
	Jon Hutchison	<i>Assistant Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:jhutchison@geringschools.net">jhutchison@geringschools.net</a>
	Barb Harder	<i>Assistant Activities Director</i>	<a href="mailto:bharder@geringschools.net">bharder@geringschools.net</a>
Gering High School	Mario Chavez	<i>Building Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:mchavez@geringschools.net">mchavez@geringschools.net</a>
	<del>Crystal Palser</del>	<i>Assistant Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:cpalser@geringschools.net">cpalser@geringschools.net</a>
	Keaton Green	<i>Assistant Principal</i>	<a href="mailto:kgreen@geringschools.net">kgreen@geringschools.net</a>
	<del>Shawn Seiler JJ Behrens</del>	<i>Activities Director</i>	<a href="mailto:jbehrens@geringschools.net">jbehrens@geringschools.net</a>

For other staff contacts, visit the district website at [www.geringschools.net](http://www.geringschools.net)

## ***School Calendars and Schedules***

The school district calendar can be found [here](#).

Staff scheduling is determined by Administrative Staff, and communicated accordingly upon hire. On occasion, temporary adjustments may be required on occasion to meet the needs of the district.

**Mandatory Attendance Days:** Gering Public Schools has the right to identify blackout periods when leave requests cannot be approved. Blackout periods include events such as mandatory training days, district-wide professional development days, etc. and will be communicated in writing by the Superintendent of Schools. When possible, these dates will be reflected in advance on staff work calendars for planning purposes.

In the event a blackout period must be added to the calendar after the start of the school calendar year, at least a 3-business days written notice shall be provided prior to the implementation of a blackout period.

The district understands that emergencies occasionally arise, and requests for an accommodation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Staff members are expected to submit these requests in writing to the Superintendent of Schools and Building Administrator with as much notice as possible for consideration.

**District Summer Hours:** The district will open normal business hours during the summer month. **Those hours are from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.**

Summer hours will be Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with an unpaid 30-minute lunch break.

Deviations from this schedule must be approved through the Superintendent of Schools and Business Manager.

**School Closure:** The safety of students and staff is very important to the District. We also recognize that certain staff members are essential to district operations; therefore, in the event of school closure, 12-month classified employees, administrators and secretaries need to report to work as soon as safely possible in order to answer the phones and help students that come to school to make arrangements for safe rides back home.

Additionally, in the event of inclement weather, district maintenance and custodial teams will be responsible for the removal of snow from sidewalks and parking lots to ensure patron safety.

Once those issues have been handled, staff should consult with the supervising administrator on finishing the work day at the school office or taking work home to finish. If employees cannot get to work or choose to not work the remainder of the day, they have the following options to cover lost wages:

- Accrued personal leave may be applied (full-time employees only).
- Vacation leave may be applied (12-month employees only).

**Decision To Close Schools and Communication:** The Superintendent of Schools will decide if school is open or closed for that day. Once notified, Administrative Staff will start their building calling chain when applicable. Additionally, the Director of Communications or other designated staff members will generate an Infinite Campus message (phone call and/or text message) to all district staff and families, and notify local news media when inclement conditions warrants such action. The information is broadcast regularly by radio and television stations.

**Weather-Related Closure or Impacts:** A decision to close school is made when forecasts by the weather service and civil defense officials indicate that it would be unwise for students to go to school. If possible, a decision about the next school day will be made by 9 p.m. for announcement during the 10 p.m. news. An early decision is not always possible because of uncertain weather conditions. School officials will make periodic assessments of conditions during the night and will decide early in the morning (by 6 a.m. if possible) whether to have school or not.

The decision to cancel school is never an easy one, but the decision will always be made with student and staff safety at the forefront. In some instances, schools will be open, but certain services may be canceled (bus transportation, student activities, etc.).

If the school district does not close despite inclement conditions, but a staff member does not report for the scheduled workday time off will be considered personal leave or unpaid.

**Severe Weather During the School Day:** The Superintendent of Schools is authorized by the Board of Education to close school in case of severe weather. Every attempt will be made to avoid closing school once classes are in session.

In some instances, closing school during the day is inevitable if children are to safely return home before the brunt of a major storm hits. In these cases, as much advance notice as possible will be given. If school is closed during the day, staff will be notified by Administrative Staff and families will be notified via media broadcast and Infinite Campus messenger when possible.

Certified staff and administrators will be responsible for remaining with students until all students have safely left school or the administration has made arrangements for remaining students.

If, because of inclement conditions, students and employees are dismissed early, employees will be compensated for the remainder of the scheduled workday.

## **Chapter I: Records**

### **Personnel Records**

All personnel records on all current employees shall be kept at the Central Office. A file shall be kept for all resigned or retired employees, including such essential information as seems appropriate to the administration and/or supervisor.

All personnel files will be considered confidential and will not be available to persons other than the employee and those authorized. Information contained in the employee's file may be viewed at the employee's request. All written materials filed (except for those prohibited by law) shall be made available for inspection by the employee in the presence of an administrator and/or supervisor. Upon request, an employee will be provided a copy of his/her employee file.

## **Chapter II: Orientation**

The first eight weeks that you work for Gering Public Schools will be considered your orientation period. During this period of time, you will work closely with your supervisor and other district personnel to learn how to do your job. You will learn about our policies, procedures, benefits and rules of the workplace. After your eight-week orientation period, your Supervisor/Principal will reflect on your job duties.

This employee handbook provides information you need to know, and you are encouraged to read it thoroughly and ask questions at any time.

### **EEO – Equal Employment Opportunities**

Gering Public Schools provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy or other protected conditions. In addition, we comply with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment.

### **Immigration Reform and Control Act (I-9)**

In compliance with the Immigration and Control Act of 1986, we require all newly hired employees to present documented proof of identity and eligibility to work in the United States. Employees will be required to furnish this information within three working days of hire date.

## **Chapter III: Employee Classification, Recruitment, Hiring and Wages**

### **Employee Classification**

Classified Staff are employees who are in positions which do not require a Nebraska Department of Education teaching certificate. Classified employees shall include the non-instructional (classified) staff of Gering Public Schools, also known as Educational Service Employees who are categorized according to job duties as follows:

1. Maintenance and Custodial employees keep the physical plant open, heated, lighted and ready for use or keep the grounds, buildings and equipment at their original condition through repair or replacement. Part time custodial staff is included in this group. Maintenance employees are under the supervision of the Director of Warehouse/Maintenance. Custodians report to the building administrators and/or the Director of Warehouse/Maintenance. Assignments are determined by the Superintendent and are designated to Maintenance and Custodial employees through the Director of Warehouse/Maintenance.
2. Administrative Assistant employees engage in accounting/fiscal office management and clerical assistance to the administration.
3. Para-professionals provide instructional services in the classroom under the direction of the classroom teachers and/or building principal.
4. Non-certified coaches and sponsors of extra-curricular activities.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

This district secures quality personnel through effective recruitment.

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools and or his/her designees to determine personnel needs of the school district and locate suitable candidates.

There shall be no discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment by reason of race, color, national origin, creed, marital status, sex or age. A personal interview will be required of selected candidates.

It shall be the duty of the Superintendent to see that persons nominated for employment meet all qualifications established by law and board policy for the type of position for which nomination is made.

All vacant positions will be posted internally for at least three (3) working days to allow school district employees to apply for the position posted. It is not required that applicants from within the district be selected to fill the vacancy. The primary concern is to select the most qualified applicant for the position available.

Should the position not be filled internally or from applications on file, employment notices will be prepared and circulated.

When appropriate, applications will be screened by the Central Office and may be referred to the appropriate building administrators or supervisors.

## **Hiring**

### Recommendations

Building administrators or supervisors will recommend classified employees for hiring. The district shall strive to employ the most qualified individuals available.

### Release of Information

Before being accepted for paid employment to work directly with Gering Public Schools' students, Gering Public Schools, as a matter of procedure, will conduct a background check to confirm that no substantiated criminal charges have been filed against the potential candidate. All employees are subject to pre-employment drug testing per Board Policy #404.08.

### Credit for Past Employment

New employees to the district will be placed on the Classified Salary Schedule according to their previous years of experience, which are applicable to the position for which they are hired. If an employee does not possess previous experience, he/she will be placed on the first step of the position.

### Transfer

Any classified employee wishing to transfer from one position to another shall submit an online internal application to the Superintendent or designee. All transfers will be considered by the

building principal or supervisor but are not guaranteed. A meeting will be held between the appropriate staff to determine salary placement on the schedule.

### Involuntary Transfers

Determining the location where a classified employee's assignment will be performed is the responsibility of the Superintendent based upon recommendations from the building principal and supervisors. In making position assignments, building administrators and supervisors, along with the Superintendent, shall consider the qualifications of the employee and the needs of the District.

A meeting will be held between the employee and his/her building principal or supervisor to discuss an involuntary transfer. If involuntarily transferred to a lesser compensated position, the employee will be paid according to the salary schedule and position.

### Wages (Board Policy 412 & 413)

A salary schedule will be developed annually for all classified positions. The basic compensation of each employee shall be set forth in the salary schedule as approved by the Gering Public Schools Board of Education or be compensated at the discretion of the Superintendent/Business Manager. Please note that we consider wage and salary information to be CONFIDENTIAL.

### Compensation and Related Benefits

**The Board of Education will establish the compensation package for the classified employees. All employees are paid monthly on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the 20<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, payment will occur on the Friday prior to the 20<sup>th</sup>.**

Payroll checks are deposited directly into your checking or savings account, unless we notify you otherwise. All employees are required to participate in the direct deposit program as this process ensures that your paycheck is deposited. You will be provided a pay stub each month. If you believe there is an error on your paycheck, please report it immediately to the payroll office. Once a determination has been made, necessary corrections will occur.

Our payroll period varies, and staff will be notified of payroll periods for each year at the start of the school year. Each hourly employee is required to use the time clock software provided in each building; and in order for us to have accurate records, it is imperative that each employee use the time clock software diligently. If the employee should have a problem using the time clock software, the supervisor should be notified. The supervisor will then notify the payroll department so that a manual adjustment can be made to the time clock software. If the employee fails to clock in or clock out, a timesheet correction form must be filled out by the supervisor or principal within 48 hours. Under no circumstance should anyone ever clock in and out for another employee. This action provides grounds for immediate dismissal from Gering Public Schools for both parties involved. If an employee habitually fails to clock in or out following supervisory notification, disciplinary action may be taken.

### Salary Checks and Deductions

Salary checks are based on hours worked multiplied by the hourly wage indicated on the employee's salary worksheet.

Gering Public Schools is required to deduct federal and state withholding taxes (income taxes) based on information you provide on your W-4. Deductions for Social Security and Medicare are also deducted at the rate established by the federal government. Retirement, based on employee's eligibility, will be deducted at the rate established by NPERS.

We are also required to withhold and remit court-ordered garnishments.

Other voluntary deductions including health and life insurance, savings bonds, annuities, etc. must be provided by the employee within 30 days of his/her start date.

Any changes per the employee to payroll including tax withholdings, insurance annuities, etc., must be received by the payroll department in the Central Office by the first day of the month preceding the pay date for that month. Any mid-year changes to any Section 125 Plan items (health insurance, dental insurance, cancer insurance, AFLAC, Select Flex child care and Select Flex medical reimbursement) can only be made if there is a qualifying "change in status".

### Overtime Pay

Fair Labor Standards Act mandates payment of 1 ½ times an employee's regular rate on any hours worked over 40 by a nonexempt employee in a work week. Gering Public School's workweek is considered 40 consecutive hours Monday through Sunday. **Any overtime must be approved by the employee's supervisor (superintendent, or director of business) before working over the 40 hour limit.**

## **Chapter IV: Laws**

### **Nondiscrimination** (Board Policy 402.1)

The decision to hire an applicant is to be based solely on the applicant's qualifications and his/her ability to meet the school district's standards of performance. Nowhere in the selection process is the applicant's race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy or other protected conditions used as disqualifying factors. Gering Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment of employment in its programs or activities.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The following grievance procedure shall be used for resolution of complaints of alleged violation of Gering Public Schools.

1. Complaints shall be filed with the building administrator. All complaints shall be made in writing, unless the complainant's disability prevents such action, in which case it may be done verbally. Grievance Procedure Forms can be obtained from the Superintendent.
2. Complaints shall contain the following: (a) name of the complainant, (b) address and phone number of the complainant, (c) a brief description of the alleged violation and (d) resolution requested by the complainant.
3. The Business Manager shall review complaints. Investigations shall be thorough but informal, and the complainant will be given an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the complaint.
4. The Business Manager will make a decision on the complaint within thirty (30) days of the filing of the complaint, unless such time period is extended by agreement of the complainant. The decision will be put in writing and forwarded to the complainant.
5. The complainant will be given ten (10) days from the date the Business Manager's decision is sent to the complainant to accept or reject the proposed resolution. If the complainant does not respond with an acceptance or rejection, the resolution will be accepted. In the event the complainant rejects the proposed resolution, the complainant will be given an opportunity to file a request for reconsideration. The Business Manager will forward this request for reconsideration, along with all

supporting documentation, to the Superintendent of Schools who will make a decision within ten (10) days.

### **Facilities for Milk Expression** (Board Policy 404.11)

Each building will designate a private area, other than a restroom, for an employee for breastfeeding or to express breast milk for her nursing child in a place which is shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public.

## **Chapter V: Attendance, Absences**

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance contributes significantly towards better team effort and productivity. Each employee is very important to the smooth operation of Gering Public Schools. Consistent attendance is an essential component of solid employee performance. Occasionally, it may be necessary for you to be absent from work as a result of illness, injury or other personal reasons. Employees who will be absent are expected to notify their building administrator or supervisor immediately. An absence must be created in SmartFindExpress by the employee/supervisor upon return to work. Compensation for sick days, personal days or vacation will not be processed until the payroll department receives the approved absence from SmartFindExpress.

Days of absence will be applied directly to an employee's leave. If an employee exhausts all leave, the absence is required to be approved as an unpaid absence by the superintendent.

### **Arrival to Duty Assignments**

Schools have different starting and ending times for each day. Classified working assignments may or may not be related to the regular school day. Classified employees are expected to know their duty dates and times and are expected to report to work on time. Adjustments to any classified employee's schedule must be approved by the building principal, supervisor, Superintendent, or district director.

### **Leaving School**

Employees are to be on duty at all times during their assigned work day. Employees may not leave school or their assigned area during duty hours without approval of the principal.

Employees who leave the school during their designated lunch period must check out at the principal's office or designated area. Employees who leave during the work hours for an approved absence must clock out and check out with the principal's office or their supervisor when leaving, and check back in and clock back in upon returning. Employees who need to leave during the school day for reasons of illness or emergency are to check out with the principal's office or their supervisor.

## **Chapter VI: Benefits**

### **Medical/Health Insurance**

Gering Public Schools offers Insurance benefits to employees who are deemed full time under the PPACA guidelines. The district pays 35% of a "single" premium for any qualifying employee. Classified staff who are not deemed full time under the PPACA guidelines have the opportunity to participate in the school district's health care program by assuming the obligation for their own monthly premium payments.

### **Flexible Benefit Plan (SelectFlex)**

The Flexible Benefit Plan or SelectFlex is available to all employees. Gering Public School has established this plan to allow our employees to select a tax benefit in exchange for a reduction in cash compensation that would otherwise be payable. SelectFlex allows you to allocate funds to either or both a Medical Reimbursement Account and a Dependent Care Assistance Account. These accounts are then used to reimburse you for eligible medical expenses and dependent care expenses, respectively on a pre-tax basis. Enrollment for SelectFlex is held every year prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>. Annual re-enrollment is required, and late applications will be denied per IRS regulations. Any questions concerning the plan should be directed to the Payroll Department.

### **Worker's Compensation**

All employees of the school district are covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance. To be eligible for compensation, the injury to an employee must arise from and in the course of employment in the school district. Employees injured during the course of employment and eligible for compensation are required to report **ALL** accidents or injuries to their supervisor immediately. **An Incident Report must be completed and forwarded to the Payroll Department.** Failure on the part of the employee to report an injury within twenty-four (24) hours may prejudice and defeat a claim for compensation.

## **Long Term Disability**

Long Term Disability Insurance is provided for classified employees who are scheduled to work more than twenty (20) hours per week. After the exhaustion of all accumulated sick leave, employees are eligible to apply for Long Term Disability Insurance. The LTD Insurance plan is provided by the employer. Please inform the Central Office of any health-related issues that may qualify you for this benefit.

## **Retirement**

All classified employees who are hired for positions that are 20 hours or more per week on an ongoing, regular basis are required to participate in the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement System.

All members of the Retirement System will contribute the required percentage of ~~8%~~ 7.25% established by NPERS. The school district will match that contribution 101%. A member who terminates employment with Gering Public Schools may:

1. Leave the account on an inactive basis
2. Receive a refund of the account. An application for refund must be filled out with the Nebraska Retirement System, P.O. Box 94816, Lincoln, NE 68509. For full details or questions, please call the Retirement System at (800) 245-5712.

**For more information please visit <https://npers.ne.gov/>**

## **Tax Sheltered Annuities**

Employees may participate in an annuity program of their choice from a list of approved service provider companies. For further information, please contact the Payroll Department.

Requests for participation should be made through a service provider company. The employee must complete a Salary Reduction Agreement Form provided by either their service provider or by Gering Public Schools. The service provider company must also complete a maximum exclusion allowance (MEA) form. Arrangement for Tax Sheltered Annuities is made through the Payroll Department. New or modifications to existing annuities may be done at any time. The required paperwork must be submitted to the Payroll Department by the first day of the month preceding the pay date for that month.

## **Life Insurance**

Gering Public Schools offers life insurance to employees who are scheduled to work 20 hours or more per week. This program provides an opportunity for employees to purchase term life insurance at a monthly group rate. For the cost of this insurance, please contact the Payroll Department.

## **COBRA**

Employee's Rights to Continue Group Health Coverage: On April 7, 1986, a federal law was enacted (Public Law 99-272, Title X) requiring 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. This notice is intended to inform you, in summary fashion, of your rights and obligations under Continuation Coverage provisions of the law.

If you are an employee of Gering Public Schools, covered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield (BCBS), you have a right to choose this continuation coverage if you lose your group health coverage because of a reduction in your hours of employment or the termination of your employment. In the event of termination for gross misconduct, continuation coverage is not provided.

Under the law, the employee has the responsibility to inform the Payroll Department at Gering Public Schools and the BCBS Administrator of a divorce, legal separation, or a child losing dependent status under BCBS within thirty (30) days of the date of the event or date coverage would end under the plan because of the event, whichever is later. Gering Public Schools has the responsibility to notify the BCBS Plan Administrator of the employee's death, termination or reduction in hours of employment or Medicare entitlements.

When the Payroll Department is notified that one of these events has occurred, she/he will in turn notify you that you have the right to choose continuation coverage. Under the law, you have at least sixty (60) days from the date you would lose coverage because of the event described above, or the date notice of your election rights are sent to you, to inform the BCBS Administrator that you want continuation coverage.

If you do not choose continuation of coverage, your group health insurance will end. If you choose continuation coverage, Gering Public Schools is required to give you coverage which, as of the time coverage is being provided, is identical to the coverage provided under the plan to similarly situated employees or family members.

The law requires that you be afforded the opportunity to maintain coverage for three (3) years unless you lose group health coverage because of termination of employment or reduction in hours. In that case, the required continuation coverage period is eighteen (18) months.

However, the law also provides that your continuation coverage may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- Gering Public Schools no longer provides group health insurance coverage to any of its employees.
- The premium for your continuation coverage is not paid on time.
- You become covered by another group plan, unless the plan contains any exclusion of limitations with respect to any pre-existing condition you or your covered dependents may have.
- You become enrolled in Medicare.
- You extend your coverage for up to 29 months due to your disability and there has been a final determination that you are no longer disabled.

If you have any questions about the law, please contact the Payroll Department at (308) 436-3125.

### **Staff Passes**

All employees of Gering Public Schools shall have the opportunity to procure a yearly activity pass for school activities. To be eligible to receive an activity pass, the individual must work a minimum of two (2) activity events in a capacity as assigned by the Activities Director. An individual who wishes to obtain activity passes for his/her children must work an additional activity for each child. A schedule will be established during the first two (2) weeks of each season whereby assignments will be made according to the needs and desires of the staff.

### **Leaves**

If you know that you will not be able to attend work at the time you are scheduled, please notify your building principal or supervisor in advance. If you are unable to give advance notice, you must telephone your building principal or supervisor as soon as possible. If you are personally unable to contact your building principal or supervisor, you are responsible for asking someone else to do so. Depending on the circumstance, your building principal or supervisor may request that you also contact the Superintendent. It is your responsibility to notify your building principal or supervisor each time you are unable to report for work.

If you are absent from work and we do not hear from you or someone notifying us on your behalf after three (3) consecutive workdays, we will conclude that you have voluntarily terminated your employment with the school district.

**If you have pre-arranged personal leave, you may not convert it to other leave after the fact.**

**Sick Leave** (Board Policy 415.2)

Starting with the 2021-22 school year, sick leave for classified staff will be granted at a specific rate per each month worked.

- 9 month employees or those who work less than 40 hours per week -- Sick leave will be accumulated at a rate of 0.416 days per month worked.
- 10 and 12 month employees who work 40 hours per week -- Sick leave will be accumulated at a rate of 0.67 days per month worked.

When an employee has accumulated thirty-six (36) days of sick leave at the end of his/her employment year, the Board of Education will grant that employee an additional thirty (30) days of sick leave for a maximum of sixty-six (66). The additional thirty (30) days is a one-time addition. The Board of Education will buy back unused sick leave at the rate of 60% of your daily standard rate up to \$80 per day up to 30 days not to exceed \$2,400. This applies to any employee who leaves the District after 15 years of consecutive service who notified the District of his/her decision to leave by February 1.

The maximum leave that can be used daily is the amount required for you to reach your scheduled hours. You cannot extend your scheduled hours by utilizing additional leave.

We expect our employees not to abuse our sick leave policy. You are required to call your building administrator or supervisor at the start of each workday for which you are scheduled but are unable to attend due to sickness.

Gering Public Schools may require medical certification to support a request for leave because of a serious health condition and may require second or third opinions (at the employer's expense) and a fitness for duty report to return to work. The school district's general policy will be to require medical certifications and fitness for duty reports, and periodic reports on intent to return and periodic re-certifications, when deemed appropriate.

Family illness days will be deducted from sick leave. The term "family" shall mean: spouse, father, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, grandchild or person in the same house as part of the family of someone whom the employee is guardian or holds power of attorney during a serious illness. This time may be extended by personal leave.

### **Maternity Leave**

1. All policies, rules, and regulations applicable to employees who are granted sick leave shall be applicable to employees applying for maternity leave.
2. Written notification for maternity leave shall be submitted to the building principal where the employee is assigned early enough so that arrangements can be made for a long term substitute. The employee will meet with the Payroll Office to complete any required paperwork.
3. Sick leave benefits for maternity shall begin when the doctor certifies that the employee is no longer able to perform her duties. The paid leave ends when the doctor certifies that the employee is fully recovered from disability resulting from delivery and recovery there from.
4. When the doctor certifies that the employee has fully recovered from the temporary disability, the employee is expected to return to employment, unless the employee requests to take unpaid leave entitled to them under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. If the employee chooses to take FMLA leave, she will be entitled to unpaid leave for no more than a total of 12 weeks, accumulated between the above paid leave with unpaid leave.

### **Sick Leave Bank**

This wording is in accordance with Board Policy 410.09 Sick Leave Bank, adopted by the Board on March 15, 2010.

### **Adoption leave**

Employees who have been with the district for more than twelve months are entitled to twelve weeks of unpaid leave for adoption or foster care of a child. Paid sick leave, family leave and personal leave shall be substituted for the unpaid leave until the paid leave time has been exhausted.

### **Personal Leave**

**Nine month employees will earn one (1) personal leave day, 10 month will earn two (2) personal leave days, and 12 month will earn twelve (12) personal leave days per year. For the breaks for Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas/New Years, Spring break, Easter or Memorial Day, not more than one (1) personal day may be used the day before or after such school recess or holiday; the Superintendent shall have the authority to grant additional days. Compensation for personal leave will not be processed until the payroll department receives the approved absence from SmartFindExpress.**

## **Military Leave**

Military Leave will be granted to any employee who is a member of the U.S. Armed Services Active Reserve or National Guard for temporary field training or emergency duty. You will be paid your regular salary for the time away from work up to a maximum of fifteen (15) work days in any one (1) calendar year, without loss of school district pay that you would normally receive for that period.

Please submit a copy of your military Leave and Earnings Statement (L.E.S.) to your building administrator or supervisor when you return to work. A military leave is considered separate from vacation time. However, you cannot take your vacation directly before or immediately after military leave. A minimum of two weeks, either before or after, must separate ordinary vacation leave from military leave.

## **Family Military Leave Act** (Board Policy 415.7)

The Nebraska Legislative Bill 497 (LB 497), Family Military Leave Act, authorizes 30 days of unpaid leave to an employee who meets the employment criteria, requests leave and is the spouse or parent of a person called to military service lasting 179 days or longer.

Any employee who takes family military leave will be entitled to regain the position he/she held when the leave period began. An employer will not be able to discharge, fine or discriminate against any employee who takes unpaid family military leave. During the leave period, employees will be able to maintain their benefits at their own expense.

## **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** – (Board Policy 415.3)

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job protected leave to “eligible” employees for certain family and medical reasons, during any twelve (12) month period.

The school districts’ applicable “leave year” is a “rolling” twelve-month period, measured backward from the date an employee last used any FMLA leave. Employees are eligible if they have worked for Gering Public Schools for at least one year, and for 1,250 hours over the previous twelve (12) months, and if there are at least 50 employees of the District within 75 miles of the employee’s work site.

Reasons for taking leave: Unpaid leave must be granted for any of the following reasons:

- 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 essential functions of the employee’s job.

At the employee or employer’s option, certain kinds of paid leave may be substituted for unpaid leave. For example, in the case of leaves for serious health conditions, you will likely be required to substitute your accrued paid vacation leave, personal leave, or medical and sick leave, if any, for the unpaid FMLA leave.

Special rules apply to instructional employees who request intermittent or reduced schedule leaves, or leaves near the end of an academic term.

**Advance Notice and Medical Certification**

The employee may be required to provide advance leave notice and medical certification. Taking leave may be denied if requirements are not met. The school district has leave applications and medical certifications forms, which are to be used. *Forms are available from the Central Office.*

- The employee ordinarily must provide thirty (30) days advance notice when the leave is “foreseeable.”
- An employer may require medical certification to support a request for leave because of a serious health condition, and may require second or third opinions (at the employer’s expense) and a fitness for duty report to return to work. The school district’s general policy will be to require medical certifications and fitness for duty reports, and periodic reports on intent to return and periodic re-certifications, when deemed appropriate.

**Unlawful Acts by Employers:**

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided by FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

**Enforcement**

- The U.S. Department of Labor is authorized to investigate and resolve complaints of violations.
- An eligible employee may bring a civil action against an employer for violations.

FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or Local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Classified employees are entitled to Bereavement Leave. Bereavement leave allowances are provided as indicated below. However, the Board recognizes that the need for such leave may vary among individuals and will consider extending the leave in special or unusual circumstances. Application for extending this leave can be made to your building administrator or supervisor.

A total of up to five (5) consecutive days on full pay is allowed for each classified employee that is employed full-time for absence in case of a death in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as wife, husband, father, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, son, son-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, grandchildren, grandparent, or a person in the same home as part of the family, or someone for whom the employee is guardian or holds power of attorney. Staff members who suffer the death of a child, step-child or spouse will have five (5) bereavement days plus an additional five (5) bereavement days will be deducted from the employee's sick leave balance. This time may be extended by personal leave.

Employees may be excused, without loss of pay, for the length of service, to attend funeral services of relatives other than those listed above or to attend funeral services of friends with the approval of the Superintendent. Bereavement leave is not limited to five (5) days in one year, but covers each death in the immediate family that occurs during the year.

Bereavement days are awarded congruently with the length of each individual's working day.

### **Legal and Civic Duties**

Employees of the district are encouraged to fulfill their citizenship obligation of jury duty. Employees who receive a subpoena for appearance in court or who are required to serve on Jury Duty shall receive full pay for such absence from duty provided that they comply with the stipulations listed below.

1. The employee must not be a litigant in the court action.
2. The employee must present a copy of the jury summons to your supervisor and attach a copy of that summons to a normal leave request form. Forward both documents to the Central Office.
3. The employee will reimburse the district from any stipend received for services on the jury in an amount equal to or less than wages paid by the district. Reimbursement from part-time employees will be individually determined.

**Paid Holidays**

All nine and ten month employees are entitled to receive six paid holidays per school year. Employees normally scheduled to work on a holiday will be compensated for their scheduled hours. These holidays are:

**9 & 10 Month (Paras & Secretaries)**

Labor Day	Christmas Day
Thanksgiving Day	New Year's Day
Day after Thanksgiving Day	Good Friday
Memorial Day (Secretaries Only)	

Only twelve (12) month employees who work eight hours per day are eligible for ten (10) paid holidays. These employees are considered full-time. The Gering Public Schools are closed for ten (10) holidays each year. The following are the paid holidays we observe:

**12 Month (Custodians, Central Office Staff, Maintenance Crew)**

Labor Day	New Year's Eve Day
Thanksgiving Day	New Year's Day
Day after Thanksgiving Day	Good Friday
Christmas Eve Day	Memorial Day
Christmas Day	Independence Day

If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed the following Monday. If it falls on Saturday, it will be observed the preceding Friday.

If a holiday occurs during your vacation, you are entitled to an extra day of vacation time.

Employees will not be allowed to work on a paid holiday unless an emergency exists and administrative approval is provided through the Superintendent and/or Business Manager at the Central Office.

**Religious Holidays**

The Gering Public Schools respect the right of each employee to worship as his or her faith dictates, but it is economically impossible for us to provide time off with pay for all religious holidays. Employees may apply for a vacation day(s), or take a personal day(s) toward any religious holidays they wish to observe. If an employee has no paid time left, he or she may

request the day off without pay. However, we expect all employees to make arrangements with their building administrator or supervisor at least one week in advance.

### **Professional Leave**

Professional leave may be granted to classified employees for the purpose of attending meetings and conferences directly related to their assignments. Attendance for professional leave is permitted at full pay if such absence is approved by the classified employee's building administrator or supervisor and planned in the budget.

### **Unexcused Absence and Lateness**

We expect all of our employees to report to work on time for each workday and to continue to work until the end of that workday. Lateness will not be tolerated. An unsatisfactory attendance record and the taking of unauthorized break periods will result in disciplinary action.

### **Misuse of Leaves**

When a building administrator or supervisor suspects misuse of leave, he/she may require verification that the leave was used for the purpose intended. Misuse of leave may be grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal from Gering Public Schools.

## **Chapter VIII: Discipline and Termination/Resignation**

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Gering Public Schools believes discipline is not meant to be punishment in any way. However, when it becomes necessary to improve an employee's performance or behavior from unacceptable to acceptable, our Progressive Discipline Policy enables us to do so in a fair and consistent way. Normal steps in the disciplinary process are outlined here. However, based on the seriousness of the offense, administration may enter into any level of disciplinary action or termination.

1. Discussion: This is a verbal discussion in which the building administrator or supervisor has a face-to-face conference with you to discuss your poor work performance or conduct and the need for correcting it.
2. Assessment: If there is little or no improvement after the discussion, the next step is a written assessment. The building administrator or supervisor completes a report. You have the right to read and discuss the report and comment in writing. The Superintendent may be present at the request of the building administrator, supervisor or you.
3. Discipline: After step two, if there is no marked improvement, the building administrator or supervisor will complete another written record of the second disciplinary action. The Superintendent may be present at the request of your building administrator or supervisor.
4. **Termination: After step three, if there is no marked improvement, you may be terminated. The building administrator or supervisor, along with the Superintendent, will conduct a review. An employee conference will be held and a determination of action will be made. The action may range from the continued opportunity to improve or dismissal. Each situation will be reviewed on an individual basis.**

Administration reserves the right to enter into any level of disciplinary action or termination based on the severity of the offense and the employee's work record.

#### **Termination by Employer** (Board Policy 414.4)

Termination may be made without prior notice or prior discipline, and it may be made without cause. When a decision is made to terminate, a conference will be held between the employee and the building administrator or supervisor. A written review of the documentation will be presented to the employee. The employee will have the opportunity to respond in writing on the termination form. Documents will be signed at the conclusion of the conference. Copies will be filed with the building administrator or supervisor and the Superintendent. A copy will be furnished to the employee. The terminated employee will receive his/her final paycheck within two weeks of the termination date or the next regular payday, whichever comes first.

Some examples of inappropriate conduct which may result in termination include but are not limited to the following:

1. Unauthorized absences
2. Commitment or conviction of any criminal act
3. Conduct unbecoming any employee in public service
4. Disorderly or immoral conduct
5. Unacceptable work performance
6. Elimination of the position (Reduction In Force)
7. Insubordination
8. Other reasons deemed appropriate by the administration or Board of Education

### **Resignation by Employee** (Board Policy 414.1)

Whenever possible, classified and exempt employees are expected to give two (2) weeks' notice of intent to resign their employment in order to provide the district sufficient time to find a replacement. Written notice of resignation should be addressed to the appropriate building administrator or supervisor. An exit interview opportunity will be provided when an employee resigns.

**Accrued vacation & sick time cannot be used during the two-week notice to resign employment.**

**If an employee submits a resignation of employment notice, personal or sick leave will not be applicable in order to minimize operational disruptions.**

### **Right to Terminate at Will**

Just as a classified employee may decide to quit his/her employment, the district reserves the right to terminate employment with or without cause and with or without notice at any time at its sole discretion.

## **Chapter IX: Grievance**

Your complaints and issues, large or small, are of concern to Gering Public Schools. For this reason we have provided for you an effective means to bring your problems and complaints to the attention of the district.

Should a grievance arise between an employee of Gering Public Schools and his/her building administrator or supervisor, such grievance shall be taken up for settlement under the following procedure within seven (7) working days following the incident.

1. The employee(s) shall present the grievance orally to the employee's immediate supervisor of record, with or without a representative of the employee's choice present.
2. If a satisfactory adjustment of such grievance is not reached within three (3) workdays, it may be presented in writing to the building principal or immediate supervisor, or supervisor of record. The principal or supervisor will present a decision in writing to the employee(s) within five (5) work days.

3. If a satisfactory adjustment of such grievance is not reached, it may be presented in writing to the Superintendent of Schools, or his or her designated representative, who will, within five (5) days, present a decision in writing to the employee.
4. If a satisfactory adjustment of such grievance is not reached, it may be presented in writing to the Board of Education. The decision of the Board of Education will be rendered in writing within thirty (30) days.

## **Chapter X: Breaks, Uniforms and Employee Identification Badges**

### **Lunch Breaks**

Classified employees who work more than an entire day (six (6) hours or more) shall receive at least a thirty (30) minute lunch break per day. **Lunch breaks are mandatory and cannot be used at the end of a workday to leave for the remainder of the day.** Lunch breaks should be scheduled so as to not disrupt building or departmental functions. Lunch breaks are uncompensated time. They do not count towards the number of hours you are required to work each day. If you leave the building for your lunch break, you are required to clock out on the time clock during the time you are gone.

### **Leaving the Building**

Classified employees who leave the building for any personal errand are required to have prior approval by immediate supervisor and clock out on the time clock software during the time you are gone.

### **Employee Dress**

Employees are expected to dress appropriately for work. Please check with your building administrator or supervisor for guidelines.

## **Employee Identification Badges**

All employees are provided district picture identification badges through the Central Office. The badges are to help staff and students recognize authorized individuals and to increase school safety. Employee Identification Badges are required to be worn by all Gering Public Schools employees when on duty. The badges may be attached to either a lanyard or to your clothing using an alligator clip. **The badges are to be in full display at all times.**

## **Chapter XI: Expenses**

### **Travel/Reimbursement** (Board Policy 402.8)

The board will reimburse employees for normal expenses for hotel, food, registration and transportation costs incurred while attending an authorized conference or other activities whose purpose is related to the instructional or operational improvement of the district. Your building administrator or supervisor must approve arrangements for attendance in advance, in writing.

Specific guidelines for travel reimbursement are as follows:

1. Each building administrator or supervisor may allow travel expenses for personnel under their direct supervision at a cost up to the limitations of their building budget.
2. Complete the appropriate Travel Voucher Form (available from the Business Office).
3. District vehicles are available for travel. If airline transportation is used, the most economical fare available will be allowed.
4. Meal receipts will be submitted to the accounts payable clerk upon your return. Your reimbursement will not exceed established per diem rates.
5. Lodging at actual costs. Receipts are required.
6. Registrations and other fees may be allowed. Receipts are required.
7. Other expenses may be allowed at actual costs. Receipts are required.

### **In-district Travel**

Some employees are required by the administration to have transportation available during the employee's scheduled hours of work. The Board of Education will reimburse this expense according to the following guidelines:

1. Mileage to be reimbursed at a rate specified by Internal Revenue Service Guidelines. No mileage for commuting from home will be reimbursed.
2. Mileage will be reimbursed by a daily log. Any random travel which is required by the district should be logged daily and submitted monthly to the building principal.

3. Requests for reimbursement will be turned in at the end of each month and paid on a monthly basis. Reimbursement requests must be submitted to Central office no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the following month. Failure to submit mileage on time will result in forfeiture of payment.

### Compensation for Time Spent Traveling

Time spent traveling shall be considered hours worked if:

1. An employee is required to travel during regular working hours;
2. An employee is required to drive a vehicle or perform other work while traveling;
3. An employee is required to travel as a passenger on a one-day assignment away from the official duty station; or
4. An employee is required to travel as a passenger on an overnight assignment away from the official duty station during hours on non-work days that correspond to the employee's regular working hours.

## **Chapter XII: Safety, Health and Asbestos**

### **Workplace Safety**

The school district is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. This district recognizes its responsibility in protecting and conserving its human and financial resources.

### **Employee Protection**

A letter addressed to the Business Manager shall make a request for reimbursement for personal property damaged in an assault upon that employee. The letter shall include a full statement describing the assault, listing all damages incurred and noting the date, hour and witness(es).

### **Health Examinations**

Any employee whose assigned responsibilities require by statute a health examination, or any employee whose condition of health is thought to be essential to the welfare of pupils or employees may be required at any time to submit to a health examination by a physician or

surgeon to be determined whether the employee can perform the essential functions of the employee's position with or without reasonable accommodations.

**Blood Borne Pathogens** (Board Policy 404.04, 508.03)

For your own safety, you will be provided with information and training on Blood Borne Pathogens. This training will teach you how to take the necessary precautions against coming into contact with HIV or Hepatitis-B. Please protect yourself by learning these important steps. Remember, if circumstances place you in a situation where there is blood or other body fluid that you could come in contact with, you should treat the blood or body fluids as if they are infected. Your training will instruct you as to what to do in this case.

Gering Public Schools provides inoculations for our employees who work in "higher risk" positions with the Hepatitis-B vaccinations. Depending upon your position, you have the option of receiving the vaccination soon after you begin your employment.

**Chronic Infectious Diseases – Not Commonly Transmitted by Casual Contact**

The definitions of Chronic Infectious Diseases are those, which are carried throughout life by the infected person and have the potential to be transmitted. Disease-causing agents/organisms, which have not been commonly associated with casual contact transmittal, may include, but are not limited to Human Immunodeficiency (HIV) or Hepatitis B.

In the event it becomes known that an employee, or other frequent contact at Gering Public Schools, becomes infected with a chronic infectious disease not commonly associated with casual contract transmittal, the Superintendent of Schools shall make decisions about changes in the employment/education program of an employee on a case-by-case basis, relying on the available scientific and medical advice.

In regard to communicable/contagious disease, which is commonly associated with casual contact transmittal, the Superintendent of Schools will refer to Nebraska Statutes.

The person infected with a chronic infectious disease that is not spread by casual everyday contact, will be entitled to similar treatment by the school as other students and employees. The school shall provide a sanitary environment and establish and enforce routine guidelines for handling body fluids that are recommended by universal precautions.

### **Communicable/Infectious Diseases Commonly Transmitted by Casual Contact**

The definition of Communicable/Infectious diseases is those which are carried for a limited period of time by the infected person and have the potential to be transmitted by casual, everyday contact.

The following are some of the common communicable/infectious disease for which employees will be excluded from work:

Measles (Rubeola)	Three-Day Measles	Ringworm	Chickenpox	Hepatitis A
Impetigo	Mumps	Head Lice	Scabies	Pinkeye
Shingles	Strep Infections			

Employees with a communicable disease may return to work when the signs and symptoms disappear and when the minimum isolation period, as recommended by the Nebraska State Health Department, has elapsed.

### **Asbestos** (Board Policy 905.05)

Gering Public Schools has complied with the 1987 Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools Rule. Each building has been inspected and the Asbestos Management Plan for the building is kept in the principal's office, as well as the Central Office. Interested persons may review the plan(s) during regular business hours.

## **Chapter XIII: Staff Development**

Gering Public Schools provides various staff development opportunities for classified employees. Staff members are expected to participate in these staff development activities as a means of on-the-job training. Employees are encouraged to share information on staff development activities with their supervisors as a means of continuously developing the district's awareness of and participation in quality staff development activities.

## **Chapter XIV: Evaluations and Conduct**

### **Transfer/Reassignment**

The assignment of any classified employee may be changed during the year when deemed advisable by the Superintendent or designees.

### **Duties**

The duties of all classified employees shall be defined in accordance with the job descriptions.

The job descriptions are of a general nature and duties assigned to an employee are not restricted to the items listed within the job description. Each employee will be responsible to the supervisor to whom they are assigned.

### **Evaluations**

Building administrators and supervisors shall perform, at a minimum, a formal annual evaluation of all classified staff. New employees will provide a reflection after their 8-week orientation period. Evaluation of support staff employees on their skills, abilities and competence shall be an ongoing process. The goal of the formal evaluation of classified staff shall be to maintain employees who meet or exceed the District's standards of performance, to clarify each employee's role, to ascertain the areas in need of improvement, to clarify the immediate priorities of the District and to develop a working relationship between the supervisor and employee. Building principals and supervisors are responsible for submitting Employee Evaluation Reports to the Superintendent or designee no later than June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Building principals and supervisors are to conference with employees regarding their evaluations

### **Conduct** (Board Policy 401)

District employees have many opportunities to contribute to the positive, caring image of the school system. Courtesy, tact, patience, friendliness, cooperation and an optimistic attitude are highly valued attributes of employees along with proficiency and skill in job assignments. All employees are expected to treat everyone with respect and understanding. Efforts by employees to contribute to the positive educational environment in the buildings are greatly appreciated.

Classified employees are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a positive manner in order to promote the best interests of the district. Appropriate employee conduct includes:

1. Treating all visitors and co-workers in a courteous manner
2. Refraining from behavior or conduct that is offensive or undesirable.
3. Reporting to administration suspicious, unethical or illegal conduct.
4. Reporting to administration any threatening or potentially violent behavior by co-workers.
5. Wearing clothing appropriate for the work being performed.
6. Performing assigned tasks efficiently and in accord with established quality standards.
7. Reporting to work punctually as scheduled and being at the proper work station, ready for work, at the assigned start time and throughout the work day.
8. Giving proper advance notice whenever unable to work and reporting absence according to established procedures.
9. Adhering to the district-wide no tobacco restriction.
10. Maintaining cleanliness and order in the workplace.
11. Following all district policies approved by the Board of Education.

The responsibility for acceptable conduct and attire rests with the employee. Building principals or supervisors shall advise employees as to the acceptable and expected standards of the job.

**Drug Free Schools/Workplace** (Board Policy 404.07)

Gering Public Schools is committed to providing a working environment that is safe and provides appropriate motivation to ensure a creative and productive workforce. To this end, the district unequivocally endorses the philosophy that the workplace should be free from the detrimental effects of illicit drugs and alcohol. Acknowledgement of understanding and receipt of board standards and policies forms must be filled out by each employee. The school district further finds that, aside from the workplace, the unlawful manufacturing, sale, distribution, possession, being under the influence or unlawful use of illicit drugs or alcohol by employees of the school district, constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes, is connected with the school district and presents a variety of risks which are unacceptable, and will constitute a reason for disciplinary action. In the event of any non-compliance by any employee, the employee may be disciplined. This may include ending employment. Any employee of this school district who has been charged or convicted of any violation of law involving illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia or alcohol must immediately report such charge or conviction to the Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent's designee. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action.

Definitions:

“School premises” shall mean any property, whether owned, leased or in any other manner under the control of the Board of Education of the school district. “Outside of the

Workplace” shall mean at all times other than on “school premises” or as part of the school activities.

### **Tobacco-Free Workplace**

It is the intent of the Board of Education of the Gering Public Schools to create a tobacco-free environment within the Gering Public Schools. Because we value our students and employees, the promotion of health, safety and well-being is one of our utmost concerns.

A policy has been implemented banning the use of all tobacco products on all Gering Public Schools property and in all school-owned vehicles. Tobacco use by the general public or adult employees is prohibited. All rules and regulations which deny student use of tobacco, both inside buildings and on school grounds, remain in force. Appropriate signs will be placed at the entrance of buildings and other appropriate locations, advising all persons that our buildings and grounds are a tobacco-free environment. The school district will provide information to employees concerning tobacco use cessation programs.

### **Unlawful Acts by Employees**

The Gering Public Schools Board of Education recognizes the value of providing an educational setting that is safe and secure and that provides proper role modeling for our students, staff and visitors.

The school setting should promote good citizenship through the behaviors that are modeled and taught. To encourage this action and to address any violations of good citizenship, the following standards will apply:

Any employee charged or convicted in any unlawful act, in violation of federal, state or local criminal or other applicable law at any time or place, whether on or off duty, may be subject to disciplinary action if, in the judgment of the Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent’s designee, the charge or conviction in the unlawful act constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes.

Any employee who has been charged or convicted of any unlawful act shall immediately report such charge or conviction to the Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent’s designee. Generally, speeding tickets and such infractions need not be reported.

### **Preventing Harassment and Discrimination of Employees, Students and/or Volunteers**

(Board Policy 404.12)

Gering Public Schools is committed to complying with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination and to taking any necessary measures to assure compliance with such laws against any prohibited form of discrimination. Unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind by employees of Gering Public Schools is prohibited. In addition, Gering Public Schools will try to protect employees, students and volunteers from discrimination or harassment by non-employees and others in the workplace.

For purposes of this policy, discrimination or harassment based on a person's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, or pregnancy, or other protected conditions is prohibited. The following are general definitions of what might constitute prohibited harassment.

- In general, ethnic or racial slurs or other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, or other protected conditions constitute harassment when they unreasonably interfere with the person's work performance or create an intimidating work environment.
- Age harassment has been defined by federal regulations as a form of age discrimination. It can consist of demeaning jokes, insults, or intimidation based on a person's age.
- Sexual harassment has been defined by federal and state regulations as a form of sex discrimination. It can consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature by supervisors or others in the workplace. Sexual harassment may exist when:
  1. Supervisors or managers make submissions to such conduct either an explicit or implicit term and condition of employment (including hiring, compensation, promotion or retention);
  2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used by supervisors or managers as a basis for employment related decisions such as promotion, performance evaluation, pay adjustment, discipline, work assignment, etc.
  3. The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working classroom or educational environment.
- Sexual harassment may include explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, sexually oriented "kidding" or "teasing", "practical jokes", jokes about gender – specific traits; foul or obscene language or gestures; displays of foul or obscene printed or visual material; and physical contact, such as patting, pinching or brushing against another's body.

### **Complaint and Grievance Procedures to Respond to Harassment and Discrimination**

- An employee who is affected by a violation of Gering Public Schools' anti-harassment and discrimination policy should initially report all instances of discrimination or harassment to the employee's immediate supervisor. However, if the employee is uncomfortable in presenting the problem to the immediate supervisor, or if the immediate

supervisor is the problem, the employee is permitted and encouraged to go to the next level of supervision. The failure on your part to report the harassment may deprive you of certain legal rights.

- If the employee's complaint is not resolved to his or her satisfaction within five (5) to ten (10) working days, or if the discrimination or harassment continues, the employee should report the complaint to the Superintendent of Schools. If a satisfactory arrangement or resolution of the complaint or grievance cannot be obtained through the Superintendent, the complaint may be submitted to the Board of Education of Gering Public Schools.
- All persons to whom a complaint or grievance is reported, are to thoroughly investigate all complaints. These situations will be treated with the utmost confidence, consistent with resolution of the problem. Based on the results of the investigation, appropriate corrective action up to and including discharge of offending employees, etc. may be taken. Under no circumstance will any employer threaten or retaliate against an employee for alleging a violation of this policy.

#### **Nepotism** (Board Policy 402.04)

More than one family member may be an employee of the school district. Prior to any interview or in-district transfer that would result in one family member supervising another family member; the board must be made aware of nepotism concerns.

#### **Employee Conflict of Interest** (Board Policy 402.03)

Employees' use of their position with the school district for financial gain shall be considered a conflict of interest with their position as employees and may subject employees to disciplinary action.

Employees have access to information and a captive audience that could award the employee personal or financial gain. No employee may solicit other employees or students for personal or financial gain to the employee without the approval of the Superintendent.

If the approval of the Superintendent is given, the employee must conduct the solicitations within the conditions set by the Superintendent. Further, the Superintendent may, upon five (5) days notice, require the employee to cease such solicitations as a condition of continued employment.

Employees shall not act as an agent or a dealer for the sale of textbooks or other school supplies. Employees shall not participate for personal financial remuneration in outside activities wherein their position on the staff is used to sell goods or services to students or to parents. Employees shall not engage in outside work or activities where the source of information concerning the customer, client or employer originates from information obtained because of the employee's position in the school district.

It shall also be a conflict of interest for an employee to engage in any outside employment or activity that is in conflict with the employee's official duties and responsibilities. In determining whether outside employment or activity of an employee creates a conflict of interest, situations in which an unacceptable conflict of interest shall be deemed to exist shall include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

1. The outside employment or activity involves the use of the school district's time, facilities, equipment, and supplies or the use of the school district's badge, uniform, business card or other evidence of office to give the employee's immediate family an advantage or monetary benefit that is not available to other similarly situated members or classes of members of the general public. For purposes of this section, a person is not "similarly situated" merely by being related to an employee who is employed by the school district.
2. The outside employment or activity involves the receipt of, promise of, or acceptance of more or other consideration by the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family from anyone other than the school district for the performance of any act that the employee would be required or expected to perform as part of the employee's regular duties or during the hours during which the employee performs service or work for the school district.
3. The outside employment or activity is subject to the official control, inspection, review, audit or enforcement authority of the employee during the performance of the employee's duties.

If the outside employment or activity is employment or activity in (1) or (2) above, the employee must cease the employment of the activity. If the activity or employment falls under (3), then the employee must:

- Cease the outside employment or activity; or
- Publicly disclose the existence of the conflict and refrain from taking any official action or performing any official duty that would detrimentally affect or create a benefit for the outside employment or activity. Official action or official duty includes, but is not limited to, participating in any vote, taking affirmative action to influence any vote, or providing any other official service or thing that is not available generally to members of the public in order to further the interests of the outside employment or activity.

It shall be the responsibility of each employee to be aware of and take the necessary action to eliminate a potential conflict of interest should it arise.

### **Use of Cell Phones**

Cell phone use is allowed during non-contact time with students and needs to be used in an area where students are not present. In the case of emergencies, please see the building principal or administrator concerning use of cell phones.

## **Internet, Computers and Network Resources** (Board Policy 402.14, 606.06)

The Board supports the use of computers, technology and the Internet in the District's instructional program as a resource to educate and inform. The use of these resources shall be consistent with the curriculum adopted by the School District and shall be employed in an appropriate and responsible manner to meet the varied instructional needs, learning styles, abilities and developmental levels of students.

### Procedures and Guidelines

The Superintendent shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for computer use and internet access. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of computer use, ethical use of electronic media, and the District's ownership and right of administrative review of electronic files and communications. The term "electronic media" includes, but is not limited to, the internet, e-mail and other technological resources.

These guidelines shall prohibit utilization of networks for inappropriate or illegal activities, the intentional spreading of embedded messages (viruses) or the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs, data or equipment. Guidelines will describe the District's limitation of liability and will establish that the use of computers, technology and the internet is a privilege, not a right. Violation of the procedures and guidelines will result in cancellation of those privileges and appropriate disciplinary action.

### Technology Protection Measure

The District will implement a technology protection measure that will block or filter internet access to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic or of a harmful nature to minors. Operation of this measure will be monitored and enforced during use of computers by minors.

### Audit of Use

Users with network access shall not utilize District resources to establish electronic mail accounts through third-party providers or any other nonstandard electronic mail system. Participation in chat rooms is prohibited without specific prior approval by the system administrator. The Superintendent shall establish a process to determine whether the District's education technology is being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing prohibited materials. The process may include, but not be limited to:

- Utilizing blocking/filtering software.
- Turning off the "auto load images" feature of the Internet browser.
- Using a proxy server to control accessible websites.

### Staff Use

A written staff agreement form will be required for all employees having access to electronic media. Staff shall confine e-mail use to work-related purposes and only limited, incidental personal use. The agreement form will refer to the procedures and guidelines for use of computers and the internet, describe prohibitions and limitations on the use of these resources and state the employee's responsibility for the security of individual passwords.

### Disregard of Rules

Individuals who refuse to sign required acceptable use documents or who violate District rules governing the use of District technology shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using computers, technology or the internet and related resources.

### **Responsibility for Damages**

Individuals shall reimburse the Board for repair or replacement of District property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care.

### **Advertising and Promotion**

Except as may be expressly authorized by the Board of Education, no employee shall permit any commercial advertising to be announced, distributed, or otherwise promoted in or through the schools; endorse a specific brand product; or recommend, prescribe, or suggest that students use performance-enhancing products, including dietary supplements which are intended to be ingested, inhaled or injected.

### **Confidentiality**

Employees should not discuss school matters outside the job nor discuss confidential or personal information about students or staff. Requests from anyone, including fellow building staff members, for personal information about students should be referred to the principal.

## **Professional Boundaries** (Board Policy 403.9)

School district employees are responsible for conducting themselves professionally and for teaching and modeling high standards of behavior and civic values, both at and away from school. Employees are required to establish and maintain professional boundaries with students. They may be friendly with students; but they are the students' teachers, not their friends, and they must take care to see that this line does not become blurred. This applies to employees' conduct and interactions with students and to material they post on personal websites and other social networking sites including, but not limited to, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. The posting or publication of messages or pictures or other images that diminish an employee's professionalism or ability to maintain the respect of students and parents may impair his or her ability to be an effective employee. Employees are expected to behave at all times in a manner supportive of the best interests of students.

Staff members are required to be educators and adult authority figures to children and students. The relationship with students is not as peers, social equals, or friends.

Even the appearance of inappropriate boundaries may significantly damage an educator's reputation. The best way for educators to protect themselves from false accusations is to avoid behavior that can be misconstrued.

Observing the following professional boundaries will help protect students, staff members, and the school.

- Private meetings with students
  - Never remain alone with a student behind a closed door;
  - Never remain alone with a student in a classroom outside of the regular school day without informing the principal;
  - Do not permanently cover classroom windows in a way that restricts viewing from the outside. All school rooms in which staff and students interact should have unobstructed windows allowing clear views of the room;
  - Coaches should never meet alone with students behind closed doors – especially if the room lacks windows or has covered windows;
  - If you must have a difficult conversation with a student – and you are concerned that a student may misinterpret or misrepresent what occurred in your meeting – ask a fellow staff member to be present for the meeting.
  
- Guidelines for Staff Members, Coaches, and Extra-Curricular Program Managers
  - Staff members should avoid driving individual students to or from games, practices, or events unless there is some type of medical or weather emergency;
  - When traveling with a team, a coach or other adult school representative should never be alone in a room with a student;

- Fraternization with Students – In general, the role of the school staff member is that of an authority figure rather than that of a peer or friend.
  - Avoid counseling students in non-school matters;
  - Avoid meeting students away from school grounds unless part of a school-sponsored event;
  - Do not regularly transport students in your personal car or ride with them in their car;
  - Never allow students to have access to your personal vehicle;
  - Do not tell sexually-themed jokes, make sexual comments or provide students with access to sexually-oriented material;
  - Do not make comments about a student’s body;
  - Do not have any discussions with students regarding romantic or sexual activities;
  - Never invite students to your home unless it is a school sponsored activity and another adult staff member is present at all times; and
  - Never touch a student in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate.
  
- The Growing Role of Personal Technology
  - Social Networking – remember that the role of school staff members is an adult authority figure to minors, not as a friend or social peer. Do not “friend” or “follow” students on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.
  - Telephone, Texting, and Email – do not provide your home phone number or cell phone number to students. If you must communicate electronically with students, make conversations brief and limit the content to school matters only. Avoid corresponding with students via email or text, especially one-on-one. If students have your email or phone number, students (or the school provides a school email), limit communications to school matters only, and only communicate with groups and include other adults, like colleagues, administrators, and parents into the conversations.

**Staff and District Social Media Use** (Board Policy 403.10)

A. General Use and Conditions

1. Staff must comply with all board policies, contract provisions, and applicable rules of professional conduct in their social media usage. They must comply with the board’s policy on professional boundaries between staff and students at all times and in both physical and digital environments.
2. Staff must obtain the consent of their building principal or the superintendent prior to posting any student-related information in order to make sure that the publication does not violate the Federal Education Records Privacy Act or any other laws. Staff must also comply with all applicable state and federal record retention requirements, even with regard to personal social media usage.

3. Staff must comply with all applicable laws prohibiting the use or disclosure of impermissible content, such as copyright laws, accountability and disclosure laws, and any other law governing the use of resources of a political subdivision. Questions about appropriate content should be referred to the staff member's supervising administrator.

## **Chapter XV: Other**

### **Accidents and Safety**

All injuries to students and adults that occur on district-owned grounds or in district-owned buildings, or during the job duties off premises, no matter how trivial, should be reported to the supervisor or principal immediately. Depending on the seriousness of the injury, the injured person should either be taken to his/her doctor or to the hospital.

### **Collection of Meal Charges**

The Gering Public School food service department utilizes a computerized point-of-sale system, Infinite Campus. Staff is provided an account through the enrollment process. Money deposited into this account can be used for the purchase of breakfast, lunch, milk and ala carte items.

Gering Public Schools expects all staff members to be responsible for monitoring their individual Café account and maintaining a positive balance. The building Principal's office will notify the individual staff member of negative account balances. In the event a staff member's account reaches a negative balance of \$10, no extra meals or ala carte items can be charged.

### **Transportation Supervision**

Coaches and activity sponsors will travel to and from all away events on school-provided transportation. Coaches/Sponsors should not drive their own vehicles to any event unless adequate supervision (another coach/sponsor) is provided for the bus also going. This should only be done for unusual circumstances and will need to be pre-approval by the Activities Director.

The buses and other transportation vehicles should be recognized as a part of the entire activity system and no conduct should be allowed that reflects adversely on the individual, team, or school. Team members should never stick or throw anything out of the windows of a bus used to transport activity participants. When a bus or other school transportation vehicle returns after an away event, the team should remove any garbage that they bring onto or find on the

transportation vehicle. Coaches/sponsors are required to check the condition of the transportation vehicle before it leaves or is parked for the evening.

All players are to use school-provided transportation. If a parent wishes to take a student-athlete home from an away event, he/she must follow the proper protocol established in the student handbook and supported by the activities department. Under no circumstances is a student to ride home with another student.

In the case of both female and male participants riding together to or home from an event, coaches/sponsors will designate the front of the transportation vehicle for one group and the back for the other. Coaches/sponsors are expected to be seated between the two groups. On the return trip home from the event, coaches/sponsors may allow the groups to switch places.