

**Strain-Japan R-16  
School District**

**2023 - 2024**

**FACULTY AND STAFF  
HANDBOOK**

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## **Greetings.....**

District employees perform diverse duties, but we all share a common bond. We educate children, and everyone is responsible for ensuring their academic success. Please take the time to read carefully the policies and procedures covered in this employee handbook. I welcome any questions or suggestions concerning the information included in this handbook.

Thank you for all you will do this year for our students and the Strain-Japan R-XVI School District. I extend my best wishes to every employee for a successful year with the district.

Kathy Vandegriffe, Superintendent/Principal

The mission of the Strain-Japan R-XVI School District is  
**Lead. Achieve. Succeed...Together!**

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**Strain Japan R-16 School District  
2023 - 24 Faculty and Staff**

Kathy Vandegriffe - Superintendent/Principal  
Erica Williamson - Assistant Principal/Seventh Grade  
Kelsie Ware - Preschool  
Linda Meek - Kindergarten  
Julie Wilson - First Grade  
Kristin Byassee - Second and Third Grade  
Kelly Webers - Fourth and Fifth Grade  
Kimberly Vincent - Sixth Grade  
Pat Songer - Special Education  
Edie Bombach - Paraprofessional  
Beverly Taylor - Counselor  
Mark Forbes - PE  
Dana Tutterrow - Art  
Sheila Copper - Food Service  
Fred Stuart - Bus Driver  
Amanda Krone - Board Secretary/Bookkeeper  
Maria Pinnell - Secretary/Health Aide

**Board of Education**

Caren Vogt – Board President  
Matt Stewart – Vice President  
Kari Schatz  
Chastity Moss  
Greg Stotler  
Krystal Hulse  
Justin Williamson

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## **Attendance**

The Strain-Japan R-XVI School District promotes excellent attendance. Absences have a severe impact on the educational mission of the district. Absences also cause inconvenience to coworkers and incur additional costs. It is the employee's responsibility to maintain an acceptable attendance record.

The Board has provided temporary absences, long-term leaves of absence, and military absences for employees to attract and retain faculty and staff who will continue to grow professionally, maintain their health, and feel job security. Please see board policies [GBCBC](#), [GCBDA](#), [GCBDB](#), AND [GDBDA](#) for more information regarding leaves of absence.

Teachers must arrive at school by 7:10 a.m. each morning and may leave each afternoon after the buses have left the parking lot and when all students are accounted for at after-school activities. This will ensure parents, the principal, and other teachers have adequate time to conference with you. It will also give you time to set up for the coming day. Certified staff members must attend monthly faculty meetings beyond 3:00 p.m.

Teachers and staff leaving the building during the day should sign out at the office and sign in upon returning. A form will be in the office for this purpose.

Non-certified staff members must arrive at school at the time the principal arranges. Positions may vary.

Teachers must pick up their students from the gym at 7:25 a.m. to begin instruction each day at 7:30 a.m. Attendance and lunch count are entered by 7:45 a.m. for all K - 8 grades.

Students must wait for their teacher in the gym unless they are working with another teacher. If a student arrives after 7:30 a.m., they must have a tardy slip from the office.

## **Assignments**

The district works hard to ensure personnel time is used effectively. Certified staff contracts state that the principal may assign other duties. These duties may include recess duty, bus supervision, gym supervision, lunch supervision, and supervision of athletic and special events. Please see Board Policy GCI for more information.

## **Awards Program**

The district offers a student quarterly award program. The district also awards students scoring proficient or better on standardized tests each spring. All students are eligible for a reward incentive for the spring standardized tests.

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Each month, a student will be chosen for student of the month. The teachers and staff will choose the child.

### **Board of Education**

The Board of Education of the Strain-Japan R-XVI School District holds a monthly meeting at the end of each month. Any patron or group desiring to be included on the agenda to address the Board shall request through the superintendent five (5) business days before the regular Board meeting. The request shall be submitted in writing and provide sufficient detail to explain the issue(s) to be discussed thoroughly. Please see MSBA policy BDDDB-1.

### **Bookmobile**

The Scenic Regional Library Bookmobile will visit on their scheduled days.

### **Bulletins**

A faculty and staff bulletin will be compiled and emailed by the principal once a week. Information on upcoming events, meetings, and news will be included.

### **Cell Phones**

See [Board Policy GBCC](#): Staff Use of Communication Devices.

### **Committees**

These are formed yearly for curriculum, professional development, and special events. All committees must follow board policy and operate within the vision and mission of the district. All committee decisions require administrative approval.

### **Committees and Chairs include**

Professional Development/Curriculum/iReady: Erica Williamson

Sunshine Committee: Pat Songer

Facilities: Kathy Vandegriffe

### **Confidentiality of Records**

Educational records will be maintained in confidentiality following the law.

Students who receive services under PL 94-142 shall have a special services record that meets the provisions of the district's compliance plan.

### **Copyright Laws & Regulations**

There are restrictions on what information can be copied. If in doubt, see the librarian or technology coordinator. The district is not responsible for a staff member who illegally copies material.

### **Curriculum**

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The curriculum will be based on the Missouri Learning Standards. The Missouri Learning Standards were revised on April 19, 2016, by the State Board of Education.

**Extra Credit:**

Teachers are allowed to offer extra credit to students.

## **Discipline**

### **Philosophy**

The philosophy of the Strain-Japan R-XVI School District is that all students can achieve success in their educational endeavors. To ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed, a discipline policy is necessary to create an environment where students feel safe, have an optimal learning environment, and are encouraged to make responsible decisions regarding their behavior.

The discipline policy for the Strain-Japan R-XVI School District strives to create student responsibility through cooperation between parents, teachers, students, and the administration. Success depends on all parties working together to create an optimal learning environment.

### **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Strain-Japan R-XVI strives to provide clear and consistent behavior expectations to all students to help them make responsible behavior decisions. Understanding school policy is the cornerstone of practical decision-making skills.

Most behavior infractions that result in a student being sent to the office are from children not keeping their hands, feet, and other objects to themselves.

The second most common behavior infraction is for those who retaliate against the first most common infraction, not keeping hands, feet, and other objects to themselves.

1. Treat others the way you want to be treated.
2. Keep your hands, feet, and other objects to yourself.
3. Walk at all times in the building.
4. Use appropriate language at all times.
5. Use "inside" voices in the building.
6. Homework must be completed on time and to the standard required by the teacher. Incomplete assignments will not be accepted.
7. Follow all classroom, lunchroom, and recess rules as instructed by the teacher.
8. Toys and other valuables should not be brought to school without the teacher's permission.

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Students are **NOT** permitted to use cell phones during the school day. A cell phone may be kept in a backpack if turned off. If a student is caught using a cell phone, it will be confiscated, parents will be required to come to school to pick it up, and disciplinary consequences may be assigned.

## **BULLYING:**

Board Policy JFCF Hazing and Bullying is included in the student handbook. The school will have **ZERO TOLERANCE** for bullying, and students will receive immediate and maximum disciplinary consequences for bullying as outlined in Board Policy JG-R Student Discipline.

## **Classroom Discipline Plans**

Individual teachers' discipline plans will comply with the discipline policies approved by the Strain-Japan R-XVI Board of Education. Teachers will post a classroom discipline plan that follows assertive discipline and includes consequences and positive reinforcement. The teacher will review the rules with all students and send a copy home to parents. The teacher and the parents/guardians handle most behavior issues. Severe infractions will result in being sent to the principal's office immediately.

Disciplinary referrals will be sent home with students, require a parent's signature, and are to be returned to school. Teachers are not responsible for explaining the consequences assigned by the principal.

## **Dismissal Procedures**

School will be dismissed at 3:05. Pick-up children should be released first to the front entrance. Mrs. Vandegriffe will release pick-up students, and Mrs. Williamson will supervise in the gym.

There are two bus routes. Both buses will load through the gym door.

## **Dress Code**

Employees must dress neat, clean, and professional.

## **Strain-Japan R-XVI School District Students At-Risk of Dyslexia Plan 2023 - 2024**

A copy of the Dyslexia Plan can be found on the district website.

## **Early Dismissal & Pick-ups**

If parents wish to pick up their children from school before dismissal, they must check out from the office. Students will be requested to meet their parents in the office.

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## **E-Mail**

The district provides email and internet access to all teachers and staff. These electronic tools provide easy access to research and can significantly enhance communication for all faculty members. The Principal will often use e-mail to communicate messages to the faculty instead of holding meetings or publishing memos. All employees should check their email at least once daily and more frequently, if possible.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Our district has a school plan for natural and man-made disasters. Practice drills are held regularly. Specific information can be found in the Emergency Plan.

Tornado Drill Announcement will be made over the intercom. Students should sit crouching with their heads down in the hall outside the classroom doors. Doors leading into the hallway should be closed. Teachers should indicate a missing student to the principal with a red card. If students are all present, display the green card.

Fire Drills The fire alarm will ring continuously. All should go outside as quickly as possible in a single file using the emergency exits posted in your rooms. Teachers should take their classroom records with them and take roll. If a student is missing, signal the principal by displaying your red card. If all students are accounted for, display your green card. All doors and windows are to be closed.

Earthquake Drills Move away from windows, shelves, and heavy objects that could fall. Cover under a table, desk, or counter, or move to an inside wall away from windows. Kneel alongside the wall, bend the head close to the knees, cover the sides of the head with elbows, and clasp hands firmly behind the neck. If on the playground, remain outside and move away from the building, propane tanks, and wires. Stay in the open and lie down or crouch close to the ground.

## **Emergency Information**

All employees will complete an emergency information form and turn it in to the office annually. This is now a digital form. All teachers should always have access to a copy of student emergency information. This information must always be taken on field trips.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities**

During the athletic seasons, grades will be checked at mid-quarter and quarter. Any player with 2 D's or 1 F's will be denied participation for at least one week until grades are checked the following Monday.

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To participate in practice or a game, students must be present the last four hours of the day of the activity or have pre-scheduled appointments approved by the principal one day in advance and not be under suspension or expulsion.

School staff will work the gate at athletic activities. The principal will give teachers a sign-up sheet to work the gate at all athletic events.

### **Faculty Meetings**

Faculty meetings will be held on a consistent schedule every month. Certified staff members are required to attend. Faculty meetings may extend beyond the hours of the regular school day, and teachers will not receive supplemental pay for that time. A schedule will be shared at the beginning of the year.

### **Field Trips**

**Educational** trips may be taken each semester. Teachers may request a trip by completing a Field Trip Form and giving it to the principal at least two weeks before the planned trip. To be approved, trips must be an extension of the curriculum and include pre- and post-activities.

When a trip is approved, the lunchroom personnel must be informed, as any other personnel may need to know. Student medications and emergency information must be taken on the trip. Medication may only be dispensed by the teacher or the child's parent.

Each child must have a parent or guardian's permission to participate in any field trip. On the day of the trip, a list of each person riding the bus must be left with the office. Permission slips will be taken on the trip and carried by the teacher in case of emergencies. Students are required to ride the bus for all trips. When necessary, a teacher may transport students in a personal vehicle, provided there are seat belts for riding. Written permission is required for students to ride home with their parents.

### **Fine Arts**

Art classes are offered weekly for students in grades K-8 according to the schedule. Students in grades K-8 also take a music class.

### **Health and Life Insurance**

Full-time employees are offered comprehensive medical coverage. Full-time employees may purchase Dependent coverage through pre-tax payroll deductions. Part-time employees whose contract time is less than 40 hours will be given insurance coverage at the discretion of the Board of Education.

Full-time employees are provided with group life insurance valued at \$25,000.

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### Health Services

The health room is staffed with a trained health aide. We are equipped to handle minor injuries. Staff members sending students to the health room must write why the child is being sent.

**Medication may not be kept in a classroom** except for inhalers and Epi-Pens. A physician's medication must include name, dose, time, and reason. The parent must provide a written request to comply with the physician's order. Non-prescription drugs will only be given with written permission from the parent. The school may reject a request for administering medication if judged appropriate.

Parents are notified if an injury is deemed questionable or severe. We will follow the recommended procedures by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

A health screening is conducted in the fall of each school year. Parents are notified of any concerns. Employees with the right to know are informed of student health problems. Confidentiality laws will be followed.

### Homework

Teachers should assign a reasonable amount of homework.

The amount of homework time varies from grade to grade and student to student.

Absent students have one day for each day absent to complete work. Special Education students' IEPs will be followed. A student with an unexcused absence is not allowed for make-up work.

### Honor Roll

To achieve excellence in education, Strain-Japan R-16 will provide an educational curriculum that meets all our students' diverse needs. Although all students should be praised for their efforts in maintaining good grades, it is also recognized that a few students attain grades that are sufficiently high enough to be considered for the Honor Roll.

**Honor points shall be awarded as follows:**

Grade	Points Assigned to each Letter Grade	Grade	Points Assigned to each Letter Grade
A+	4.3	B-	2.7
A	4.0	C+	2.3
A-	3.7	C	2.0
B+	3.3	C-	1.7
B	3.0		

\*Grade of "D" and "F" shall disqualify a student from the Honor Roll.

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**Students in first, second, fourth, and fifth grade will have a total of 11 classes, third grade will have 12 classes, and sixth through eighth-grade students will have 15 classes.**

The *Superintendent's Honor Roll* is based on students maintaining an A average, the *Principal's Honor Roll* is based on students maintaining an A- average, and the *Black and Gold Honor Roll* is based on students maintaining a B average. A semester Honor Roll may not be higher than the two quarters that compose the semester.

\*Report cards will be distributed within five school days from the end of the quarter. The report cards must be signed and returned to the school within two days.

### **Inclement Weather and School Closings**

**The Teacherease system will be activated when closing the school.** We have set up a phone system to call the home and cell numbers of every student and employee in the district. You should be contacted by phone with a recorded message in the event we have a school closing; however, you should continue to listen to the following stations for school closings and cancellations:

**TV Channels:  
2, 4, and 5**

The television stations have a computerized system and our school name appears almost immediately (depending on the alphabetical order scrolling across the bottom of the screen) once the information is entered.

As a courtesy to parents and staff, we will post school closings on social media.

Teachers are not required to report to school on days when the school has been closed due to inclement weather.

### **Instructional Time**

Instructional time will be protected by all faculty and staff. Instructional time is used efficiently and effectively for students to learn the required curriculum.

### **Inventory**

Inventory will be kept on all equipment. No texts or materials may be destroyed without permission from the principal.

### **iReady**

The iReady program has been scheduled for all students for 30 minutes/day with a final goal of 45 minutes/day. This program should be implemented and supervised by the classroom teacher. Classroom teachers should access the data from iReady and use that data to guide

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classroom instruction. Teachers are also responsible for monitoring the students' use of iReady. The Student's Response to Instruction Report should be used to verify that students are accessing lessons in all domains.

### **Lactation Support**

According to policy EBBC, the district will provide accommodations to lactating employees and students to express breast milk, breastfeed a child, or other needs related to breastfeeding. That employee will be provided at least three opportunities during a school day at intervals agreed upon by the district. This accommodation will be made until one year after birth. The Teacher's Lounge will be the designated area, and the times when it will be used will be posted. The employee is expected to lock the door while using the Teacher's Lounge for lactation support. This space is also available to the public.

### **Lesson Plans**

Teachers will keep daily lesson plans.

### **Library Services**

Students receive library time to visit the library throughout the week.

### **Lunch**

**Mrs. Vandegriffe and Mrs. Williamson will supervise lunch/lunch detention lunch shifts.** If one or both are not in the building, teachers will be asked to step in rotating. The teachers will assign lunch detention for late work and classroom behavior consequences. Lunch detention for K-5 will be served in the cafeteria at a separate table. Lunch detention for 6-8 will be served in a separate room with Mrs. Vandegriffe or Mrs. Williamson. All assigned detentions MUST be recorded on the shared Google form.

Adult breakfasts are \$1.30. Adult lunches are \$3.20.

### **Maintenance and Repairs**

Keeping the building in good operating order and good appearance is everyone's responsibility. If you see something that needs repair, you must write that notice and turn it in to the principal (e-mail is also acceptable). The Principal will forward the item for repair.

Custodial: The building's cleanliness requires staff cooperation to keep the building clean and orderly. Teachers and students are responsible for keeping trash picked up off the floor. Classrooms will receive weekly mopping and sweeps. Teachers will assign students to disinfect desks periodically or more frequently during influenza outbreaks. Staff members are responsible for maintaining a clean and orderly workroom and classroom.

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The workroom should be free from clutter, and materials should be put away in the cabinet. Those items marked “workroom” must be in the workroom for all staff members to access.

### **Money in Room**

Staff should never keep money in their rooms. Money can be brought to the office and locked in the safe. The school is not responsible for any missing money or other items.

### **No Smoking Policy**

The Board of Education commits itself to a continuing effort to maintain a drug-free school. This commitment includes enforcing a policy of no smoking in the school building. The health and safety of the school environment are a high priority. Adults who smoke in the building will be asked to leave. Students will be disciplined by school policy.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held at the end of the first quarter and in the Spring. It is recommended that ongoing communication is held throughout the year. Teachers must document parent contact in a parent contact log.

### **Physical Education**

All students are required to participate in Physical Education classes. Written notification and a physician's order are required if a child cannot participate due to health reasons. Alternative education services will be provided for students who cannot physically participate. IEPs will be followed for special education students.

### **Professional Development**

A Professional Development Committee is selected annually by the staff, and a plan is prepared and adopted by the school board.

New teachers are assigned a mentor for the first two years in a district.

### **Promotion Policy**

Decisions concerning the promotion or retention of students are the school's responsibility. After input from personnel involved with the student, the following guidelines will be used to determine retention:

- Reading ability level.
- Inability to do school work at the level necessary to succeed in a higher grade.
- Conduct or actions that indicate a lack of maturity necessary to succeed in a higher grade.
- Absent excessive school days, ten or more per semester.
- A grade average of “F” for the year in two or more subjects.

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### **Report Cards**

Report cards are sent to parents at each quarter's end. Mid-term reports are sent at the mid-point of each quarter. Parents are required to return these within five days. Parent/Teacher Conferences are held at the end of the first quarter. It is recommended, however, that parents and teachers communicate regularly. Teachers are required to grade homework and tests on time and send home the graded items to keep parents informed of their child's progress.

The grading scale is as follows:

A	97-100	C	77-82
A-	95-96	C-	72-76
B+	93-94	D+	68-71
B	90-92	D	64-67
B-	88-89	D-	60-63
C+	83-87	F	59 or <

### **Retirement**

Regular certified staff working at least 20 hours per week shall be participants in the Public School Retirement System.

Fourteen and a half percent of each employee's contracted salary will be committed to the retirement program on a pre-tax basis. The Board of Education will make yearly matching contributions toward the Public Schools Retirement Fund.

Non-certified staff who work at least 20 hours per week shall pay .0686 percent into the Non-Teacher School Employee Retirement System of the State of Missouri. The Board of Education contributes an additional .0686 of salary earned.

### **Social Media**

The District has a Facebook page. Employees are encouraged to follow the District's social media pages.

### **Special Education**

Teachers or parents may refer students to be screened for possible evaluation for special education services. See referral forms for more information.

Classroom teachers are responsible for communicating with the special education staff to understand a student's IEP. Confidentiality laws apply to all information included in a child's IEP.

### **Sports Program**

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**Eligibility** – Students in grades 3-8 will be eligible to try out for the sports programs, provided they meet the academic requirements.

All team members must have a physical examination and proof of insurance each year before the first practice day. Parents and students must sign the Sports Agreement annually.

### **Student Planners**

Classroom teachers must require students to use their planners. Teachers are required to check the Student Planner daily.

### **Substitutes**

When a substitute is needed, teachers must contact Kathy Vandegriffe by **6:30 a.m.** at 573-237-5108 or 314-540-4064. Mrs. Vandegriffe will schedule substitutes for planned absences such as doctor appointments, professional or personal days, etc.

A substitute folder must be kept up-to-date and placed in a visible place in your classroom. Include a class list, schedule, duties, lesson plans, special education students and their schedules, attendance and lunch money routines, and any other information a substitute may need.

In cases where substitutes are unavailable, absences will be covered internally with the least disruption to faculty schedules.

### **Supply List**

A school supply list should be updated annually and submitted to the office at the end of each school year for the following year. The previous year's supply list will be used if an updated list is not provided.

### **Tardy Students**

If students arrive at school after 7:25 a.m., they must report to the office. They will bring the classroom teacher a note from the office about why they were late. If students arrive late to one of your classes, you may also count them as tardy and have them report to the office for a tardy slip.

### **Testing**

The Missouri Achievement Program is administered to grades 3 through 8 for English/Language Arts and Math. As DESE requires, all grades will be given Science and Social Studies.

Assessment of Reading Ability Level must occur annually.

### **Title I**

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The Title I program helps identify students who are at a disadvantage through a multiple selection criteria process and provides services to students who struggle with reading. Federal Programs require the District to actively encourage parental participation in developing the Parent/School Compact and the Parent Involvement Plan. We must document meetings twice a year where all stakeholders are present. We must also document a collaborative effort between the classroom teachers, Title I teachers, and paraprofessionals.

### **Toys and Valuable Items**

Students cannot bring toys or other valuable items to school without the teacher's permission. The school is not responsible for personal items.

### **Use of the Building**

A staff member or sponsor must supervise any student group requesting the use of the building after hours. The staff member or sponsor must receive permission from the Principal before each event. A fee is charged for any event not related to children's education.

### **Visitors**

All visitors must sign in at the office, including employee family members. Visitors will remain in the office until the employee that they are here to see can come to the office. If the visit is planned and will be longer than a few minutes, please get it approved by the Superintendent.

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