



Communication Tip Sheet



Granite Falls "Needs to Know"

Media Excluded Students

When enrolling or re-enrolling their children, Granite Falls parents must give or deny permission for their child's name and photograph/video to be published by Granite Falls or the news media for the purpose of news coverage and publicity (print and online). Any child whose parent has denied permission cannot be included in any publicity-related materials produced by the child's school or the district (newsletters, press releases, website, social media, etc.) Please familiarize yourself with the children in your class(es) who have these media exclusions. Your school secretary can assist you with a list or show you how to access one. This will be important to know if your class or students are part of any activities receiving district, school and news coverage.

Story Ideas and Recognition

Story ideas: If you've got something great going on in your school or classroom or if you're doing something new, unique or different, let us know about it so we can share the good news with our school community. If you have a special event coming up, let us know a week or two in advance so we can give proper notice to the news media if appropriate.

Recognitions: The Granite Falls School Board recognizes students and staff for their accomplishments on a regional, state or national level. Recognitions occur quarterly throughout the year. Criteria and instructions on nominating someone to be recognized by the board can be found online on the staff intranet or by contacting the communications department via email or our phone extension, Melanie Freeman (4010).

Social Media Policy

Social media is a great way to connect with our community however, it's important to remember that it should be used in a manner that preserves professional boundaries between staff, students, parents and community members and portrays our students, staff, schools and the district in an appropriate manner. Find out more on our social media policy and guidelines.

Advertising

Granite Falls has a limited forum for advertising in our schools and to our families and staff. Most options are only open to non-profits with governmental tax-exempt status. More information on the approval process for flyers and what's allowed can be found at www.gfalls.wednet.edu.

News Media

If you are contacted by a member of the news media about any story related to Granite Falls or your school, refer them to the Communications office to arrange possible interviews, then notify us immediately, as well as your principal or supervisor.

How to be an effective communicator

- In everyday or difficult situations, **lead with compassion**. Speak, write and act in ways that value, recognize and respect the person with whom you are communicating, whether that's a student, coworker, parent or community member. See the world through their eyes, listen for understanding and then speak.
- **Over-communicate**. Everyone is busy and people may miss your first message. Communicate with parents early and often so that if there is an issue with their child, you have positive interactions with them first. Let them know the best ways to contact you if needed and that you're available to help.
- Operate by a **"no surprises"** mentality. If there is a potential problem or concern, make sure the appropriate people know (i.e., your supervisor, parents and/or your coworker) so they aren't surprised with unexpected or problematic news.
- Be careful what you put in writing (email, social media, letters, etc.). If you **wouldn't want to see it go viral** on the 5 o'clock news, don't put it in writing. Information, photos and videos are easy to upload to the internet and never really go away. 
- **Embrace your role as an ambassador** for your school and for Granite Falls. What you say to friends, neighbors, parents and people in the community where you live and work has an impact on how the district is perceived. As an employee of the district, you are considered by people you know as an expert on what is happening in Granite Falls, so it's critical you know all the facts and speak accurately. If you don't know, don't speculate. Get the facts and share what you can (if appropriate).
- Make sure to **follow up on promises and be prompt in communications**. Return email and telephone messages within 24 hours. If you cannot provide immediate answers to a question, return the call to let that person know that you will have to get back with them.
- Keep confidential matters confidential. Student and employee matters are confidential by law, so our job is to **safeguard the privacy of our student's and coworkers**. 
- **Use your manners, please**. Acknowledging others and saying please and thank you to EVERYONE goes a long way to fostering goodwill. What's more, take every opportunity to congratulate others on their accomplishments and milestones. Help others feel appreciated every chance you get.
- **Take care of you**. Working in a school setting and striving to meet the needs of our students, parents, community and coworkers can be stressful. A positive life-work balance and selfcare can keep you healthy mentally and physically. Reach out to your supervisor or coworkers if you need help or support. You can only serve our students well if you, too, are well.