

DC WEST  
Teacher



Handbook  
2024-2025

## FOREWORD

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**DC West Community Schools Teacher Handbook  
2024-2025 School Year**

**FOREWORD**

**Section 1                    Intent of Handbook**

Welcome to DC West Community Schools! This handbook is intended to be used by teachers and other certificated staff to provide general information about DC West Community Schools and to serve as a guide to the District’s policies, rules, and regulations, benefits of employment, and performance expectations.

References in this handbook to “teachers” are intended to apply to all certificated staff. This includes administrative staff to the extent the handbook deals with professional expectations and conduct.

Each teacher is responsible for becoming familiar with the handbook and knowing the information contained in it. Although the information found in this handbook is detailed and specific on many topics, the handbook is not intended to be all encompassing so as to cover every situation and circumstance that may arise. This handbook is intended to supplement other documents that deal with your employment, including your employment contract, the negotiated agreement between the DC West Community Schools and the DC West Education Association, and the policies and regulations of the Board of Education. In reading this handbook, please understand that where a direct conflict exists, state or federal law, the negotiated agreement, and Board policies and regulations will control.

Every staff member is subject to the Policies of the Board of Education. As such, every classified staff member should review the Policies of the Board of Education, available online at: [DC West Board Policies](#).

The administration will be responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook and shall have the right to make decisions and make rule revisions at any time. Should a situation or circumstance arise that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will decide based upon applicable school district policies, state and federal statutes and regulations, and the best interests of the District. In the event that a staff member does not understand a provision of this Handbook, it is the staff member’s responsibility to seek the administration’s interpretation of such provision.

This handbook will be in effect for the 2024-2025 and subsequent school years unless replaced by a later edition.

## **Article 1 – CONTRACT DAYS**

### **Section 1 Contract Days**

Teachers are contracted for 185 contract days for the school year. Contract days shall be serviced by individual teachers on varying schedules as established by the Superintendent or Superintendent’s designee.

### **Section 2 Make-Up Days**

In the event teachers are not required to report for duty due to inclement weather conditions or other circumstance whereby a duty day is canceled, such days shall not be credited as a contract day served. Make-up days will be scheduled by the administration during the contract year as needed to allow all teaching staff to serve the full number of contract days.

## **Article 2 – EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

### **Section 1 Employment**

On or after March 15 of each school year teachers may be requested to accept employment for the next school year. It is important for teachers to respond to the request to signify acceptance as a failure to signify acceptance of employment by the designated date shall constitute cause for amendment of termination of the teacher’s contract.

Should a teacher wish to resign from employment the teacher must give written notice of resignation to the Superintendent. The request to resign may be acted upon by the Board of Education. Mid-year resignations and resignations given late in the spring for the following school year can present significant planning problems for the District. If a mid-year resignation is submitted, or a resignation for the following school year is submitted after April 30, the Board may only release teachers from the contract if the resignation is mutually agreed upon by both parties. Resignations mutually agreed upon by both parties will have no penalty.

### **Section 2 Assignments**

The professional duties to be performed by a teacher with the District shall be subject to assignment by the Superintendent or designee. A teacher will be expected to devote full time during days of school to the teacher’s position and to perform the assigned duties diligently and faithfully to the best of the teacher’s professional ability. Job descriptions, where available, may provide additional information about the position duties.

In addition to the normal duties traditionally required of teachers, a teacher may be assigned such “extra duty” assignments to support the extra-curricular programs of the District, which shall be upon such terms and conditions and at such additional rate of compensation as the Teacher and the District may agree upon or as set forth in the negotiated agreement. The extra-curricular program of the District is an integral part of the overall educational program of the District. As such, a teacher shall not unreasonably refuse to accept such extra-duty assignments. In addition, performance in an extra duty assignment is a part of the evaluation of the teacher’s overall performance to the District.

### **Section 3 Personnel File**

The District will follow the requirements of state and federal law and regulation with regard to a teacher's personnel file.

### **Section 4 Grievances and Complaints**

Teacher grievances regarding wages, hours, and conditions of employment set forth in the negotiated agreement shall be governed by the grievance or complaint procedure in the negotiated agreement. All other employment related grievances or complaints shall be addressed through the administrative chain of command, including the process set forth in board policy.

### **Section 5 Compensation**

Regular Salary and Extra-Duty Compensation. Compensation is paid only as authorized by the Board of Education. Teachers are paid a salary based on placement on the salary schedule set forth in the collectively bargained negotiated agreement between the District and the collective bargaining agent for the certificated teaching staff, and the extra-duty salary schedule also incorporated into the negotiated agreement.

Salary Payments. Salary is payable over twelve equal installments. Teachers will be paid on the payroll date each month. Upon separation of a teacher's employment, or upon fulfillment of the contract, the teacher may, at the option of the Board, be paid all salary due in one lump sum.

### **Section 6 Benefits**

Teachers are provided benefits in accordance with the negotiated agreement.

Continued health insurance benefits are available through COBRA subject to certain qualifying requirements. A Notice of COBRA Continuation Coverage Rights is available in the Superintendent's Office.

### **Section 7 Payroll and Payroll Deductions**

Payroll deductions shall be made in accordance with law, the negotiated agreement, and/or consent of the teacher.

### **Section 8 Expense Reimbursement**

Reimbursement for authorized mileage will be paid to teachers required to drive their own vehicles during their regularly scheduled working hours between two or more work sites. Teachers shall receive approval from their supervisor before incurring any mileage. Claims for reimbursement should be submitted to the appropriate supervisor. The allowable rate shall be governed by Board policy, unless otherwise required by law. The District is not liable for physical damage to employee vehicles. A request for reimbursement shall be accurate. Any teacher who falsifies a reimbursement request may be terminated from employment.

Materials necessary for instruction are provided by the District. If teachers need additional materials for instruction or school-related purposes, the request should be made to the Building Principal, Director of Learning, or Director of Special Education. Once approval has been given, teachers should enter requisition into online purchase order system for final approval and ordering.

Reimbursement for purchase of materials or for meals or other expenses related to travel must be submitted to and approved by either the Building Principal, Director of Learning, or Director of Special Education, or, if the expense relates to an activity, by the Activities Director. The request for reimbursement should include an itemized receipt sufficient to establish that the expense was actually incurred and that the expense was reasonable and related to a school-purpose. There is no guarantee that teachers will be reimbursed for the purchase of materials or meals. Therefore, teachers should obtain prior authorization from the Building Principal before making such purchases.

## **Section 9      Injuries at Work**

### Accidents

Every accident which results in a personal injury must be reported to the Principal immediately. In the event the injury involves a student, the teacher responsible for the student either as teacher, coach or sponsor is responsible for making the report. If the injury occurs in the presence of the teacher, the teacher is also responsible for making a report.

### Workers Compensation

Teachers are required to immediately report any work-related injury and/or work-related medical condition to their supervisor and complete all appropriate paperwork.

## **Article 3 – ABSENCES FROM WORK**

### **Section 1      Paid Leaves**

All leaves (paid or unpaid) are identified in the Negotiated Agreement. If any teacher has a question about their availability or access to leaves, the teacher must contact the business office for verification.

### **Section 2      Payroll Deductions for Absences in Excess of Paid Leave**

Should a teacher be absent from work in excess of the teacher's accumulated sick leave or other paid leaves called for in the negotiated agreement, the teacher's salary and fringe benefits (including the cost of premiums for group health insurance) may be reduced by the day or days of work missed on a per diem basis calculated using the number of days missed as the numerator, and the number of total contract days for the school year as the denominator.

### **Section 3      Jury Duty Leave**

A teacher who is summoned for jury service must promptly notify the Building Principal. The teacher will be allowed time off for jury duty, pursuant to law.

There will be no loss of salary or deduction to the teacher for time spent in jury service. The District may, at its discretion, reduce the teacher's salary by an amount equal to any compensation, other than expenses, paid by the court for jury duty service.

If a teacher reports for jury duty in the morning and is then dismissed from jury duty for the remainder of the day, the employee is to report for work and resume duties for the balance of the day, except as may be otherwise arranged by the Building Principal.

## **Section 4      Family and Medical Leave Act**

### **Employee Rights and Responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act**

Family and medical leave will be allowed under the terms and conditions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, as amended (FMLA).

Basic Leave Entitlement. FMLA provides 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 childbirth;
- To care for your child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for your spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes you unable to perform your job.

The “leave year” for purposes of the FMLA is a “rolling” 12-month period, measured backward from the date of any FMLA leave usage.

Military Leave Entitlement. Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active-duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation 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 12-month period. A covered servicemember 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 on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the servicemember is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

Benefits and Protections. During FMLA leave, a teacher’s health coverage under a “group health plan” will be maintained on the same terms as if the teacher had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

A teacher’s use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of the FMLA leave.

Eligibility Requirements. A teacher is eligible if he or she has been employed with DC West Community Schools for at least one year, for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if there are at least 50 employees of DC West Community Schools within 75 miles of your work location.



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 teacher from performing the functions of his or her 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 three consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regiment of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

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

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave. The teacher may choose, or the District may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. To use paid leave for FMLA leave, the teacher must comply with the District's normal paid leave policies.

Employee Responsibilities. The teacher must provide sufficient information for the District 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 teacher 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. The teacher also must inform the District if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. The teacher also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Employer Responsibilities. The District will inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice will specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the District will provide a reason for the ineligibility.

The District will inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the District determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the District will notify the employee.

Enforcement. An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

For additional information you may refer to FMLA posters on employee bulletin boards or contact the U.S. Wage and Hour Division at:

1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627  
[www.wagehour.dol.gov](http://www.wagehour.dol.gov)

To submit a request for use of FMLA, or to plan for payment of benefits while on an FMLA leave, contact Human Resources at Extension 313 or 531-459-3841.

### **Section 5 Military and Family Military Leave**

Military leave and family military leave will be granted to the extent required by state and federal law and in accordance with Board Policy.

Teachers requesting to take military leave or family military leave under the Nebraska statutes must notify the Superintendent at least 14 days in advance of taking such a leave if the leave will be for 5 or more consecutive days and consult with their Building Principal to schedule the leave to not unduly disrupt operations of the District. For leaves of less than 5 days, the teacher is to notify the Superintendent of the leave request as soon as practicable. Teachers are to attach a copy of their orders to a leave request form when they prepare the request for military leave.

### **Section 6 Adoption Leave**

Adoption leave will be permitted to be taken by an adoptive parent for the same time and on the same terms as the teacher is permitted to take a leave of absence upon the birth of the teacher's child.

The adoptive parent leave of absence begins following the commencement of the parent-child relationship. The parent-child relationship commences, for purposes of adoption leave, when the child is placed with the teacher for purposes of adoption. The teacher shall be deemed to have waived any adoptive leave days not taken following the commencement of the parent-child relationship, except as the Superintendent and the teacher may otherwise agree. Advance notice of an anticipated adoption shall be provided by the teacher to the Superintendent as early as possible.

### **Section 7 Subpoena to Testify Leave**

A teacher must promptly notify the Building Principal when the teacher receives a lawfully issued subpoena to testify in court or to give a deposition that may require an absence from duty.

In the event the subpoena involves a job-related matter in which the teacher is testifying on behalf of the District, the absence will be treated like a jury duty leave.

In the event the subpoena involves a personal matter, the teacher will be required to use available leave days. The Superintendent shall make the final determination as to whether a matter is personal to the teacher.

### **Section 8 Voting Leave**

Teachers will be allowed paid time off to vote in an election if the teacher: (a) is a registered voter; (b) does not have 2 consecutive hours between the time of the opening and closing of the polls during which the teacher is not required to be present at work; and (c) applies for voting leave prior to or on election day with the Building Principal.

When voting leave is available, a teacher will be entitled to be absent from work on election day for such period as will, when considering the employee's non-working time, total 2 consecutive hours between the time of the opening and closing of the polls. When voting leave is used, no deduction shall be made from the teacher's salary on account of such absence. The Building Principal may specify the hours during which the employee may be absent for voting leave.

## **Article 4 – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Section 1 Hours of Work & Meetings**

Regular, dependable, in-person attendance at work is an essential function of a teacher's employment position.

Certificated employees are required to serve at the playground, lunchroom and hall supervision as designated by the Principal.

Teachers shall attend meetings assigned by the Superintendent of Schools, directors, principals, department heads and team leaders.

### **Section 2 Arrival to Duty Assignments**

Teachers are to be in the building by no later than 7:45, to be in their classroom no later than 8:00, and to remain on duty until 3:45. Teachers and other certificated employees who are part-time or work on adjusted schedules are to be in the building at least 15 minutes before their class or assigned duty begins, and to be in their classroom or assigned duty area at least 15 minutes after their class or assignment ends. During the school day, teachers are to be in their assigned classroom at least five minutes before each period begins to assure that students are not unsupervised within the classroom.

### **Section 3 Leaving School**

Teachers are to be always on duty during the school day. Teachers are considered on duty even during designated planning periods. An uninterrupted lunch period of not less than 30-minutes each day is provided to teachers during which they are not assigned teaching, supervisory, or other duties.

Teachers may not leave school during duty hours without the approval of the Principal. If the absence has been approved, the teacher must check out with the Principal's office when leaving and check back in with the Principal's office upon return. Teachers who need to leave during the school day for reason of illness or emergency are to check out with the Principal's office and make sure that a responsible person has been notified of their unexpected absence so student coverage may be provided.

### **Section 4 Lesson Plans/Substitute Folder**

On each contract day, teachers must prepare written lesson plans which cover at least three days of advance instruction. The plans must be in a format accessible to the Principal or substitute teacher if the teacher is absent from school. The lesson plans must be sufficiently clear in establishing objectives and related activities so that they are easily used by a substitute teacher or

other staff member not familiar with previous classroom activities or progress. The lesson plans must give specific reference to other instructional sources immediately available which will enhance the instructional lesson.

Lesson plans should be with or near a substitute folder which should include: class roster, daily procedures, student handbook, this handbook, and a class schedule including schedules for special education students.

Multicultural Education: As required by Rule 10, the instructional program must incorporate multicultural education in all curriculum areas at all grades. Staff members should keep documentation of at least one multicultural lesson in their classrooms from each school year.

### **Section 5 Daily Class Records**

Every teacher is required to keep a complete and easily understandable written or electronic record of the attendance and achievement of every student.

Upon request, a student's individual record in the teacher's class record shall be made available for review or copying. Information relating to other students should not be allowed to be seen by other students or parents.

### **Section 6 Classroom and School Procedures**

Teachers are expected to adhere to the following classroom and school procedure in the performance of their duties:

1. Use of Cell Phones

Teachers shall limit personal cell phone use during active supervision of students unless the teacher is using a District-issued application or website that directly relates to their teaching duties.

Teachers are not to use cell phones or otherwise engage in distracted driving while transporting students. This rule applies to the driver regardless of whether the vehicle is in motion. The only exception to these rules is in the case of emergencies. Teachers will abide by all rules of the road and any applicable rules of the Nebraska Department of Education and the District relating to driving a motor vehicle. Seat belts and child restraint systems will be utilized by all occupants.

2. Paraprofessional Duties

Paraprofessionals provide valuable assistance in the educational process and allow teachers to carry out their responsibilities in a more efficient and effective manner. A paraprofessional must not, however, assume teaching responsibilities. The teacher must maintain the role of leadership and responsibility for the students, with the paraprofessional in a supportive role. Teachers ultimately bear responsibility for the actions that occur in the classroom. A paraprofessional is not a sufficient substitute for a teacher's duties. Paraprofessionals may be used to

assist the teacher by, among other tasks, assisting with instructional activities under the direction of the teacher, helping to supervise students, copying tests and other written material, organizing class materials, preparing bulletin boards, grading tests or class work, and calculating grades and recording grades. Paraprofessionals are to work only on their assigned workdays and within their assigned workday. If the teacher desires the paraprofessional to work hours other than the assigned work hours or assigned workday, contact the administration for approval.

3. Student Aides

Student aides are to be directly supervised by the teacher and are not to leave the building or be in the halls or anywhere they are not being supervised. Student aides are not to be used to assist the teacher by helping supervise another student, grade tests or class work, calculate student grades or record grades. Keys are never to be given to students, whether they are student aides or not. Student aides should not be present and assisting a teacher without another adult present after the end of regular teacher duty hours.

4. Classroom Environment

At all times, teachers are expected to organize, maintain, and ensure that their classroom is in a safe, orderly, and clean condition for student learning. Classrooms should be free from distractions (such as inappropriate or unprofessional posters or other displays) and other apparatus that may cause student health problems (such as essential oils and/or essential oil diffusers). Teachers who are uncertain as to whether their classroom meets this requirement are encouraged to consult with their building principal in a proactive manner.

## **Section 7 Supervision of Students**

Proper supervision of students is necessary for teachers and other adults responsible for students. Teachers and other adults responsible for student supervision are expected to meet the four “P’s” for student supervision and safety.

1. Proper Supervision

- Report to all duty assignments on time.
- Circulate through your duty area. Pay particular attention to areas and activities that pose an increased risk of injury.
- Be vigilant while supervising students. Never leave the classroom unattended; the need to make a copy is not greater than the need to supervise students. If an emergency requires that a teacher leave the classroom, request that another nearby staff member cover the class, or notify the office so someone can help. If the teacher is on recess duty, the teacher’s responsibility is to supervise the students in the assigned area. When talking with other adults or students, the primary duty is supervision, and the teacher is to be aware of what all students are doing.
- If the teacher has seen or has been informed that a particular student has a propensity to act dangerously or in an unpredictable manner, the teacher’s

supervision of that student must increase with the known risk of injury. (Remember, though, that this type of information may be confidential—do not share confidential information about students except with other staff who need to know the information to perform their jobs).

- Be careful with touching students. Use of corporal punishment is prohibited. Touching students should be limited to that necessary to protect the student from harm (e.g., falling from playground equipment) and that which professional educators determine appropriate for purposes of proper student relationships.
- Be careful with language. Profanity or abusive language may not be used. Teachers must be good role models for students. If a student uses such language, the teacher should correct the student and take such disciplinary action as is appropriate, which may include making a report to administration.

2. Proper Instructions

- Proper instructions are important to reduce the risk of injury when students undertake an activity, especially an activity that has an increased risk of harm to students.
- Repeat the instructions on how to complete a task that has a heightened risk of danger, as often as needed. Do not assume because students heard the directions once they will be remembered.

3. Proper Maintenance of Buildings, Grounds, and Equipment

- Conduct periodic inspections of equipment under your control or in your area of supervision.
- If equipment is broken and presents a risk of injury, immediately take it out of service (if it can't be moved, tape a "Do Not Use" sign) and notify the Principal immediately so repairs may be undertaken.
- Any requests for maintenance should be made under "Staff Only-Maintenance Request" tabs.

4. Proper Warnings

- If you have knowledge of a hazard that can likely cause injury, take steps to warn other staff and students. Tell the Principal immediately so additional warnings may be given.

Contact the Principal for Assistance

The Principal should be contacted immediately when a situation exists which could cause injury to students or others. Examples include:

- student fight
- student health problem (fainting, bleeding, high temperature, difficulty breathing, etc.); if the Principal cannot be immediately located, call 911 if the problem appears to be of immediate and serious concern
- a report or a suspicion that a student has a weapon or other dangerous item or drugs, alcohol, or other illegal substances

- presence of an intruder (a non-student or staff member who refuses to go to the office)

### Student Searches

The Principal should also be contacted before performing searches of students or their belongings. A student suspected of having an item in violation of school rules should be directed to wait until another adult is present, or to follow the teacher to the office if the teacher cannot leave his or her assigned area without causing risk of harm to others. Do not use physical force to detain the student or to make the student accompany you except as reasonably necessary to protect the student or others.

### Student Rights

Students should be treated fairly and given the same treatment without consideration of race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religion, gender, or disability. Students who need reasonable special accommodation should be given those accommodations as needed for them to participate in school and school activities. Further, students have the right to have their school records kept confidential. Such information should be shared only with other school staff with a need to know the information to perform their duties.

## **Section 8 Managing Student Conduct**

Discipline is everyone's responsibility. It begins with the student being responsible for his/her own behavior and understanding the consequences it may cause. The teacher is responsible for articulating classroom expectations at the beginning of the school year, implementing the classroom expectations on a consistent basis, and being familiar with the student handbook. All staff are responsible for all students in the hallways, in the restrooms, at assemblies, at pep rallies, in other open spaces and during lunch. Consequences for inappropriate behavior may include students making up time before or after school, a student or a parent conference, or a referral to an administrator.

The following guidelines will assist in maintaining appropriate student conduct and complying with the process required for student discipline.

1. Students must be consistently made aware of classroom expectations on a regular basis and should be engaged with effective instruction.
2. It is important to document student behavior in your classroom, calls to parents, referrals, and/or communications with a student.
3. If, after attempts to improve student behavior, problems continue, talk to the Principal about possible alternatives in discipline procedures. Be attentive and respond to “bullying.”
4. If a student continues to cause problems, inform the Principal. Be sure to state the problem clearly and expectations in terms of assistance, as, at times, the student’s and teacher’s stories are different. Be prepared to provide documentation.

5. Follow up on any referral. The student may not go to the Principal or the counselor when sent, so check to ensure that student arrived when sent..
6. Refer students with continued and significant behavioral problems to the Falcon Individualized Problem Solving Team (FIPS team) for a determination of whether the student needs special services. Contact the principal or designee if you have questions as to the procedure.
7. Talk with other teachers about the classroom management techniques they use to establish an atmosphere conducive to learning in their classroom. A large repertoire of classroom management techniques always enhances learning.
8. Read and understand the student handbook and the student conduct rules of the District.
9. Use good judgment when dealing with difficult situations involving students. Physical confrontation generally escalates tense situations. Corporal punishment is prohibited in the District and is not to be used. Physical force may only be used to the extent reasonably necessary to protect the student, yourself, and others, and to protect property as may be reasonable.
10. Violations of student rules which are also violations of state law are required to be reported to law enforcement. Make a report of such conduct to the Principal so this law may be followed.

### **Section 9 Dispensing Medication**

Teachers are not permitted to give any medication to students unless trained under the Medication Aid Act. Students who need to take prescription medicine must have a signed parent release form on file in the office. Medications are to be taken in the presence of the office staff, the nurse, or medication aide and are to be stored in the nurse's office; except for students who have a diabetes self-management or asthma self-management plan. Medical procedures are not to be administered in the classroom except in accordance with the District's Safety and Security Management Plan and the District's Emergency Protocol. Any questions about these rules are to be addressed to the Principal.

### **Section 10 Reporting Child Abuse [Board Policy 5402](#)**

Teachers are to promptly report to the appropriate law enforcement agency and the Principal when they have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, or circumstances which reasonably would result in abuse or neglect. Administrative staff may sometimes choose to make a report for a teacher. However, simply informing a Principal or supervisor does not end the teacher's responsibility; teachers are obligated by law to make certain a report was made if they do not do it themselves.

Teachers (as citizens of Nebraska) are required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the proper law enforcement agency or the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protective Services) when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has



been abused or neglected, or a child is in a situation which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect. According to Nebraska State Law, abuse or neglect means knowingly, intentionally, or negligently causing or permitting a minor child to be:

- (a) Placed in a situation that endangers his/her life or physical or mental health;
- (b) Cruelly confined or cruelly punished;
- (c) Deprived of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care;
- (d) Left unattended in a motor vehicle if such minor child is six years of age or younger;
- (e) Sexually abused; or
- (f) Sexually exploited by allowing, encouraging, or forcing such person to solicit for or engage in prostitution, debauchery, public indecency, or obscene or pornographic photography, films, or depictions. Teachers should use the following phone numbers:

**Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline: 1-800-652-1999, Emergency Dispatch: 911, Douglas County Sheriff: 402-444-6620, Valley Police: 402-359-2151 (X310), Waterloo Police: 402-779-4104.**

Staff members should immediately notify the building Principal when they make a report.

### **Section 11: Emergency Procedures**

1. **Incident Procedures** School safety is everyone’s responsibility. Emergency procedures can be found in the [District Emergency Operations Plan \(EOP\)](#). The school will follow the [Standard Response Protocol](#) for all emergencies. During all emergencies, teachers should remain with students and supervise them to maintain safety and order. Follow all directions provided by building and district administration exactly. Teachers should always maintain accurate records of student attendance and report any missing students as soon as possible. All staff should know where their evacuation site is for all types of emergencies, and teachers should always take their crisis bags with them if directed to evacuate the classroom.
2. **Inclement Weather** The Superintendent is authorized to cancel school in the case of severe weather. This decision to close school will be communicated to the appropriate media sources, as well as to the staff through the “alert now” system.

## **Article 5 – PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

### **Section 1 Professional Ethics Standards: [Board Policy 4190](#)**

The School District expects its certificated employees to adhere to the professional ethics standards established by the Nebraska Department of Education as such standards may be modified from time to time. The professional ethics standards which certificated employees are expected to adhere include those set forth below. References to “educator” shall include all certificated employees of the District.

## **Preamble**

The educator shall believe in the worth and dignity of human beings. Recognizing the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, the devotion to excellence and the nurture of democratic citizenship, the educator shall regard as essential to these goals the protection of the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator shall accept the responsibility to practice the profession to these ethical standards.

The educator shall recognize the magnitude of the responsibility he or she has accepted in choosing a career in education, and engages, individually and collectively with other educators, to judge his or her colleagues, and to be judged by them, in accordance with the provisions of this code of ethics.

The standards listed in this section are held to be generally accepted minimal standards for public school certificate holders in the State of Nebraska and for all educators, including administrators, with respect to ethical and professional conduct.

## **Principle I - Commitment as a Professional Educator:**

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

In fulfillment of the educator's contractual and professional responsibilities, the educator:

- A. Shall not interfere with the exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities of students, colleagues, parents, school patrons, or school board members.
- B. Shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religion, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, sexual orientation or gender identity, or other protected status in its programs and activities.
- C. Shall not use coercive means, or promise or provide special treatment to students, colleagues, school patrons, or school board members to influence professional decisions.
- D. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact for which the educator is responsible.
- E. Shall not exploit professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, school patrons, or school board members for personal gain or private advantage.
- F. Shall not sexually harass students, parents or school patrons, employees, or board members.
- G. Shall not have had revoked for cause in another state a teaching certificate, administrative certificate, or any certificate enabling a person to engage in any of the activities for which a special services counseling certificate is issued in Nebraska.
- H. Shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation in the performance of professional duties.
- I. Shall report to the Superintendent any known violation of paragraphs G, E, or B above.

- J. Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported a violation of this rule.

**Principle II - Commitment to the Student:**

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

In fulfillment of the obligation to the student, the educator:

- A. Shall permit the student to pursue reasonable independent scholastic effort and shall permit the student access to varying points of view.
- B. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter for which the educator is responsible.
- C. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions which interfere with the learning process or are harmful to health or safety.
- D. Shall conduct professional educational activities in accordance with sound educational practices that are in the best interest of the student.
- E. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes, or is required by law.
- F. Shall not tutor for remuneration students assigned to his or her classes unless approved by the Board of Education.
- G. Shall not discipline students using corporal punishment.

**Principle III - Commitment to the Public:**

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

In fulfillment of the obligation to the public, the educator:

- A. Shall not misrepresent an institution with which the educator is affiliated and shall take added precautions to distinguish between the educator's personal and institutional views.
- B. Shall not use institutional privileges for private gain or to promote political candidates, political issues, or partisan political activities.
- C. Shall neither offer nor accept gifts or favors that will impair professional judgment.
- D. Shall support the principle of due process and protect the political, citizenship, and natural rights of all individuals.
- E. Shall not commit any act of moral turpitude, nor commit any felony under the laws of the United States or any state or territory.
- F. Shall, with reasonable diligence, attend to the duties of his or her professional position.

**Principle IV - Commitment to the Profession:**

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

In fulfillment of the obligation to the profession, the educator:

- A. Shall provide upon the request of an aggrieved party, a written statement of specific reasons for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.
- B. Shall not misrepresent his or her professional qualifications, nor those of colleagues.
- C. Shall practice the profession only with proper certification and shall actively oppose the practice of the profession by persons known to be unqualified.

**Principle V - Commitment to Professional Employment Practices:**

The educator shall regard the employment agreement as a pledge to be executed both in spirit and in fact. The educator shall believe that sound personnel relationships with governing boards are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect.

In fulfillment of the obligation to professional employment practices, the educator:

- A. Shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or responsibility on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.
- B. Shall not knowingly withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or employer or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
- C. Shall give prompt notice to the employer of any change in availability of service.
- D. Shall conduct professional business through designated procedures, when available, that have been approved by the employing agency.
- E. Shall not assign unqualified personnel, tasks for which an educator is responsible.
- F. Shall permit no commercial or personal exploitation of his or her professional position.
- G. Shall use time on duty and leave time for the purpose for which intended.

**Section 2 Evaluations**

Evaluations of teachers will be conducted in accordance with the District’s evaluation policy. Supervisors reserve the right to observe, appraise or evaluate teachers more frequently than required by policy on an as-needed basis. Teachers are expected to participate constructively and positively in the evaluation process and to accept and implement constructive suggestions and improvement strategies developed by the administration. See [Board Policy 4150](#).

**Section 3 Role Model**

At all times, teachers serve as role models for students and their actions and conduct reflect on the school as a whole. Teachers are in all respects to conduct themselves in a professional manner.

A. Notification of Arrest: [Board Policy 4023](#)

Teachers must notify Superintendent by the next business day after:

1. Arrest or Criminal Charges. The teacher is arrested, ticketed, or issued a criminal charge where:
  - a. The maximum penalty for the crime equals or exceeds six months incarceration.
  - b. The crime relates to abuse, neglect or endangerment of a minor, a minor was allegedly a victim or a witness, or the crime involves alleged sexual misconduct.
  - c. Conviction would impact performance of teacher's job responsibilities, including offenses that:
    - i. Would impact the responsibility to be a role model for students or relations with other employees of DC West Community Schools;
    - ii. Would impact the teacher's ability to operate a motor vehicle if the teacher at times needs to travel during duty time or the teacher at times drives students; or
    - iii. Would impact the teacher's Commercial Drivers License if the teacher's job requires that the employee have a CDL.
  - d. The arrest or the alleged criminal activity occurred while the teacher was on duty, on property of DC West Community Schools, or in a school owned or utilized vehicle, or at a school-supervised activity or school-sponsored function.

Teachers must also promptly report to the Superintendent whenever the teacher has been sentenced to be incarcerated for any period, even if the offense is not otherwise reportable.

2. Certificate or License. The teacher becomes aware that a complaint has been filed against the teacher that could affect a certificate or license required for the teacher's position. This includes proceedings of the Nebraska Department of Education related to an alleged violation of the NDE Standards of Conduct and Ethics, Chapter 27, and proceedings of the Health and Human Services related to an alleged violation of the professional standards of conduct for the teacher's position.
3. Child Abuse. The teacher becomes aware that a report of child abuse or neglect has been made against the teacher under the Child Protection Act.

Further, teachers must give full disclosure of any Child Protection Act investigation that resulted in an "inconclusive" determination that occurred at any time. Teachers must disclose such findings within ten days following the Teacher's notice of such determination.

Teachers must give full disclosure of the existence and nature of the above proceedings and must also promptly notify Superintendent of the disposition of the proceedings.

Legal documents relating to the proceedings shall be treated and maintained as part of the teacher's confidential criminal background file.

Failure to notify as required under this section may subject the teacher to disciplinary action, including termination.

#### B. Civility

Each teacher shall behave with civility, fairness, and respect in dealing with fellow employees, students, parents, patrons, visitors, and anyone else having business with DC West Community Schools. Uncivil behaviors are prohibited. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination for engaging in uncivil behaviors.

Uncivil behaviors are any behaviors that are physically or verbally threatening, either overtly or implicitly, as well as behaviors that are coercive, intimidating, unprofessional, violent, or harassing. Such interactions are prohibited in all forms of communication, including telephone conversations, voice mail messages, face-to-face conversations, written communications, social media communications and email messages.

Any teacher aware of another teacher's uncivil behavior shall report the conduct to the teacher's immediate supervisor or to the Superintendent. There will be no retaliation against the person for making the report.

#### C. Tobacco

The use of tobacco products is prohibited on school grounds.

"Tobacco products" means any tobacco product (including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, and chewing tobacco), vapor products (such as e-cigarettes), electronic nicotine delivery systems, alternative nicotine products, tobacco product look-alikes, and products intended to replicate tobacco products either by appearance or effect. This does not preclude adults from wearing non-visible nicotine patches, or using nicotine gum without displaying the product container, as part of a smoking cessation program.

### **Section 4 Relationships**

It is important for teachers to maintain an effective working relationship with the administration and all co-workers, including other teachers and support staff. Teachers must maintain appropriate relationships with students and the community, including parents and patrons. Appropriate relationships are established by extending social courtesies, following through on commitments and promises, complying with administrative directives and Board policies, being prompt and responsive to questions and concerns, being honest and consistent, and not intruding into personal matters outside the scope of duties or gossiping or spreading rumors about others.

Professional Boundaries Between Employees and Students: [Board Policy 4025](#)

All teachers are expected to observe and maintain professional boundaries between themselves

and students. A violation of professional boundaries will be regarded as a form of misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

The following non-exclusive list of actions will be regarded as a violation of the professional boundaries that teachers are expected to maintain with a student:

Using e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or social networking sites to discuss with

- a student matter that does not pertain to school-related activities, such as the student's homework, class activity, school sport or club, or other school-sponsored activity. Electronic communications with students are to be sent simultaneously to multiple recipients, not to just one student, except where the communication is clearly school-related and inappropriate for persons other than the individual student to receive (for example, e-mailing a message about a student's grades).
- Engaging in social-networking friendships or communications with a student on social networking sites. Material that employees post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community must reflect the professional image applicable to the employee's position and not impair the employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents or impair the employee's ability to serve as a role model for children. Employees shall not friend, communicate with, or follow students on any social networking site.
- Engaging in sexual activity, a romantic relationship, or dating a student or a former student within one year of the student graduating or otherwise leaving the District.
- Making any sexual advance - verbal, written, or physical - towards a student.
- Showing sexually inappropriate materials or objects to a student.
- Discussing with a student sexual topic that are not related to a specific curriculum.
- Telling sexual jokes to a student.
- Invading a student's physical privacy (e.g., walking in on the student in a restroom).
- Hugging or other physical contact with a student that is initiated by the employee when the student does not seek or want this attention.
- Being overly "touchy" with a specific student.
- Allowing a specific student to get away with misconduct that is not tolerated from other students, except as appropriate for students with an IEP or 504 Plan.
- Discussing with the student the employee's problems that would normally be discussed with adults (e.g., marital problems).

- Giving a student a ride in the employee's personal vehicle without express permission of the student's parent or school administrator unless another adult is in the vehicle.
- Taking a student on an outing without obtaining prior express permission of the student's parent or school administrator.
- Inviting a student to the employee's home without prior express permission of the student's parent and school administrator.
- Going to the student's home when the student's parent or a proper chaperone is not present.
- Giving gifts of a personal nature to a specific student.
- Discussing alcohol, tobacco, or other illicit drugs in a non-instructional setting, such as describing a party that the employee attended.
- Discussing another student's or employee's personal matters when it is not appropriate outside of the instructional setting.
- "Grooming," which includes building trust with a student and individuals close to the student in an effort to gain access to and time alone with the student, with the ultimate goal of engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration with the student, regardless of when in the student's life the sexual contact or sexual penetration would take place.

Appropriate exceptions are permitted to the foregoing for legitimate health or educational purposes and for reasons of family relationships between employees and their children who are students in the District. A teacher seeking an exception must receive advance approval from his or her Principal. If a teacher is unable to communicate with their Principal in advance (such as in the event of an emergency), the teacher must notify the Principal as soon as possible, but not later than 24 hours immediately following the event.

A teacher who violates this policy may face discipline, up to and including termination of employment, and may be referred to the appropriate certification or credentialing agencies for further discipline. A violation of this policy will result in referral to the Department of Health and Human Services, law enforcement, or both.

### **Section 5 Professional Attire**

It is important for teachers to project a professional image to students, parents, co-workers, and patrons. Appropriate attire and grooming are one of the means of projecting a professional image. Teachers are expected to maintain professional attire and grooming when on duty. As professionals, teachers are expected to be aware of the standard to be maintained. As a minimal guide, teachers should not wear clothing which students would not be permitted to wear at school. The administration may establish more detailed guidelines for individual teachers should that be necessary.



## **Section 6 Private Tutoring: [Board Policy 4131](#)**

Teachers are encouraged to provide individual assistance to students as a part of their duties. Teachers who engage in private tutoring for pay (compensation of any kind from a source other than the District) are subject to the following rules:

1. The teacher may not arrange to provide private tutoring for any child enrolled in the teacher's class.
2. The teacher is not to provide private tutoring in a school building.
3. The teacher is not to provide private tutoring during duty time.
4. The teacher is not to advertise or promote the teacher's private tutoring services in the school or in the school's communications systems except with the express permission of the Superintendent or designee.

## **Section 7 Outside Employment**

Teachers shall not perform duties unrelated to District employment during duty hours without the prior permission of the Superintendent. In addition, teachers shall not engage in employment which conflicts with their school duties. Teachers are not required to notify the District of outside employment except: (1) teachers who are also employed by another Nebraska school district to comply with Nebraska State Retirement System regulations and (2) teachers who have a work-related injury in order to comply with workers' compensation requirements.

## **Section 8 Safe Transportation**

When driving a school vehicle or transporting students, teachers are to abide by all rules of the road and any applicable rules of the Nebraska Department of Education and the District relating to driving a motor vehicle. Seat belts and child restraint systems must be utilized by all occupants.

When transporting students, teachers are not to use cell phones or otherwise engage in distractions. This rule applies to the driver regardless of whether the vehicle is in motion. The only exception is in the case of emergencies.

## **Article 6 – ACADEMIC MATTERS**

### **Section 1 Teaching to Student Understanding to Assure Learning**

Each teacher is responsible for teaching in a manner to meet the mission of the District and to assure student understanding and learning of the principles and concepts to be presented to students within the curriculum adopted by the District. Teachers will model classroom instruction on the educational model implemented by the District and reflected in the teacher evaluation instrument adopted by the Board of Education. Teachers are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the instructional model and the principles of instruction set forth in the evaluation instrument.

Special Populations: State and federal laws and regulations have been enacted which require that students with certain needs be provided instruction and services consistent with those special needs. Examples include students who have been determined eligible to receive special

education services, students with other disabilities entitled to Section 504 Accommodations, and students who are English learners. The District's policy is to comply with the state and federal laws and regulations in all respects. Teachers who are assigned special education, 504, or EL students are required to provide instruction and services consistent with legal requirements and the requirements of Board policy and regulation. Teachers should attend any individualized meeting involving students with whom they work. This provides teachers an opportunity to share important information about the student, an opportunity to help develop a plan for the student, and an opportunity to know what is expected of all teachers working with individual students on specific instructional or behavioral plans.

Homeless Students: [Board Policy 5418](#) The District shall ensure that homeless children and youths shall have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths

Field Trips: [Board Policy 6270](#) Field trips shall be considered as instruction and planned as such with definite objectives determined in advance. Teachers or other certified personnel shall accompany pupils on all field trips and shall assume responsibility for their proper conduct. When a field trip is made to a place of business or industry, the teacher shall insist that an employee of the host company serve as conductor. Appropriate education experience and proper supervision shall be supplied for any pupils whose parents do not wish them to participate in a field trip.

#### MANAGEMENT OF FUNDS

All activity funds of each school, including class funds, organization funds and other funds into which any monies have been deposited in the name of the school, shall be accounted for by a system of receipts and disbursement authorizations. The principal is responsible for all such funds.

A system of accounting shall be prescribed by the Superintendent who shall provide for a system of internal audits for each school's account. A report showing receipts and expenditures shall be submitted annually to the Board of Education through the Superintendent.

#### MONIES IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Monies collected by District employees and by student treasurers shall be handled with good and prudent business procedures.

All monies must be deposited in the school office daily. All monies collected shall be receipted, accounted for, and directed without delay to the Board designated depository. Any District funds kept by an employee overnight are in violation of District expectations and are the sole liability of the employee.

### **Section 2      Measuring and Reporting Academic Achievement**

Grades and Grading. Measuring and accurately reporting the level of each student's academic achievement is of critical importance to students, parents, staff, the board of education and community. To this end, each teacher shall develop a variety of assessment instruments and techniques to measure student achievement in the curriculum adopted and implemented by the

school district, record the results of such assessment, and report such results on report cards. Teachers should endeavor to measure student learning and understanding on a frequent basis during each quarter to provide an accurate evaluation of each student's academic achievement for that period.

Recording Grades. Each teacher shall record grades in the applicable electronic format. Enough grades must be recorded in the grade book to justify all quarter and semester grades for each student. Teachers must be able to support and justify the grades that each individual student earns.

#### Reconsideration of Grades/Marks

Questions raised concerning duly assigned grades should be resolved cooperatively in a conference which includes the teacher(s) involved and the Principal. In the event a grade is questioned by parents or students, the parents/guardians and/or student may be included in the conference.

Failure to resolve the issue may result in a second conference involving the Superintendent or designee and the participants in the initial conference described above. The grades designated by teachers will not be changed unilaterally by the Superintendent unless the Superintendent determines that the grade is not consistent with the requirements of law, Board policy, or the best interests of the District.

Reports to Parents. Grades and credit are assigned on a quarter or semester basis. Reports will be made available to parents at the close of each quarter during the school year.

### **Section 3 Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-Teacher conferences are a critical opportunity for teachers to dialogue with parents (or guardians) of students regarding student achievement and learning. To this end, Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled and held during the school year. Teacher attendance at Parent-Teacher conferences is mandatory. A teacher may only be excused from attendance at Parent-Teacher conferences in writing by the Superintendent and in advance.

Teachers are expected to be prepared for such conferences. Being prepared includes having completed grade books which include all student assignments, work or tests completed before the Parent-Teacher conference.

### **Section 4 Newspaper Releases**

Any information concerning school activities or events, which is to be released to the newspaper, must be approved by the building Principal. Public relations is everyone's job and it is important to let the community know about significant personal, professional, or educational achievements regarding staff or students.

### **Section Five PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parental involvement is key to student success. The district believes that parental involvement is a key factor in the education of children; that parents will be informed of the educational

practices affecting their children; and that public schools should foster and facilitate parental information about and involvement in educational practices affecting their children.

## **Section 6 OUTSIDE SPEAKERS**

Any outside speakers, who will be asked to present information in the school building, must be approved by the building Principal.

## **Article 7 – USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

### **Section 1 Drug-Free Workplace: [Board Policy 4009](#)**

The District has established the school as a drug-free workplace. The drug-free workplace for this purpose includes school grounds, school utilized vehicles, and places in which school activities are held.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, disposition, possession, or use of tobacco (including electronic nicotine delivery systems), alcohol or a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace. The possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs or alcohol, the use of glue or aerosol paint or any other chemical substance for inhalation, and being under the influence of illicit drugs, alcohol, or inhalants, is prohibited in any place on school grounds, in a school utilized vehicle or any location over which the District had control. The possession or distribution of a look-alike drug or look-alike-controlled substance is similarly prohibited. Any level of impairment from illicit drugs, alcohol, or inhalants, and the presence of any odor of illicit drugs (such as marijuana) or alcohol on a teacher in the workplace or on duty time shall be a violation of the drug-free workplace. In addition, teachers are expected to serve as role models for students and will be considered to have violated the District's expectations in the event the teacher commits a criminal drug or alcohol offense off the workplace or off duty time.

As a condition of employment teachers will abide by the District's drug-free workplace policies and notify the Superintendent of any criminal drug statute arrest, citation, or conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than 5 days after such arrest, citation, or conviction. Disciplinary sanctions up to and including termination of employment and referral for prosecution will be imposed for violations of the District's drug-free workplace policies.

### **Section 2 Weapon-Free Workplace: [Board Policy 6700](#)**

The District prohibits any person from being in possession of a weapon at a school attendance facility, on school property, at a school-supervised activity, or at a school-sponsored function. Any teacher found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Teachers shall refer to the District's Board Policies on weapons to determine what qualifies as a weapon. If a teacher remains uncertain whether an object constitutes a weapon, the teacher must consult the Superintendent in advance for a final determination.

### **Section 3 Use of District Computer Network and Internet**

Teachers have access to the District's computer network and the Internet for the enhancement and support of student instruction. It is important to remember that the equipment and the software are the property of the District.

As a condition of using the computers and the Internet, teachers agree to the following:

1. Since copyright laws protect software, teachers will not make unauthorized copies of software found on school computers by any means. Teachers will not give, lend, or sell copies of software to others unless the original software is clearly identified as shareware or in the public domain.
2. If a teacher downloads public domain programs for personal use or non-commercially redistributes a public domain program, the teacher assumes all risks regarding the determination of whether a program is in the public domain.
3. Teachers shall not access material that is obscene, child pornography or otherwise inappropriate matter for educational or work-related uses or contrary to the District's mission. Teachers are not permitted to knowingly access information that is profane, obscene, or offensive toward a group or individual based upon race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, national origin, religion, disability, age, sex, or other protected category. Further, teachers are prohibited from placing such information on the Internet.
4. Teachers will protect the privacy of other computer users' areas by not accessing their passwords without written permission. Teachers will not copy, change, read, or use another person's files. Teachers will not engage in "hacking" or otherwise attempt to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment.
5. Teachers will not disclose their passwords and account names to anyone or attempt to ascertain or use anyone else's password and account name.
6. Teachers will not attempt to log in to the system as someone other than themselves without the other person's prior permission.
7. Teachers will not use the school network or computers for financial gain or for any commercial or illegal activity.
8. The District reserves the right to inspect a teacher's school computer and computer usage at any time. Teachers have no privacy rights or expectations of privacy regarding use of the District's computers or Internet system.
9. The computer system is not a public forum. It is provided for the limited purpose of advancing the District's mission.
10. Teachers shall not use or access the Internet for any reason that would violate the request that a teacher serve as a role model for students.

Any violation of any part of this agreement or any other activity which school administrators deem inappropriate will be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **Section 4 Use of School Facilities: [Board Policy 4016](#)**

A teacher who is issued school keys or fobs shall not lose their keys or fobs and shall not allow others to have access to or to use their keys or fobs. Teachers are permitted to have access to school facilities during non-school time provided such access is for work-related purposes or has been approved in advance by the Principal.

The school district has installed a security system in the school buildings to prevent vandalism and theft and monitor who is in the building when school is not in session. The system is monitored during evening hours and weekends. Staff members needing access to the building at

a time when school is not in session should follow the building security guidelines. The school district is not responsible for any personal property teachers may bring to school. Teachers are cautioned to bring items of significant value to school. Teachers should keep their rooms locked anytime they are not in their classroom.

Use of school supplies (paper, staples, etc.), school equipment (copiers, telephones, etc.) and school postage is to be for approved school-related purposes only. Excess or surplus supplies or equipment, including items which have been placed in the trash, must not be removed for non-school use without prior approval from the Principal.

### **Section 5 Care of School Property**

Teachers are responsible for the proper care of all books, equipment, computers, supplies, and furniture supplied by the school. If an item needs maintenance or repair, report it to the Principal. If a teacher learns that a student has damaged school property or equipment, or if a teacher is responsible for damage to school property, the teacher must promptly report it to the Principal so the item may be replaced or repaired (if possible) and appropriate responsibility for the cost of replacement or repair may be determined.

### **Section 6 Video Surveillance**

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

### **Section 7 Recording of Others**

To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of student information, no person (including a teacher) is authorized to record or transmit any sound or image of any person (including themselves) without the prior consent or authorization of either (1) the person or persons being recorded or whose image or sound is being transmitted, (2) by authorized staff for purposes of child welfare (for example, to record images of injuries to students caused or believed to be caused by another person), or (3) the Principal or Principal's designee. This prohibition applies to all persons, regardless of the content or context of the image or sound; however, this provision shall not apply to District-sponsored athletic or activity events where the focus of the recording or transmission is on the student performances or activity. Nothing in this provision shall prohibit the recording of an Individualized Education Program meeting if the recording is necessary to ensure that the parent understands the IEP or the IEP process or to implement other parental rights guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

### **Section 8 Copyright and Fair Use Policy**

It is the District's policy to follow the federal copyright law. Teachers are reminded that, when using school equipment and when performing school duties, they also must follow the federal copyright laws. The federal copyright law governs the reproduction of works of authorship.

The following criteria should be followed when considering copyright and fair use:

1. The purpose and character of the use of material(s) is for nonprofit educational purposes;

2. A single copy of the following copyrighted materials may be photocopied for use in teaching:
  - a. a chapter from a book
  - b. an article from a periodical or newspaper
  - c. a short story, essay or poem
  - d. a chart, graph, diagram, drawing, cartoon or picture from a book, periodical or newspaper;
3. Multiple copies (not to exceed one copy per student) may be photocopied if the copying meets the tests of brevity and spontaneity; each copy must include a notice of copyright.

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

## **Article 8 – STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS**

### **Section 1 Notice of Nondiscrimination: [Board Policy 4003](#)**

The School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religion, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, sexual orientation or gender identity, or other protected category in admission or access to, or treatment of employment, in its programs and activities. The Coordinators listed in Section 2 have been designated to handle inquiries regarding complaints, grievance procedures or the application of these policies of nondiscrimination.

Complaint and grievance procedures are provided for by the District and set forth in the Board of Education Policy. If an employee does not feel that a complaint of nondiscrimination has been satisfactorily resolved at the school level, the employee may file a complaint with the appropriate federal or state agency. Complaints are to be filed with the regional Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights where the complaint relates to Title IX (discrimination, harassment or lack of equity based on gender), Title VI (discrimination or harassment based on race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, or national origin) or Section 504 (discrimination, harassment, or failure to accommodate a disability). Complaints are to be filed with the regional U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) if the complaint relates to Title VII (discrimination or harassment based on race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, gender, national origin, or religion), the Americans with Disabilities Act (discrimination, harassment or failure to accommodate a disability), or the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (discrimination based on age). The contact information for the OCR and the EEOC in this regard are:

Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (OCR)  
One Petticoat Lane  
1010 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 320  
Kansas City, Missouri 64106  
(816) 268-0550; Fax (816) 268-0599, (800) 877-8339 (telecommunications device for the

deaf), or [ocr.kansascity@ed.gov](mailto:ocr.kansascity@ed.gov).

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)  
Gateway Tower II  
400 State Avenue, Suite 905  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
(800) 669-4000; TTY: (800) 669-6820; Fax (913) 551-6957

## **Section 2 Designation of Coordinators**

Any person having inquiries concerning the District's compliance with anti-discrimination laws or policies or other programs should contact or notify the following person(s) who are designated as the coordinator for such laws, policies, or programs. The contact address for the coordinator is: Dr. Melissa Poloncic, Superintendent, 401 South Pine Street, PO Box 378, Valley, NE 68064, 402-359-2583, [mpoloncic@dcwest.org](mailto:mpoloncic@dcwest.org).

Law, Policy, or Program	Issue or Concern	Coordinator
Title VI	Discrimination or harassment based on race (including skin color, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, or national origin; harassment	Dr. Melissa Poloncic, Superintendent
Title IX	Discrimination or harassment based on sex; gender equity	Dr. Dawn Marten, Director of Learning
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)	Discrimination, harassment, or reasonable accommodations of persons with disabilities	Nicki Pechous, Director of Special Education
Homeless student laws	Children who are homeless	Dr. Melissa Poloncic, Superintendent
Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities	Safe and drug free schools	Dr. Melissa Poloncic, Superintendent

## **Section 3 Confidentiality of Student Records (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives parents and family members and students over 18 years of age rights of access and confidentiality with respect to education records. Employees are expected to provide access rights and maintain the confidentiality of education records in accordance with FERPA and Board policy. Further information about FERPA and the District's policies under FERPA are found in Board policy and in the student handbook.



**RECEIPT OF 2024-2025 TEACHER HANDBOOK  
OF DC West Community SCHOOLS**

This signed receipt acknowledges receipt of the 2024-2025 Teacher Handbook. This receipt acknowledges that it is understood that I will read and be familiar with the handbook, I will familiarize myself with Board Policies, and that I understand that the District's policies include specific complaint and grievance procedures that must be used for reporting harassment or discrimination.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher's Signature