

TEACHER ASSISTANT HANDBOOK 2022-23



Park Hill School District

Building Successful Futures • Each Student • Every Day

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Welcome!

This handbook is meant to be used as a tool to help establish a positive climate for learning to take place. It is not all inclusive, but is an excellent resource for Teacher Assistants as they seek to provide the best support to the students and educational staff in Park Hill School District.

The success of the Teacher Assistant can only be gauged on the success of the student and therefore, should be the guiding principle for all Park Hill Teacher Assistants.

Introduction

A Teacher Assistant is one who is assigned to assist and support a teacher but who does not assume the primary responsibility for the classroom. This person possesses a commitment to the betterment of education and a desire to work with and understand student needs.

The Teacher Assistant makes it possible for the teacher to be more effective and to utilize his/her ability and professional knowledge. It is the teacher's responsibility to assure that the students are moving toward achievement of their individual goals and objectives. Teacher Assistants serve under the direction and supervision of the teacher to assist in carrying out those goals and objectives.

This handbook is based on the belief that there is a basic body of knowledge that needs to be shared and acquired if the Teacher Assistant is to be effective in providing services to students. It is also based on the belief that the Teacher Assistant should be viewed as a team member and who along with the teacher provide the best possible learning environment for their students.

Myths About Teacher Assistants

- The Teacher Assistant will see that all needs of students are met.
- The Teacher Assistant is initially fully trained for his or her class and/or student assignments.
- The Teacher Assistant receives all his or her instructions from the teacher.
- The Teacher Assistant cannot be a part of student planning.
- The daily tasks of the Teacher Assistant are planned in advance and will always follow that plan.
- The Teacher Assistant can work only with specified students.
- The Teacher Assistant always knows what to do.

Ethical Considerations for Teacher Assistants

As an integral part of the educational team, Teacher Assistants have a commitment to maintain ethical standards of behavior in their relationships with students, parents, supervising teachers and other school personnel.

In order to protect the right of students and parents, Teacher Assistants must be aware of and practice appropriate ethical behaviors. You must always maintain confidentiality and protect and promote the rights of students to due process, dignity, privacy and respect. Teacher Assistants must also demonstrate honesty, loyalty, dependability, cooperation, accountability and a willingness to learn. The following is a suggested code of ethics for Teacher Assistants.

A Code of Ethics

Accepting Responsibilities:

- Communicate progress or concerns about students to the supervising teacher, not to parents.
- Refer concerns expressed by parents, students or others to the supervising teacher.
- Recognize the teacher has the ultimate responsibility for instruction and management and follow the prescribed directions.
- Help to see the best interests of individual students are met.
- Recognize that you represent the district in all your interactions, both within and outside the district work hours or locations.
- Be on time to work and demonstrate reliable attendance because students are counting on you for your help.

Relationships with Students and Parents:

- Discuss a child's progress, limitations and/or educational program only with the teacher in the appropriate setting.
- Express differences of opinion with the teacher only when students are absent from the room.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel.
- Respect the dignity, privacy and individuality of all students, parents and staff members.
- Serve as a positive role model for students in personal interactions and communications.

Relationship with the Teacher:

- Recognize the teacher as your functional, day-to-day supervisor.
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher.
- Recognize that the supervising teacher has the ultimate responsibility for the instruction and behavior management of children and follow the directions prescribed by him/her.
- Discuss concerns about the teacher or teaching methods directly with the teacher.
- When problems cannot be resolved, speak with the building administrator.

What to Expect as a Teacher Assistant

What Could or Will Happen:

- Be left alone in the classroom when the teacher needs to step out.
- Work with individuals or groups of students on concepts that have been introduced by the teacher.
- Have specific instructional and management responsibility for students.
- Be involved in meetings related to student educational needs.
- Be used to support the integration of students into regular classes.
- Be assigned record-keeping or data collection tasks relevant to student goals and objectives.
- Aid the teacher in supervising activities outside of the classroom.
- Communicate with the teacher about student progress or discipline issues.
- Be used as a substitute teacher when the teacher is not available since all TAs have a Substitute Certificate.

What Shouldn't Happen:

- Use a personal cell phone when responsible for supervising or assisting students.
- Work "off the clock."
- Communicate directly with parents about student progress instead of the teacher.
- Change lesson plans or learning objectives without the knowledge or approval of the teacher.
- Change or disrupt the daily schedule of students without the knowledge of the teacher.

Mandt Training

Specialized Teacher Assistants and Behavior Support Assistants roles are expected to obtain and maintain Mandt training. Specialized Teacher Assistants and Behavior Support Assistants are paid at a higher rate of pay due to the increased level of care needed for our students. The specific training offered through the Mandt system is valuable for maintaining a productive learning environment as well as keeping students and yourself safe. Mandt training is offered at no cost by trainers located at Park Hill School District, and staff are paid to attend.

Roles and Responsibilities

While the role of the Teacher Assistant is multifaceted, the Teacher Assistant's primary focus always should be to provide better learning opportunities for students with disabilities. Depending upon the level of the student's ability, the student's age and the type of classroom the student is assigned; the role of the Teacher Assistant will vary. Below are examples of instructional, organizational, behavior, and general support that Teacher Assistants are frequently asked to provide.

Examples of Instructional Support

- Reinforce and review concepts and skills. Assist students in activities initiated by the supervising teacher.
- Carry out the instructional program as planned by the supervising teacher.
- Modify written materials as needed to meet students' needs.

- Monitor and check student work.
- Assist students with self-help skills (grooming, toileting etc.)
- Assist with testing modifications.
- Assist a small group of students or an individual student in a particular task planned and assigned by the teacher.
- Assist students in writing dictated stories.
- Assist with computer-assisted instruction.
- Assist students in the general education settings (specials, library, cafeteria, classroom, recess, etc.)
- Assist with social skills instruction and generalization of these skills.
- Work with students in their mainstream regular education classes.
- Reinforce student's goals and objectives.
- Assist with lifting and positioning students.
- Accommodate for individual students learning needs.
- Follow daily work schedule.

Examples of Organizational Support

- Meet students upon arrival.
- Help students load and unload bus.
- Assist with lunch and/or recess.
- Assist students in their environmental setting with the restroom, library etc.
- Accompany students to physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech etc.
- Help prepare students for dismissal.
- Get materials ready for activities.
- Help prepare and clean up after classroom activities.
- Collect completed work.
- Prepare and arrange room for the teacher.
- Make visual aids.
- Organize supplies in the classroom.

Examples of Behavior Support

- Observe and chart behavior.
- Give positive reinforcement and support.
- Provide close supervision for students with behavior problems.
- Circulate in classroom to provide support where needed.
- Enforce class and school rules.
- Assist students with organizational skills.
- Motivate students.
- Help students develop to become independent learners.
- Assist in implementing the behavior plan as set up by the supervising teacher according to the IEP.
- Assist with data keeping and recording.
- Supervise safe spot.

Examples of General Support

- Sort and file student papers.

- Help with the preparation of educational materials.
- Assist with assemblies.
- Assist on field trips/Community Based Instruction trips.
- Provide safe school environment for students.
- Assist student with mobility needs. (May involve lifting, toileting, etc.)

Interpersonal Relations

Communicate with your supervising teacher. Discuss expectations and work habits from the beginning. The goal is for the Teacher Assistant and the supervising teacher to work as partners, sharing responsibilities to ensure all students have a successful experience.

Accept supervision. Be flexible and cooperate with change. Understand that the schedule will and can be changed to meet the needs of the students. Treat all persons with respect and maintain positive interpersonal relationships.

If for any reason you cannot resolve difficulties with your supervising teacher or other staff members, it is important to follow the chain of command and to follow the grievance procedures outlined by the school district.

Work Hours and Travel

Teacher Assistants are typically hired for seven (7) hours per day with a 30-minute unpaid lunch. This establishes a 7 ½ hour day. Teacher Assistants should report to work 15 minutes before the start of the school day and stay for 15 minutes after the end of the school day. Work schedules can be adjusted by building principals to best suit the needs of the building and students.

Upon reporting to work, Teacher Assistants will time in/out using the UKG/Kronos system.

The school year calendar consists of 179 student days. Teacher Assistants report for work additional days prior to the beginning of the year or on an additional day for professional development. Teacher Assistants may also apply to work summer school. The teacher's calendar consists of 188 workdays. There are nine (9) assigned days for teachers that Teacher Assistants do not work.

Teacher Assistants who are assigned to travel among schools should submit a request for reimbursement for travel on the 1st of each month. All Teacher Assistants are paid twice per month on the 15th and end of the month.

Throughout the year, Teacher Assistants may be asked to attend IEP meetings, faculty meetings or training sessions. In these cases, report extra time by timing in/out through the UKG/Kronos system.

Reporting Your Absence

Personal time off should be requested at least 24 hours in advance through WILLSUB© and submitted to your supervisor for approval. Personal business days are granted if student and building needs are covered. For other absences, such as sick leave, a time off request should be submitted through

WILLSUB©. In some instances, such a bereavement/funeral leave, documentation may be required. Please review the Support Staff document for Compensation & Fringe Benefits for specific information related to leave.

Scheduling Substitutes

If you are unable to work you must access our automated system (willSub©) to report your absence and, if applicable request a substitute. willSub© may be accessed by phone or online. Only sick leave and personal business may be entered via the phone.

Your building administrator or classroom teacher may also request that you notify them of your absences. Check with your administrator for direction.

- Enter your absence in willSub© as soon as possible. Leave may be entered weeks in advance. Only urgent or unexpected matters should be left until the last minute. Jury duty may be an exception; please wait until you have verification that you are required to report. Staff should return to their building once released from jury selection or duty.
- You may create a preferred list of substitutes for priority calling or prearrange a substitute for your absence.
- If leave is exhausted or not accessible, please contact your building office or Human Resources for assistance.
- Leave accruals and balances may be viewed in willSub© under the Reports tab.

Absence are recommended to be taken as a full or half day and should be entered in 15-minute increments.

willSub® Quick Reference Guide



Employee Quick Reference

877-WILLSUB (877-945-5782)

www.willsub.com

Activating your willSub® Account

Visit www.willsub.com, and enter the 7-digit User ID and 4-digit PIN you were provided. Review the Information tab: name, subject, email, etc. Click 'Update', and your account is activated.

After your account is activated, changes or additional job information can be entered under the 'Information' menu and 'My Information'.

How to Call in an Absence Request

1. Dial **1-877-945-5782 (1-877-WILLSUB)**.
2. Enter your User ID and #.
3. Enter your PIN and #
4. Select your request type - Sick 01 or Personal Business 04
5. Select your request options:
 - a. Full next day
 - i. Press 1 to accept
 - ii. Press 2 to accept without a sub
 - iii. Press 3 to reschedule.
 - b. Partial next day
 - i. Press 1 for arriving late
 - ii. Press 2 for departing early
 - iii. Enter in 24-hour format (i.e. 1430=2:30pm)
 - iv. Press 1 to accept, 2 to accept without a sub or 3 to reschedule.
 - c. All other dates
 - i. Enter start date (MMDDYY)
 - ii. Enter number of days
 - iii. Enter full or partial day
 - iv. Press 1 to accept, 2 to accept without a sub or 3 to reschedule.
6. Cancellation
7. Press 9 - Record Voice Prompt (Name, Grade level or Subject)

Leave Codes

WillSub serves dual roles as a substitute management system and tracking employee leave.

Click on the **Home tab** for a quick dashboard of your absences.

Click on the **Reports Tab** to view your leave usage and balances for the year.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Academic Meetings* | Administrator Initiated* |
| 2. Bereavement | Competition/Field Trip |
| 3. Court Leave* | Emergency leave |
| 4. Family Sick Leave | Perfect Attendance |
| 5. Personal Business | Sick |

*Leave codes will have drop down menus for more specific reason codes, such as Curriculum or TIP.

Highlighted codes will require additional information when entering an absence.

How to Enter an Absence Request Online

Requests for days off can be entered in two ways:

1. Regular—when you need willSub® to look for a sub.
2. Prearranged—you and the sub have already agreed upon a date they will work.

To enter a Regular request:

1. Go to 'Requests', 'New' and choose 'Regular Request'.
2. Complete the required information.
3. Click the 'Finish' button.

To enter a Prearranged request:

1. Go to 'Requests', 'New' and 'Prearranged'.
2. Select the date, the sub you have already spoken with, and complete the required information.
3. Click the 'Finish' button.

Choosing Preferred Subs

You may add and delete subs from your preferred list whenever you would like. These subs will have first priority to your requests; if these subs are already working, the system will then start contacting subs from the general available list.

By choosing My Preferred Subs, you will create a list of subs you wish for willSub to contact first.

1. Go to the 'Information' menu.
2. Choose 'My Preferred Subs'.
3. Highlight the desired subs to add or exclude from the list and click the button below.