

ELKHART INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK (Approved and Adopted June 16, 2014)

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Employee Handbook Receipt

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to your building principal. This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate district office. District policies can be accessed on line at www.elkhartisd.org.

District Information

About Our District

Elkhart ISD is a 3A school district with approximately 1,200 students enrolled in Early Childhood through grade twelve. The district encompasses 164.77 square miles and is composed of four campuses: elementary, intermediate, middle school, and high school. Each campus provides a safe and orderly learning environment, dedicated professional educators, a balance of academic, cultural, and athletic experiences, individualized instruction, and a variety of student activities that contribute to student goal attainment and the development of productive and responsible citizens.

Mission Statement

In partnership and collaboration with parents and community members, Elkhart Independent School District dedicates its efforts and resources to the benefit of all students by providing an integrated educational program of quality, equity, challenge, and Academic Excellence Through Innovative Instruction.

District Goals and Objectives

Policies AE

ELKHART INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND GOALS FOR THE 2014-2015 SCHOOL YEAR

This information will be given to all employees after the District Committee approves the 2014-2015 School Year Goals. The goals will also be placed on the district web site, www.elkhartisd.org.

Board of Trustees

Policies BA, BB, BD and BE series

Texas law grants the board of trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the district's schools. The board is the policy-making body within the district and has overall responsibility for curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, and employment of the superintendent and other professional staff, and facilities. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal laws and regulations.

The board members are elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Board members are elected in May by position and serve three-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Board members are: Paul Barnett, Harold Holloway, Joe Estes, Stephen Ham, Kevin Bush, Krispen Rucker, and Charles McShan.

The Board usually meets the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Library. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted at the administrative office at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with two hours notice.

All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the board to go into a closed session from which the public and others are excluded. Closed sessions may occur for such things as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real property acquisition, certain personal matters, student discipline, or consulting with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

Administration

Dr. Ray DeSpain.....	Superintendent
Kay Chapman.....	Director of Special Programs and Accountability
Kevin Clark.....	High School Principal
Jason Ives.....	Assistant High School Principal
Ron Mays.....	Middle School Principal
Tana Herring.....	Elementary Principal
Greg Herring.....	Intermediate Principal
Robin Salazar.....	High School Counselor
Melody Holloway.....	Middle School Counselor
Kelly Smith.....	Elementary and Intermediate School Counselor

Helpful Contacts

From time to time, employees have questions or concerns. If those questions or concerns cannot be answered by supervisors or at the campus or department level, the employee is encouraged to contact the appropriate office listed below:

Superintendent.....	ext. 1016
Superintendent Secretary.....	ext. 1016
Special Programs/Accountability.....	ext. 1013
Business Manager.....	ext. 1012
Athletic Director.....	ext. 5023
High School Principal.....	ext. 5013
Assistant High School Principal.....	ext. 5012
Middle School Principal.....	ext. 4013
Elementary School Principal.....	ext. 2012
Intermediate School Principal.....	ext. 3013
Nurse.....	ext. 2013
High School Counselor.....	ext. 5014
Middle School Counselor.....	ext. 4012
Elementary/Int. Counselor.....	ext. 3012
Technology Director.....	ext. 1018
Maintenance.....	ext. 1022
Bus Barn.....	ext. 1021
Cafeteria.....	ext. 1023

Employment

The Board of Trustees shall provide each teacher with a copy of the teacher’s contract with the school district and, on the teacher’s request, a copy of the board’s employment policies. The employment policies shall be posted on the district’s web site, www.elkhartisd.org.

Equal Employment Opportunity (Policies DAA, DIA)

Elkhart Independent School District does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, military status, genetic information, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Additionally, the district does

not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any of the reasons listed above should contact the Superintendent.

Job Vacancy Announcements (Policy DC)

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis at the central administration building, campus offices, and on the district's Web site.

1. Elkhart ISD may choose to maintain a permanent posting of all positions to allow the public and any interested employee to submit applications at any time for any position(s) currently open or any position(s) that may open in the future.
2. Principals and Supervisors may request a job posting for any Administrative, Teaching, Technology, Paraprofessional, Secretarial, Clerical, Transportation, or Maintenance position by providing pertinent information to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will post openings at the appropriate level.
3. Campus Level applicants will be considered first. If no selection is made from the campus level applicants, district level applicants will be considered. If no selection is made from the district level applicants, public applicants will be considered.
4. Positions may be filled only after a posting period of ten (10) days unless the vacancy occurs during the summer, when the hiring window is short, or if health or safety issues put students at risk without a qualified staff member in place.
5. Applicants from the campus, district, and public levels all may be considered in the order previously mentioned (number 3 above) during the same 10-day period.
6. Applicants who are current EISD employees may submit a letter of intent rather than full applications. Full applications and resumes may be submitted if the applicant prefers in order to update information.
7. Principals or Supervisors may request that additional special qualifications be added to job postings.
8. Applications will be kept on file for two (2) years.

Employment after Retirement (Policies DEG and DPB)

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed in limited circumstances on a full- or part-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and state law. Employees may be responsible for any/all surcharges deemed necessary by TRS. Detailed information about employment after retirement is available in the TRS publication *Employment After Retirement*. Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling 800-223-8778. Information is also available on the TRS Web Site.

Contract and Noncontract Employment (Policy DC)

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional and administrative employees in positions requiring a certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term, or continuing contracts. Employees in all other positions are employed at will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewal or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide information.

Probationary Contracts

Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the district and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive a probationary contract during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after at least a two-year lapse in district employment also may be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed in public schools for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district may not exceed one school year. For those with less experience, the probationary period will be two school years (i.e. two one-year contracts), with an optional third and fourth school year if the board determines it is doubtful whether a term or continuing contract should be given.

Term Contracts

Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by term contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract. Employment policies can be accessed on line or copies will be provided upon request.

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees

All paraprofessional and auxiliary employees, regardless of certification, are employed at will and not by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing *(Policy DHE)*

Noninvestigatory searches in the workplace, including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the district reserves the right to conduct searches when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct.

Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The district may search the employee, the employee's personal items (to include cell and telephone records), work areas, including district-owned computers, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business.

Employees required to have a commercial driver's licenses: Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people, counting the driver; drivers of large vehicles; or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements when their duties include driving a commercial motor vehicle.

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted if an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs returns to duty.

All employees required to hold a CDL or who otherwise are subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact Tammie Pyeatt.

Health Safety Training (Policies DBA, DMA)

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to Dr. DeSpain by September 31.

Reassignments and Transfers (Policy DK)

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the superintendent or designee when the superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the District. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA (Local).

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request by June 1st. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Superintendent's office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

Workload and Work Schedules (Policies DEA, DL)

Professional Employees Professional employees and academic administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the district. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including start and end dates and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year.

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation including conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level but must provide at least 450 minutes within each two-week period in blocks not less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. Teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The district may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one day a week when no other personnel are available.

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees Support employees are employed at will and will

be notified of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not exempt from overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

Notification of Parents Regarding Certification Status (Policies DK, DBA)

In a school receiving Title I funds, the district is required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. NCLB also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned a teacher for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under NCLB is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request.

Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Dr. Ray DeSpain, Superintendent, at extension 1016, or Kay Chapman at extension 1013.

Outside Employment and Tutoring (Policy DBD)

Employees are required to disclose in writing to the superintendent any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest with of the district. The superintendent will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

Performance Evaluation (Policies DN, DNA, DNB)

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor. Written evaluations will be completed on forms approved by the district. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda can also be used to document performance information. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, participate in a performance conference annually with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Employee Involvement (Policies BQA, BQB)

At both the campus and district levels, Elkhart ISD offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influence the instruction effectiveness of the district. As part of the district's planning and decision-making process, employees may either be asked or elected to serve on district-or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision-making process are available in each campus office or from the Superintendent's office.

Staff Development

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the district.

Staff development is predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, addressed in the campus improvement plan, and approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Staff development for noninstructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g. bus drivers) and continued employee skill development.

Individuals holding renewable SBEC certificates are responsible for obtaining the required

training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation. Individuals holding Standard Certificates are responsible for maintaining documentation of the required 150 hours of continuing professional education (CPE) necessary for 5-year certification renewal. As a courtesy, a record of these hours will be placed in an employee's personnel file if sent to the administrative office.

Compensation and Benefits

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends (*Policies DEA and DEAB*)

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation.

All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before September 10th of each school year. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule.

Employees should contact Rhonda Brewer for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Paychecks

All employees are paid monthly. During the school year, paychecks or direct deposit information are delivered to each campus. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization.

Employee's payroll statements contain information including deductions and withholding information. If you have questions about your payroll statement contact Rhonda Brewer. Pay dates are the last working day of each month except for the months of November and August.

Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of two weeks is necessary to activate this service. Contact Rhonda Brewer for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Payroll Deductions (*Policy CFEA*)

The district is required to make the following automatic payroll deductions:

- Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS)
- Federal income tax required for all full-time employees
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986).

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, cancer, disability, and vision insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans; and savings and loan payments through Trinity Valley Teacher's Credit Union. Employees may also request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overtime Compensation (*Policy DEA*)

The district compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage

and hour laws. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and some paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday and ends at 12:00 p.m. Saturday. Work weeks in excess of forty (40) hours must be pre-approved by the Superintendent.

Employees may be compensated for overtime with compensatory time off or direct pay at time-and-a-half rates. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees may accumulate up to 48 hours of comp time each school year.
- Compensatory time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Compensatory time earned must be used according to a schedule that is mutually agreeable to the employee and supervisor.
- An employee may be required to use compensatory time before using available paid leave (e.g. sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time sheets will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

Travel Expense Reimbursement (Policy DEE)

Before an employee incurs any travel expenses, the employee's supervisor and the Superintendent must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule authorized by the board of trustees and the Internal Revenue Service. ***Written Procedures for employee travel are provided on a separate document.***

Health Insurance Benefits (Policy CRD)

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-ActiveCare, the statewide public school employee health insurance program. The board of trustees determines the district's contribution to employee insurance premiums annually. Employees eligible for health insurance coverage include the following:

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are regularly scheduled to work at least 10 hours per week

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) and employees who are not contributing TRS members who are regularly scheduled to work less than 10 hours per week are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each spring. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact Rhonda Brewer for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits (Policy CRD)

At their **own expense**, employees can enroll in supplemental insurance programs that include vision, dental, cancer, disability, and life insurance. Premiums for these programs can be paid by

payroll deduction.

The insurance plan year is from September 1st through August 31st. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the first 30 days of employment. Employees should contact Rhonda Brewer for more information.

Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental, and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

New employees must accept or reject this benefit during their first month of employment. All employees must accept or reject this benefit on an annual basis and during the specified time period.

Workers' Compensation Insurance (*Policy CRE*)

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case. All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to your supervisor. Employees who are unable to work due to a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See Darlene Ives to complete paperwork.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance (*Policy CRF*)

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact Rhonda Brewer .

Teacher Retirement

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits that work at least 90 days a year are also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify Rhonda Brewer as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits are available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.state.tx.us). See pages 8 & 9 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

Other Benefit Programs:

Tuition-Free Attendance: A nonresident full-time District employee may request that his or her child be admitted into District schools by filing an application with the Superintendent or designee. In addition, the District shall accept a transfer application from a nonresident full-time

employee of any company with which the District regularly contracts for services, such as custodial or food services.

Leaves and Absences *(Policies DEC, DECA, DECB)*

The district offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence. Employees who have personal needs that will require long leaves of absence should call Rhonda Brewer for counseling about leave options, continuation of benefits, and communicating with the district.

Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health care benefits for employees on leave authorized under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district, as they were when they were working. The district does not make benefit contributions for employees who are on unpaid leave.

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate leave request form. Any employee who is absent more than **FIVE** days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and – in the case of personal illness – the employee’s fitness to return to work.

Personal and local sick leave is earned on a days-worked basis. If an employee leaves the district before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee’s final paycheck.

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits employers and other entities covered by GINA Title II from requesting or requiring genetic information of an individual or family member of the individual, except as specifically allowed by law. To comply with this law, we ask that employees and health care providers do not provide any genetic information in any medical certification. ‘Genetic information,’ as defined by GINA, includes an individual’s family medical history, the results of an individual’s or family member’s genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual’s family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual’s family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.

Continuation of Health Insurance

Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the district does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave.

Personal Leave

State law entitles all employees receive five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is earned at a rate of ½ a workday for each 18 workdays of employment. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers. There are two types of personal leave: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

Nondiscretionary

Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, or a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave allows very little, if any, advance planning. Nondiscretionary leave will be granted to employees in the same manner as sick leave.

Discretionary

Leave that is taken at an employee's discretion and that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to this or her principal or supervisor 5 days in advance of the anticipated absence.

- A maximum of 10% of campus employees in each job category will be permitted to take discretionary personal leave at the same time
- Discretionary leave may not last more than **3 consecutive workdays**.
- Discretionary leave may not be taken on the following key days except in extenuating circumstances approved by the superintendent: The day before a school holiday, the day after a school holiday, days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams, days scheduled for standardized tests, or professional or staff development days.

The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

Sick Leave

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State Sick leave can be used only in 1/2-day increments except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis if when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

State Sick leave may be used for the following reasons only:

- Employee illness
- Illness in the employee's immediate family
- Family emergency (i.e., natural disasters or life-threatening situations)
- Death in the immediate family
- Active military service

Local Leave

All employees shall earn an additional three equivalent workdays of local personal leave per school year. Local personal leave shall be cumulative and shall be taken with no loss of pay. Local personal leave shall be subject to the same request procedures and schedule limitations as discretionary leave.

Sick Leave Bank

The District sick leave pool comes from voluntary donations by the District staff to assist a fellow employee suffering from personal illness or disability, or who must be absent due to illness of an immediate family member. To receive days from the pool, the requesting employee must first use all of his or her state and local leave, personal days, and vacation days. The employee may participate in the pool until he or she has used 90 days from the pool.

Establishment: A request for the establishment of a sick leave pool shall be made in writing to the Superintendent. Pooling may be requested when an employee has exhausted his or her state sick leave, local sick leave, personal days, and vacation days. The Superintendent shall then initiate

the sick leave pool for the employee and notify District staff.

The sick leave pool shall be created by voluntary donations by District staff for a specific individual and donated days shall be designated to a specific pool. Contributions may consist of one, two, or three local leave days per person. Total number of days contributed may not exceed the number of days the employee has requested. No staff member may contribute more than three of his or her local leave days per school year. These days will be subtracted from the employee's local personal leave record. A maximum of 90 days may be contributed to a sick leave pool, unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent.

Cessation of Sick Leave Pool: The sick leave pool shall cease to exist when the employee returns to work or when each voluntary donation reaches the three-day maximum contribution and the sick leave pool is exhausted.

Temporary Disability

Certified Employees

Any full-time employee whose position requires certification from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) is eligible for temporary disability leave. The purpose of temporary disability leave is to provide job protection to full-time educators who cannot work for an extended period of time because of a mental or physical disability of a temporary nature. Temporary disability leave must be taken as a continuation block of time. It may not be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability.

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. An employee's notification or need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days. If disability leave is not approved, the employee must return to work or be subject to termination procedures.

If an employee is placed on temporary disability leave involuntarily, he or she has the right to request a hearing before the board of trustees. The employee may protest the action and present additional evidence of fitness to work.

When an employee is ready to return to work, the Superintendent's Office should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee to resume regular duties. Professional employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned as soon as an appropriate position is available. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, professional employees will be reinstated at the beginning of the following school year.

Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)—general provisions

The following text is from the federal notice, Employee Rights and Responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Specific information that the district has adopted to implement the FMLA follows the general notice.

Basic Leave Entitlement

The FMLA requires covered employees to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth:

- 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 employee’s job.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active military duty and deployed to a foreign country may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty or active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list. It also includes a family member who is a veteran with an illness or injury that occurs in the line of duty while on active duty and manifests itself before or after the service member became a veteran. The veteran must have been on active duty during the five years preceding the need for treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

Benefits and Protections

During FMLA, the employer must maintain the employee’s health coverage under any “group health plan” on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of the FMLA cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee’s leave.

Eligibility Requirements

Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee’s job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Conditions must need continuing treatment.

Use of Leave

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave

Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA. In order to use paid leave for FMLA, employees must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions; the family member is unable to perform daily activities; the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider; or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Employer Responsibilities

Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are eligible, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA, the employer must notify the employee.

Unlawful Acts by Employers

The FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right protected under the FMLA;
- Discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the

Enforcement

An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. The 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. *FMLA section 109(29 U.S.C. # 2619) required FMLA covered employers to post the text of this notice. Regulations 29 C.F.R. #825.300 (a) may require additional disclosures.*

For additional information:

1-866-4us-WAGE (1-866-487-9234) TTY: 1-877-889-5627 or www.wagehour.dol.gov.

Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions

An employee must have been employed by the district for at least 12 months, and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months immediately preceding the need for the leave are eligible for family and medical leave. Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave each eligible year. A year is defined as the 12-month period beginning on the first day of the school year. Employees qualify for family and medical leave for the following reasons:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child
- To care for a spouse, parent, or child with a serious health condition
- An employee's serious health condition
- A qualifying exigency resulting from active military service of a spouse, child, or parent

A husband and wife who are both employed by the district are subject to limits in the amount of leave that they can take to care for a parent with a serious health condition or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child; or to care for a covered military service member.

An eligible employee is entitled to leave to care for an active duty military service member who incurs a serious illness or injury in the line of duty. The service member must be the employee's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin. An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks on a one-time basis to provide care to a covered service member.

Eligible employees are entitled to continue their health care benefits under the same terms and conditions as when they were on the job and are entitled to return to their previous job or an equivalent job at the end of their leave. Under some circumstances, teachers who are able to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue their leave until the end of the semester.

Family and medical leave runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The district will designate the leave as family and medical leave, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

In some circumstances, employees may take family and medical leave in blocks of time or by reducing their normal weekly or daily work schedule. Intermittent leave when medically necessary or in the case of a qualifying exigency, may be taken intermittently on a reduced schedule.. The district does not permit the use of intermittent or reduced-schedule leave for the care of a newborn child or for adoption or placement of a child with the employee.

When the need for family and medical leave is foreseeable, employees must provide 30-day advance notice to the district. When the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees must contact the building principal as soon as possible. Employees may be required to provide the following:

- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member.
- Second or third medical opinions and periodic recertification of the need for leave.
- Periodic reports during the leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work.
- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider at the conclusion of leave of an employee's ability to return to work and to perform the essential job functions.
- Certification of the need for family military leave.

Employees requiring family and medical leave should contact Donna Hobson for details.

Workers' Compensation Benefits

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly income benefits if the absence exceeds seven calendar days.

An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury may choose to use accumulated sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. An employee choosing to use paid leave will not receive workers' compensation weekly income benefits until all paid leave is exhausted or to the extent that paid leave does not equal the pre-illness or –injury wage.

If the use of paid leave is not elected, then the employee will only receive workers' compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work related illness or injury which may not equal his or her pre-illness or –injury wage.

Assault Leave

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person not responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At the request of an employee, the District will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation benefits. Upon investigation the District may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

Bereavement (Funeral) Leave *(Policy DEC Local)*

Use of state leave and/or local leave for death in the immediate family shall not exceed five workdays per occurrence, subject to the approval of the District.

Jury Duty

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service and shall be allowed to retain any compensation they receive.

Other Court Appearances

Employees will be paid while on leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding and will not be required to use paid leave. Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

Military Leave

Paid Leave for Military Service

Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, or reserves component of the United States Armed Forces will be granted a paid leave of absence without loss of any accumulated leave for authorized training or duty orders. Paid military leave will not exceed 15 days each federal fiscal year (October 1-September 30). In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during active military service.

Re-employment after Military Leave

Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active state military duty (Texas National Guard or Texas State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed in the position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment to the office of the superintendent. In most cases, the length of military service cannot exceed five years, and the employee must apply for reemployment within the period of time specified in law.

Continuation of Health Insurance

Employees who perform service in the uniformed services may elect to continue their health plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months. Employees should contact Rhonda Brewer for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Employee Relations and Communications

Employee Recognition and Appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities may also include the presentation of certificates of recognition by the Superintendent to employees with outstanding service records during the end-of-the-year employee luncheon.

District Communications

The Superintendent of Schools will provide a weekly district report to all employees throughout the school year. In addition, the Administration office and respective campus offices will release announcements, memos, handouts, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

Complaints and Grievances *(Policy DGBA)*

Personnel Management Relations *(Policy DGBA)*

In an effort to hear and resolve employee concerns or complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted an orderly grievance process. Employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

The formal process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted; employees can bring concerns or complaints to the board of trustees.

You can access DGBA (Local) at www.elkhartisd.org.

Employee Conduct and Welfare

Standards of Conduct *(Policy DH)*

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the district and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct:

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Know and comply with department and district procedures and policies.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticisms through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policy, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent first learns of the incident.

Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

Purpose and Scope

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community.(19 TAC 247.1(b))

Enforceable Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

Standard 1.1 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, education preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board of Education (SBEC) and its certification process.

Standard 1.2 The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

Standard 1.3 The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

Standard 1.4 The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Standard 1.5 The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

Standard 1.6 The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

Standard 1.7 The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other applicable state and federal laws.

Standard 1.8 The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

Standard 1.9 The educator shall not make threats of violence against parents of students.

Standard 1.10 The educator shall be of good moral character and be trustworthy to instruct or supervise youth of this state.

Standard 1.11 The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

Standard 1.12 The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.

Standard 1.13 The educator shall not consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

2. Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues

Standard 2.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 2.2 The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

Standard 2.3 The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

Standard 2.4 The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Standard 2.5 The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.

Standard 2.6 The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

Standard 2.7 The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

3. Ethical Conduct Toward Students

Standard 3.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 3.2 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

Standard 3.3 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

Standard 3.4 The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

Standard 3.5 The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.

Standard 3.6 The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

Standard 3.7 The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

Standard 3.8 The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.

Standard 3.9 The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
the subject matter of the communication;
- (ii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
- (iii) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- (iv) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- (v) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons, including board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action.

Employees who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, or appropriate district official. If the campus principal, supervisor, or district official is the subject of a complaint, the employee should report the complaint directly to the superintendent. A complaint against the superintendent may be made directly to the board.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation can be accessed at DIA (Local) at elkhartisd.org.

Harassment of Students (*Policies DF, DH, FFG, FFH*)

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See *Reporting suspected child abuse* for additional information.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is reprinted below:

The District prohibits sexual harassment and harassment based on a person's race, color, gender, national origin, disability, or religion.

Employees shall not tolerate harassment of students and shall make reports as required at REPORTING PROCEDURES, below:

STUDENT WELFARE and FREEDOM FROM HARASSMENT (Policy FFH)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

By an Employee. Sexual harassment of a student by a District employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

1. A District employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
2. The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
 - a. Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational

program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or

- b. creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and District employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

By Others Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of sexual harassment of a student may include, but are not limited to, sexual advances; touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Necessary or permissible physical contact such as assisting a child by taking the child's hand, comforting a child with a hug, or other physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature is not sexual harassment.

Other Prohibited Harassment Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, gender, national origin, disability, or religion that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of prohibited harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Reporting Procedures Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee.

Any District employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced prohibited harassment is required to immediately report the alleged acts to an appropriate person designated below.

Any other person who knows or believes that a student has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to the appropriate person designated below. Reports of known or suspected child abuse or neglect shall be made as required by law. [See FFG]

Reports of harassment shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged acts. A failure to promptly report alleged harassment may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the harassment.

Oral or written reports of prohibited harassment shall normally be made to the campus principal. A person shall not be required to report harassment to the alleged harasser; nothing in this policy prevents a person from reporting harassment directly to one of the District officials below:

1. For sexual harassment, the Title IX coordinator. [See FB(LOCAL)]
2. For all other prohibited harassment, the Superintendent.

A report against the Title IX coordinator may be made directly to the Superintendent; a report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board.

Notification of Report Upon receipt of a report of harassment, a principal shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed above.

Notice to Parents The principal or District official shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited harassment by a District employee or another adult associated with the District. In cases of student-to-student harassment, the District shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced harassment when the allegations presented, if proven, would constitute sexual harassment or other prohibited harassment as defined by District policy.

Confidentiality To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

Investigation of the Report The District may request, but shall not insist upon, a written report. If a report is made orally, the District official shall reduce the report to written form.

Upon receipt or notification of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute sexual harassment or other prohibited harassment as defined by District policy. If so, the District official shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation.

If appropriate, the District shall promptly take interim action to prevent harassment during the course of an investigation

The investigation may be conducted by the District official or a designee, such as the campus principal, or by a third party designated by the District, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the campus principal shall be involved in or informed of the investigation.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.

The District's obligation to conduct an investigation is not satisfied by the fact that a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending.

Concluding the Investigation Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the District official overseeing the investigation.

District Action If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited harassment occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the harassment.

The District may take disciplinary action based on the results of an investigation, even if the District concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or District policy.

Appeal A student, including a complainant, may appeal through FNG (LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. A complainant shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Retaliation Prohibited Retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced harassment, a witness, or another person who makes a report or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited. A person who makes a good faith report of prohibited harassment shall not suffer retaliation for making the report. A person who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding prohibited harassment is subject to appropriate discipline.

Records Retention Retention of records shall be in accordance with FB(LOCAL).

Access to Policy Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to District employees and included in the student handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

The definition of solicitation of a romantic relationship in DF(Legal) and FFH(Local) can be accessed at www.elkhartisd.org

Alcohol- and Drug-Abuse Prevention (*Policies DH, DI*)

Elkhart ISD is committed to maintaining an alcohol- and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The district's policy on drug abuse and drug-free schools follows:

The District prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance and alcohol on school premises or as part of any of the District's activities. District employees are prohibited from being under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours while at school or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours:

1. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
3. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
4. Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drugs.

An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered “under the influence” of a controlled substance.

An employee who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for that employee’s use shall not be considered to have violated this policy.

A copy of this policy, the purpose of which is to eliminate drug abuse from the workplace, shall be provided each employee at the beginning of each year or upon employment.

Employees who violate this prohibition shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Such sanctions may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs or employee assistance programs, termination from employment with the District, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution.

Compliance with these requirements and prohibitions is mandatory and is a condition of employment.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse (*Policies DF, DH, FFG, GRA*)

All employees are required by state law (Senate Bill 152) to immediately report any suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency. Teachers and other professional staff are required to file a report with a law enforcement agency or Child Protective Services within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Abuse is defined by SBEC and includes the following acts or omissions:

- Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student’s or minor’s development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student’s or minor’s development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or
- Sexual conduct harmful to a student’s or minor’s mental, emotional, or physical welfare.

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to a local office or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the District is prohibited from retaliating against the employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee’s failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. In addition a certified employee’s failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a

report to the appropriate agency.

Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

Child Sexual Abuse

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, which may be accessed at our website. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of the warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services. Employees are required to follow the procedures described above in Reporting Suspected Abuse.

Fraud and Financial Impropriety (Policy CAA)

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the district's financial resources. The district prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below. Fraud and financial impropriety includes the following:

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets, including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

Conflicts of Interest (Policy DBD)

Employees are required to disclose to their supervisor any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the district. This includes the following:

- A personal financial interest

- A business interest
- Any other obligation or relationship
- Nonschool employment

Gifts and Favors (*Policy DBD*)

Employees may not accept gifts or favors that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee’s discharge of assigned duties. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an administrator or teacher that might reasonably tend to influence the selection of textbooks, electronic textbooks, instructional materials or technological equipment may result in prosecution of a Class B misdemeanor offense. This does not include staff development, teacher training, or instructional materials, such as maps or worksheets, that convey information to students or contribute to the learning process.

Associations and Political Activities (*Policy DGA*)

The district will not directly or indirectly discourage employees from participating in political affairs or require any employee to join any group, club, committee, organization, or association. Employees may join or refuse to join any professional association or organization.

An individual’s employment will not be affected by membership or a decision not to be a member of any employee organization that exists for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

Use of district resources, including work time, for political activities is prohibited.

Safety (*Policy CK*)

All employees shall adhere to District safety rules and regulations and shall report unsafe conditions or practices to the appropriate supervisor. The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students, and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirement:

- Observe all safety rules.
- Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times.
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor.
- Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the Superintendent’s office.

Tobacco Use (*Policies DH, GKA, FNCD*)

State law prohibits smoking or using tobacco products on all district-owned property. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking while inside the vehicle. Employees shall not use tobacco products in the presence of students at school or school-related activities. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in all school buildings.

Criminal History Background Checks

Employees may be subject to a review of their criminal history record information at anytime during employment. National criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on certain employees and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the district and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

Employee Arrest and Convictions (Policy DH)

An employee must notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any felony, and any offenses listed below:

- Crimes involving school property or funds
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- Crimes involving moral turpitude

Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence
- Vile or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor
- Crimes involving any felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell or distribute any controlled substance
- Felonies involving driving while intoxicated (DWI) or driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs or alcohol
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the SBEC rules

If an educator is arrested or criminally charged, the superintendent is also required to report the educators' criminal history to the Division of Investigations at TEA.

Possession of Firearms and Weapons (Policies FNCG, GKA)

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a concealed handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, illegal knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors or call the Superintendent's office immediately.

Visitors in the Workplace (Policy GKC)

All visitors are expected to enter any district facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

Copyrighted Materials (Policy CY)

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of federal copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Electronic media, including motion pictures and other audiovisual works, are to be used in the classroom for instructional purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

Technology Resources (Policy CQ)

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate electronic media resources for instructional and administrative purposes.

The district's technology resources, including its network access to the Internet, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district
- Does not unduly burden the district's technology resources
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use. Elkhart I.S.D. has adopted an Acceptable Use policy which all system users shall be required to receive, read, sign, and return to the District.

Employees who are authorized to use the systems are required to abide by the provisions of the district's acceptable use policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact Wes Allison.

Personal Use of Electronic Media (Policy DH)

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (email), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn), Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.

As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for Web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following:

- The employee may not set up or update the employee’s personal social network page(s) using the district’s computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall not use the district’s logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:

Confidentiality of student records. (See Policy FL)

Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. (See Policy DH (EXHIBIT))

Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses. (See Policy GBA)

Copyright law (See Policy CY)

Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about colleagues or the school system. (See Policy DH (EXHIBIT))

See Use of Electronic Media with Students, below, for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media.

Use of Electronic Media With Students (Policy DH)

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below.

All other employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the district through electronic media.

An employee is not subject to these provisions to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee’s child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization. The following definitions apply for the use of electronic media with students:

- Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.
- Communicate means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee’s personal social network page or a blog) is not a communication; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See Personal Use of Electronic Media, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.
- Certified or licensed employee means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC

certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

An employee who uses electronic media to communicate with students shall observe the following:

- The employee may use any form of electronic media except text messaging. Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility.
- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g. for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page ("professional page") for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee's professional page.
- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including:
 - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. (See Policies CPC and FL) and Copyright law (Policy CY)
 - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student (See Policy DF).

Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students. Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to one communication.

An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.

CIPA

Staff and Students will follow all CIPA rules that protect students from inappropriate material and Cyber-bullying. Staff displaying material with teacher's accounts or hardware with greater access to the internet are responsible for content displayed to students. Any teacher witnessing bullying using any technology resource needs to take appropriate action by policy.

Asbestos Management Plan (Policy CKA)

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the district’s management plan is kept in the Administration office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

Pest Control Treatment (Policies CLB, D)I

Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide or herbicide without appropriate training and prior approval of the integrated pest management (IPM) coordinator. Any applications of pesticide or herbicide must be done in a manner prescribed by law and the district’s integrated management program.

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located at each office. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written or electronic means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

Dress and Grooming (Policy DH)

The dress and grooming of District employees shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by their supervisors and approved by the Superintendent.

Employees shall comply with the standards of conduct set out in this policy and with any other policies, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards attendant to their status as District employees. Violation of any policies, regulations, and guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

General Procedures

Bad Weather Closing

The district may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district’s facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school the school officials will notify the following radio and television stations:

<i>KYYK</i>	<i>98.3 FM</i>	<i>KLTV</i>	<i>Channel 7, Tyler</i>
<i>KNET</i>	<i>1450 AM</i>	<i>KETK</i>	<i>Channel 56, Tyler</i>

Early release and school closing will also be posted on the district Web page, www.elkhartisd.org

Electrical Appliances in Classroom:

The following items are not allowed in classrooms:

- Refrigerators (Unless Approved By Superintendent for Medical Reasons).
- Microwave ovens
- Coffee makers
- Plug in room fresheners

Emergencies (Policy CKC)

All employees should be familiar with the safety procedures for responding to a medical emergency and the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with safety and evacuation procedures. Each campus is equipped with an automatic external defibrillator. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all district buildings. Employees should know the location of these devices and procedures for their use.

Purchasing Procedures (Policy CH)

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the Administration office on an official district purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a PO number. **The district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization.** Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact Darlene Ives for additional information on purchasing procedures

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees should notify the Administration office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, home telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary.

Personnel Records (Policy GBA)

Most district records including personnel records are public information and must be released upon request. Employees may choose to have the following information withheld:

- Address
- Phone number
- Social Security number
- Information that reveals whether they have family members.

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be done at any time by submitting a written request to Tammie Pyeatt. New or terminating employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public.

Building Use (Policies DGA, GKD)

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. Tammie Pyeatt is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours and Karen Bridges is responsible for scheduling the auditorium during school hours. You can contact Tammie or Karen to schedule facilities and find out usage fees.

Termination of Employment

Resignations (Policy DFE)

Contract Employees

Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A

written notice of resignation should be submitted to your immediate supervisor. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the superintendent or the board of trustees. Resignation without the consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification.

The superintendent will notify the Texas Commissioner of Education when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in *Reports to the Texas Education Agency*.

Noncontract Employees

Noncontract employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to your immediate supervisor at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

(Policies DFAA, DFAB, DFBA, DFBB, DFD, DFF, DFFA, DFFB, DFFC)

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be non renewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The time lines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Information on the time lines and procedures can be found in the DF policies that are provided to employees or in the policy manuals located on the District's web site, www.elkhartisd.org or Administration office.

Dismissal of Noncontract Employees *(Policy DCD)*

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, military status, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to a grievance hearing before the Board. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance.

Exit Interviews and Procedures *(Policies DC and CY)*

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the district. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on their employment experience.

All district keys, books, property, **including intellectual** property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

Reports to the Texas Education Agency *(Policy DF)*

The dismissal of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA whenever the termination is based on a determination that the employee was involved in any of the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other unlawful conduct with a student or a minor
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of district property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation
- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on district property or at a school-sponsored event

The superintendent is also required to notify TEA when a certified employee resigns and there is reasonable evidence that would support a recommendation to terminate employment because of the conduct listed above.

The reporting requirements above are in addition to the superintendent’s ongoing duty to notify TEA when a certified employee has a reported criminal history. “Reported criminal history” means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction.

Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance to the court and the individual receiving the support (Texas Family Code §8.210, 158.211). Notice of the following must be sent to the court and support recipient:

- Termination of employment not later than the seventh day after the date of termination
- Employee’s last known address
- Name and address of the employee’s new employer, if known

Student Issues

Equal Educational Opportunities (*Policies FB, FFH*)

The Elkhart Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination against students on any of the bases listed above should be directed to the Superintendent’s office.

Student Records (*Policy FL*)

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. The following people are the only people who have general access to a student’s records:

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights
- The student: The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student's records before this time.
- School officials with legitimate educational interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

Parent and Student Complaints (Policy FNG)

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus office or the superintendent's office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teachers or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved to their satisfaction should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response.

Administering Medication to Students (Policy FFAC)

Only designated employees may administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Exceptions apply to the self-administration of asthma medication, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., EpiPen[®]), and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is self-administered in accordance with district policy and procedures. A student who must take any other medication during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the principal or school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students. A teacher may not dispense medication!

Dietary Supplements

District employees are prohibited by state law from knowingly selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to a student with whom the employee has contact as part of his or her school district duties. In addition, employees may not knowingly endorse or suggest the ingestion, intranasal application, or inhalation of a performance-enhancing dietary supplement to any student.

Psychotropic Drugs (Policy FFAC)

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

District employees are prohibited by state law from doing the following:

- Recommending that a student use a psychotropic drug
- Suggest a particular diagnosis
- Excluding from class or school-related activity a student whose parent refuses to consent

to a psychiatric evaluation or to authorize the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student

Student Conduct and Discipline (*Policies FN and FO*)

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management procedures that have been adopted by the district. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal.

Student Attendance

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student, upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

Bullying (*Policy FFI*)

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to an administrator. The district policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students may be accessed at FFI (Local) at www.elkhartisd.org.

Hazing (*Policy FNCC*)

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible engaging in or permitting "hazing" is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.

ELKHART INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Employee Handbook Acknowledgement

Employee's Name: _____

Campus/Department: _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Elkhart ISD Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

The electronic format version of the Elkhart I.S.D. Employee Handbook may be located on the district web site, www.elkhartisd.org.

- I accept responsibility for accessing the Employee Handbook according to the instructions provided.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or eliminate the information summarized in this booklet. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that this handbook intends no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will relationships.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my supervisor and the administration office of any changes in personal information, such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor or the Superintendent if I have any questions, concerns, or need further explanation.

_____ I would like to request a hard copy of the Employee Handbook.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to administration office.