

# *Augusta School Department*

---

## *Employee Handbook 2015-2016*

**Augusta School Department**

**40 Pierce Drive, Suite 3**

**Augusta, ME 04330**

***Phone: (207) 626-2468***

***Fax: (207) 626-2444***

**[www.augustaschools.org](http://www.augustaschools.org)**

## **Introduction**

This handbook contains general information and guidelines. If you have any questions regarding benefits, policies or practices, you should contact the Human Resources Administrative Assistant. This handbook does not guarantee any fixed terms and conditions of your employment. Procedures, practices, policies or benefits may be changed or discontinued. As changes occur, you will be notified. Refer to the written bargaining unit contracts, policies ([www.augustaschools.org](http://www.augustaschools.org)) and procedures for complete documentation and specific details.

## **Augusta School Department's Mission**

The mission of the Augusta School Department is to provide all students with challenging, high quality educational programs in academic skills, life skills, career preparation, and citizenship.

*Adopted 08/08/01 by  
Augusta Board of Education*

## **Augusta School Department's Vision**

Our school system is one in which:

***Learning and teaching are personalized to be meaningful and to promote achievement.***

Through Personal Learning Plans, we challenge every student to develop and achieve.

***The environment is safe, nurturing and respects the individual.***

Learning is fun and possible only in a safe place. Safety means a culture of civility and respect in secure, modern facilities. It means involving social and mental health services when needed. We strive to respect and celebrate each individual.

***Communication among students, parents, teachers, and the community promotes positive change.***

***The community is committed to the school system, invests in it and benefits from it.***

We bring the community into the schools through volunteer programs, mentoring and by combining schools with health care, childcare, cultural and recreational and social service activities.

***Resources are available to meet educational needs and aspirations.***

Meeting needs and aspirations requires federal, state, local and private resources; modern, well-designed and constructed facilities; justly compensated employees and up to date technology that enhances traditional educational need.

## **Augusta School Department's Core Beliefs**

- We believe that each individual has special worth and should be honored.
- We believe that all children are gifted and can learn.
- We believe that learning is fun.
- We believe that learning is a partnership involving children, parents, teachers and the community.
- We believe that schools must provide a safe environment where civility is practiced and individuality respected.
- We believe that teachers nurture and challenge all students.
- We believe that teachers use multiple approaches to engage students to learn.
- We believe that communication among students, parents, teachers and the community promotes positive change.

## **Computer and Internet Policy: GCSA**

The Augusta School Department provides computers, networks and Internet access to support the educational mission of the schools and to enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for students and school staff.

Employees are to utilize the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services for school-related purposes and performance of job duties. Incidental personal use of school computers is permitted as long as such use does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance, with system operations or other system users. "Incidental personal use" is defined as use by an individual employee for occasional personal communications. Employees are reminded that such personal use must comply with this policy and all other applicable policies, procedures and rules.

Any employee who violates this policy and/or rules governing use of the school unit's computers will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Illegal uses of the school unit's computers will also result in referral to law enforcement authorities.

All Augusta School Department computers remain under the control, custody and supervision of the school unit. The school unit reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by employees. Employees have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers.

The Superintendent shall be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and the accompanying rules and for advising the Board of the need for any future amendments or revisions to the policy/rules. The Superintendent may develop additional administrative procedures/rules governing the day-to-day management and operations of the school unit's computer system as long as they are consistent with the Board's policy/rules. The Superintendent may delegate specific responsibilities to building principals and others as he/she deems appropriate.

*Cross Reference: GCSA-R – Employee Computer and Internet Use Rules  
IJNDB – Student Computer and Internet Use  
EGAD – Copyright Compliance*

*City of Augusta  
Department of Public Schools  
Approved: September 10, 2003  
Revised: January 14, 2015*

## **Employee Computer and Internet Use Rules: GCSA-R**

The intent of these board-level rules is to provide employees with general requirements for utilizing the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services. The board rules may be supplemented by more specific administrative procedures and rules governing day-to-day management and operation of the computer system.

These rules provide general guidelines and examples of prohibited uses for illustrative purposes but do not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities or use is acceptable should seek further guidance from the system administrator.

Failure to comply with board policy GCSA, these rules and/or other established procedures or rules governing computer use may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Illegal uses of the school unit's computers will also result in referral to law enforcement authorities.

### **A. Access to School Computers, Networks and Internet Services**

The level of access that employees have to school unit computers, networks and Internet services is based upon specific employee job requirements and needs.

### **B. Acceptable Use**

Employee access to the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services is provided for administrative, educational, communication and research purposes consistent with the school unit's educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals. General rules and exceptions for professional behavior and communication apply to use of the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services.

Employees are to utilize the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services for school-related purposes and performance of job duties. Incidental personal use of computers is permitted as long as such use does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance, with system operation or other system users. "Incidental personal use" is defined as use by an individual employee for occasional personal communications. Employees are reminded that such personal use must comply with this policy and all other applicable policies, procedures and rules.

### **C. Prohibited Use**

The employee is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving school unit computers, networks and Internet services and for his/her computer files, passwords and accounts. General examples of unacceptable uses that are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to:

1. Any use that is illegal or in violation of other board policies, including harassing, discriminatory or threatening communications and behavior, violations of copyright laws, etc.;
2. Any use involving materials that are obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit or sexually suggestive;
3. Any inappropriate communications with students or minors;
4. Any use for private financial gain, or commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes;
5. Any use as a forum for communicating by e-mail or any other medium with other school users or outside parties to solicit, proselytize, advocate or communicate the views of an individual or non-school sponsored organization; or to raise funds for any non-school-sponsored purpose, whether for-profit or not-for-profit. No employee shall knowingly provide school e-mail addresses to outside parties whose intent is to communication with school employees, students, and/or families for non-school purposes. Employees who are

uncertain as to whether particular activities are acceptable should seek further guidance from the building principal or other appropriate administrator.

6. Any communication that represents personal views as those of the school unit or that could be misinterpreted as such;
7. Downloading or loading software or applications without permission from the system administrator;
8. Opening or forwarding any e-mail attachments (executable files) from unknown sources and/or that may contain viruses;
9. Sending mass e-mails to school users or outside parties for school or non-school purposes without the permission of the system administrator [or other designated administrator];
10. Any malicious use or disruption of the school unit's computers, networks and Internet services or breach of security features;
11. Any misuse or damage to the school unit's computer equipment;
12. Misuse of the computer passwords or accounts (employee or other users);
13. Any communications that are in violation of generally accepted rules of network etiquette and/or professional conduct;
14. Any attempt to access unauthorized sites;
15. Failing to report a known breach of computer security to the system administrator;
16. Using school computers, networks and Internet services after such access has been denied or revoked; and
17. Any attempt to delete, erase or otherwise conceal any information stored on a school computer that violates these rules.
18. The Augusta School Department staff and administrators **may not self-provision cloud services to store, process, share, or manage data**. Regulated institutional data are data that are regulated by information privacy or protection laws, regulations, contracts, binding agreements (such as non-disclosure or data use agreements), or industry requirements. If your office is looking to provision a cloud service to support its work, it should consult with IT support. If your department or office needs to provision a cloud service to store, process, share, or otherwise manage regulated institutional data, it must work with the IT Department in order to properly evaluate and manage the risks that come with using the service for regulated institutional data. This will help ensure that agreements with cloud service providers have the appropriate provisions, such as notification of changes to the service's protective measures and assurance that the service properly destroys deleted data.

#### D. No Expectation of Privacy

The school unit retains control, custody and supervision of all computers, networks and Internet services owned or leased by the school unit. The school unit reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by employees and other system users. Employees have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, including e-mail messages and stored files.

#### E. Confidentiality of Information

Employees are expected to use appropriate judgment and caution in communications concerning students and staff to ensure that personally identifiable information remains confidential.

## F. Staff Responsibilities to Students

Teachers, staff members and volunteers who utilize school computers for instructional purposes with students have a duty of care to supervise such use. Teachers, staff members and volunteers are expected to be familiar with the school unit's policies and rules concerning student computer and Internet use and to enforce them. When, in course of their duties, employees/volunteers become aware of student violations, they are expected to stop the activity and inform the building principal. [or other appropriate administrator].

## G. Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages

The employee shall be responsible for any losses, costs or damages incurred by the school unit related to violations of policy GCSA and/or these rules.

## H. School Unit Assumes No Responsibility for Unauthorized Charges, Costs or Illegal Use

The school unit assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by employees including but not limited to credit card charges, subscriptions, long distance telephone charges, equipment and line costs, or for any illegal use of its computers such as copyright violations.

*Cross Reference: GCSA – Employee Computer and Internet Use*

*City of Augusta  
Department of Public Schools  
Adopted: January 12, 2000  
Revised: January 14, 2015*

*All Augusta school employees should understand that any records they create related to school business—including text messages, voicemail messages, emails, and other electronic communications—are records of the school department. Because we are a public entity, all records, including emails, are public unless they contain information that is made private by the law. Examples of private information include private student and private personnel data. Any data that is not private information must be produced publicly upon request. In addition, we retain all email, both incoming and outgoing, in perpetuity.*

## **The Maine Video Display Terminal (VDT) Law**

The Maine Video Display Terminal (VDT) Law gives certain rights to people who use computers for work.

If you work at a computer for more than 4 hours in a row on most days, your employer must:

1. Train you to use your computer safely so you won't get hurt. Using your computer safely includes:
  - Not hitting the keys too hard,
  - Not keying too fast or for too long, and
  - Not sitting in one position or in an uncomfortable position.
2. Train you the right way to adjust your workstation.
3. Train you within the first month after you are hired and then once a year.

## **Confidentiality**

As a staff member of the Augusta School Department it is our responsibility to keep confidential information from being obtained in regards students and employees. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Student records
- Employee personnel records,
- Identity records (phone number/address of students or staff)
- Conferences (parent/teacher, administrator/employee, teacher/student, etc.)
- Disciplinary actions
- Grievances, complaints, and resulting investigations
- Worker's compensation
- Payroll (salary records)
- Evaluations/Actions Plans/TAP
- User ID, logins and passwords

Except as stated under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, education records disclosed or observed by an educator or other employee may not be released to any other party. At all times, such records are to be kept confidential.

## **Family and Medical Leave**

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) generally provides that an eligible employee is entitled to up to 12 work weeks of leave during any 12-month period for the birth of a child and to care for such child; for the placement of a child for adoption or foster care; to care for a spouse; parent or child with a serious health condition; or when the employee is unable to work because of the employee's own serious health condition.

*Augusta School Department Policy: GCBDC*

*Cross Reference: GCBDC: Family Care Leave*

## **Tobacco Use Policy: GBK**

The board is committed to the promotion of health and a healthy lifestyle. Smoking and the use of tobacco products is not permitted.

*Augusta School Department Policy: GBK*

## **Harassment and Sexual Harassment of School Employees: ACAB**

Harassment of school employees because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry or national origin, age, or disability is prohibited. Such conduct is a violation of Board policy and may constitute illegal discrimination under state and federal laws.

*Augusta School Department Policy: ACAB*

## **Bullying: JICK, JICK-R**

“Bullying” includes, but is not limited to a written, oral or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof directed at a student or students that:

Has, or a reasonable person would expect it to have, the effect of:

- a) Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property; or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to his/her property.
- b) Interferes with the rights of a student by: creating an intimidating or hostile education environment for the student; or interfering with the student’s academic performance or ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the school.
- c) Is based on: a student’s actual or perceived characteristics ( including race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, physical or mental disability or other distinguishing personal characteristics (such as socioeconomic status; age; physical appearance; weight; or family status); or a student’s association with a person with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or any other distinguishing characteristic; and that has the effect described above.

All school employees are expected to intervene when they see acts of bullying in progress and are required to report incidents of bullying they have witnessed or become aware of to the building administrator(s) as soon as practicable.

*Augusta School Department Policies: JICK, JICK-R*

## **Accident Reports - EBBB**

Accurate and prompt accident reporting is essential for the filing of insurance claims and to promote the safety of the District’s students and employees and others present on school property or at school sponsored events. All accidents involving staff, students, personal or school property must be reported immediately to the building principal or supervisor.

*Augusta School Department Policy: EBBB*

## **Non-Discrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action**

The Augusta School Department Board is committed to maintaining a workplace and learning environment that is free from illegal discrimination and harassment.

In accordance with applicable Federal and/or State laws and regulations, Augusta School Department prohibits discrimination against and harassment of employees, candidates for employment, students and others with rights to admission or access to school programs, activities or premises on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry or national origin, or disability. For the purpose of this policy, “sexual orientation” means a person’s actual or perceived heterosexuality, bisexuality, homosexuality, or gender identity or expression.

*Augusta School Department Policy: AC*

## **Professional and Ethical Responsibilities of Augusta School Department Employees**

An employee must:

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Protect and promote student’s rights to due process, privacy and respect.
- Demonstrate honesty, loyalty, dependability, responsibility, and accountability for own actions, cooperation and willingness to learn.

## **Reasonable Accommodations**

Augusta School Department complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reasonable accommodations are available for all qualified employees with a disability to enable such person to perform the essential functions of the position they are applying for or are employed in.

## **At-Will Statement**

This means that employees who are not part of a union, who do not have an employment contract, or who do not work for the federal, state or local government, are “employees at will,” free to leave their jobs at any time. However, employers are also “at will,” and are free to terminate employees without prior warning and without having particular reasons.

## **Alcohol and Chemical Abuse**

The Augusta School Department recognizes its responsibility to establish procedures and assist employees and students to address their own use and abuse problems as well as the problems of significant others. Those procedures will ensure the confidential nature of all school records and any referrals to non-school agencies or individuals.

*Augusta School Department Policy: GBEC*

## **Personnel Records**

Staff personnel records are confidential. Only the staff person or authorized management may access these records. Employees requesting to review their personnel file may do so by making a request to the Superintendent of Schools. To keep personnel files current, please notify the Human Resources Administrative Assistant of any address, phone, marital status, dependent or direct deposit changes, etc.

## **Evaluations**

Evaluations are based on job classifications and bargaining unit agreements.

## **Fingerprinting and Criminal History Record Check**

Maine Law requires that all educational staff be fingerprinted and undergo a criminal history record check. Any new hire who has not been fingerprinted or undergone a criminal history record check must begin the process immediately. Existing staff members must complete the process for renewal or recertification in a timely manner.

## **Job Postings**

Position openings are posted in all buildings, on our website, [www.augustaschools.org](http://www.augustaschools.org) and [www.servingschools.com](http://www.servingschools.com).

For additional information contact the Human Resources Administrative Assistant.

## **Pay Schedules**

Augusta School Department employees are paid every two weeks. Employees are encouraged to use direct deposit. A notification period of 2-4 weeks will be necessary for direct deposit to become active.

## **Timecard Reporting**

It is the responsibility of the employee to accurately report their hours worked. Time worked is the actual time spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Hourly employees must take ½ hour break if they are scheduled to work more than 6 hours per day. This must be recorded on the time card. Falsifying, tampering or altering a timecard may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## **Whistleblowers Protection Act**

It is against the law (26 M.R.S.A. §§ 831-840) for an employer to fire or threaten you because:

- you reported a law violation;
- you reported a risk to health and safety;
- you would not do something that was a danger to your life or to someone else's;
- you are part of a government investigation; or
- you are a healthcare worker and you reported a medical error.
- You are protected by this law ONLY if you tell your supervisor about what you think is wrong. You must allow enough time for your supervisor to correct the problem unless you have a good reason to think that he or she will not fix it.

## **Staff Code of Conduct**

The ASD has three (3) school board policies specific to staff code of conduct covering procurement issues, including conflict of interests, gratuities, and violations. Please review Policies: STAFF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – GBCA, PUBLIC GIFTS/DONATIONS TO THE SCHOOL – KCD, and BIDDING/PURCHASING REQUIREMENTS – DJ,

## **403(b) Plan**

Augusta School Department has available to all employees a voluntary salary reduction 403(b) program. Employees may electively defer compensation to be deposited in fixed or variable annuities which are qualified under Section 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code. The relationship is between the organization providing the annuities and the employee. Augusta School Department is only responsible for payroll deduction and submission to The Omni Group, a third party administrator. For more information regarding 403(b) plans, contact the Payroll and Benefits Department.

## **Health and Dental Benefits**

Augusta School Department offers health insurance through MEA Anthem. Benefits are available the first of the month after hire. Dental insurance is offered through Delta Dental for Teachers, Support Staff, and Custodians. Securian Dental is offered to Administrators and Central Office Staff. For additional information see bargaining unit contracts.

## **Member Assistance Program**

The Member Assistance Program is a free and confidential program offered to all employees, even if you are not covered by Augusta School Department's health insurance plan. The program is also available to dependent family members of Augusta School Department free of charge.

Assistance is available for a wide range of issues including relationships, parenting and family concerns, emotional issues like stress, anxiety, depression, and grief, as well as substance abuse and financial and legal matters.

For information call 1-855-686-5615 or visit [www.anthemEAP.com](http://www.anthemEAP.com) and use the password MEA Benefits Trust to access all areas.

### **Substitute Coverage**

In order to secure substitute coverage, it is the employee's responsibility to report their absence as soon as possible in order to secure coverage if necessary.

Augusta School Department utilizes a substitute placement and absence management system called Aesop. All employees must use Aesop. If you need additional training on Aesop, please notify your administrator.

### **Personal Leave (if applicable – see bargaining unit contracts)**

Eligible employees are given 3 paid personal leave days per year. 1 day may be taken without stating a reason and this day need not comply with the emergency guidelines. Personal leave days may not be taken the day before or after a holiday or vacation. For additional information see the reverse side of the request form and/or the bargaining unit contracts.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Granting of bereavement days is specific to each bargaining unit contract.

### **Sick Leave**

See bargaining unit contracts for specific details.

### **Holidays**

See Support Staff and Custodian bargaining unit contracts for listing of paid holidays.

### **Professional Work Reimbursement**

See the bargaining unit contracts for details on Professional Work Reimbursement.