

# Ascension Head Start

2024-2025



## PERSONNEL HANDBOOK



# GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

## 1. Confidentiality

- Confidentiality must always be kept. Employees will never discuss a student with anyone other than the child's parent or guardian.
- Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, or other family members do not have a legal right to information about students.
- Discussing a student with another teacher should only be done to share information when it is in the best interest of the child.
- Breaches of confidentiality will be dealt with in a serious manner.
- Substitute teachers should not be left with access to your student records.
- Substitutes are not allowed to contact parents.

## 2. Idle Talk / Gossip

- Staff must always display professional attitudes. No employee should discuss another employee, parent, or students' performance or capabilities at any time. This includes at school and away from school.

## 3. Meetings

- All employees are expected to actively participate in all staff meetings and professional development opportunities at the school and district level. Therefore, checking emails, writing lesson plans, cutting things out, etc. should not occur during meetings. Doing so is very disrespectful to the presenters and distracting to your peer teachers.
- Teachers must dress professionally when attending district level meetings.

## 4. Cell Phones

- Cell phone usage during instructional time is not allowed, as it negatively impacts the learning environment.
- Cell phones should be placed on silent or turned off once you arrive at school. Employees should not make or receive phone calls or other electronic messages during the school day. The only exception to this is phone calls made to the front office, administrator, or a Head Start Leadership Team member during crisis situations.
- Staff should never be seen talking on their phones regarding personal business while students are present or when walking down hallways.
- Social texting and use of social media are prohibited at all times.
- Headphones/ear buds of any type are not permitted at any time.

## 5. Eating and Drinking

- Drinks or foods outside of meal time are considered personal items. According to licensing, personal items must be kept in a location inaccessible to children.
- Hot liquids are not permitted in the presence of children at any time.

## 6. E-Mail

- All employees are given an email account and must check their email at least twice a day. Important communication from the central office and the school is sent via email.
- Employees may check their email at home.

## 7. Monthly School Calendars

- School calendars are sent home monthly and include the lunch menu, early dismissal dates, school events, and other important information. It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that each student receives a copy. If a student is absent when the calendars are sent home, be sure they receive one upon their return.

## 8. Parent/Teacher Conferences

- All communication between the school and the parents should come from the teacher, not the paraprofessional, substitute or classroom volunteer.
- A record of all conferences must be kept and entered in ChildPlus.
- Conferences are based on facts, not opinions.
- Teachers are encouraged to communicate and conference with parents on a regular basis, and not just on scheduled conference days.
- On Conference Day, sign in sheets for parents are to be used and sent to the office at the end of the day.

## 9. Weekly Newsletters

- Teachers are required to send home a newsletter each week informing parents of the skills and concepts that will be addressed that week.
- Newsletters should also include important information about school/class activities.
- Parents must have access to a paper copy of the newsletter.

## 10. Daily Schedules

All teachers must display their most current daily schedule outside their classroom. Schedule changes can only be made with approval from the Principal.

# STUDENT/EMPLOYEE SAFETY & SECURITY

## 1. Supervision

- Teachers and paraprofessionals are responsible for the safety and security of all students. Students must always be supervised! Teachers and paraprofessionals must engage in active supervision of students. Teachers and paraprofessionals will not leave students unattended at any time and will not leave students in charge of supervising other students.
- Teachers are responsible for leaving specific instructions for substitutes in cases of emergency. This should include an updated student list.

## 2. Dangerous / Valuable Items

- Teachers and paraprofessionals are responsible for keeping dangerous or valuable items out of the reach of students including purses, money, medication, cell phones, etc.
- Licensing requires these items to be in an area inaccessible to children.

## 3. Security

- All staff are responsible for the safety and security of the campus.
- All doors and gates should be locked at all times, including during arrival and dismissal times.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals are responsible for making sure that their classroom doors are always locked.
- Windows on the doors should be covered.
- When leaving for the day, it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that the room and building is secured (LOCKED) before departing. The last teacher to leave the school building in the afternoon should make sure that the exterior doors are closed and locked, not left propped open or unlocked.
- Staff members are responsible for notifying the office of anyone on campus without an Ascension Parish ID badge or visitor tag.
- All visitors will sign in at the office following licensing procedures and utilize the Raptor system as a security measure. This system will identify any child predators who may be attempting to enter our school.

## 4. Working After Hours

- To ensure the safety of our staff, teachers are discouraged from being on campus alone after dark.
- For their safety, employees are asked to keep their doors locked when working in their classrooms after hours.

- Buildings are inaccessible with ID badges after 6:00 pm.

## 5. Classroom Visitors

- Any visitor that comes to your classroom, playground, or other area without a visitor's tag must be directed to the office.
- Parents or other visitors are not allowed to interrupt classroom instruction to deliver forgotten items, conference with the teacher, etc. during the school day.
- Parents or other visitors may not take video or audio tapes of your instruction or conferences.

## 6. Release of Student Information

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): Parents and guardians have the right to view or receive copies of student's records. This includes a parent with whom the child does not reside but who has joint custody or is a biological parent.
- Records may also be disclosed to school officials with legitimate educational interests. This includes, but is not limited to, health, medical staff, law enforcement personnel, persons serving on the School Board and persons contracted to perform a special task such as an attorney or therapist.

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- The Crisis Management team will meet monthly.
- #1 goal: In the event of a crisis, make logical decisions which will keep you and your students as safe as possible. Safety trumps all plans and policies if you can keep your children safe.
- We teach our students: In case there is a crisis at our school, #1 Run to the nearest teacher, #2 Do what the teacher says, and #3 Stay quiet and become invisible.
- Know the procedures on the "Teacher/Staff Crisis Checklist" and "Know the Drill" signs.
- "Know the Drill" must be posted for reference in your classroom. Teacher Checklist, along with other required parish documents, current class roster and parent contact information, must be in your orange folder located by your door.
- All visitors must enter the front office doors, sign in and get a visitor's tag.
- If you see a visitor who is not wearing a visitor's pass, politely tell them to go to the office to get one. If anyone acts suspicious in ANY way or does not comply, inform the office staff/Principal immediately. Do not let them out of your sight.
- Lock your classroom door each time you exit the room. Always keep your key with you.
- "CODE BLUE" = will only be used when a person on our campus is nonresponsive and needs medical attention. CPR will be administered and 911 will be called. Clear the halls and keep them clear until you are told otherwise.
- At Ascension Head Start the words "all clear" are code words for "we are being forced to say these words and the situation is NOT CLEAR". DO NOT return to normal if you hear "all clear". Wait for an explanation in sentences from office personnel or law enforcement. For example: "This has been a drill. You may not return to your classes. This has been a drill. OR "The situation is under control at this time. It is now safe to resume normal operations." Someone will explain what next steps, etc. when a situation is over.
- Doors must be locked at all times.
- Glass panels on doors must remain uncovered.

# SCHOOL PROPERTY

## 1. Email

- All employees are given an e-mail account through the school system. Please remember that your e-mail account is the property of the school system and should not be used for inappropriate communication.

## 2. Computers

- The computers and printers located in the school are the property of the school system and are to be

used for school business and instructional purposes.

- Use of school computers and printers for personal reasons is not permitted.
- You should not be sending personal emails or shopping on the Internet during school hours. • Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, etc. are prohibited during school hours by employees, students, and children of employees.

### 3. Copy Machine

- Teachers should make every effort to have all materials copied prior to needing to use them. Use of the copy machine for personal reasons is not permitted.

### 4. Classroom Keys

- All employees must sign out your keys at the beginning of the year and sign them in at the end of the year.
- Lost keys are to be immediately reported to the Principal and a \$50.00 fee for replacing the key will be charged to the employee.
- Keys are not to be copied or given out by employees to others for any reason.

### 5. ID Badges

- Badges must be visible at all times.
- The ID badge is the property of the APSB. Please be careful and keep up with your badge to avoid having to purchase a new one. Lost badges must be reported to the Principal immediately.

All badges must be turned in before leaving for the summer.

## EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE

### 1. Signing In

- Clock-in by 8:00 a.m. daily.
- The NOVAtime clock is an official record of your attendance. This record can be subpoenaed to court, used to determine employee benefits, etc. Because of this, employees may not sign in for one another.
- Signing in is mandatory and habitual violation of the sign in policy will result in a documented conference with the Principal.

### 2. Lunch

- Staff is allowed to leave any day to pick up lunch.
- Pick up must be done quickly (no more than 15 minutes).
- No dining in a restaurant or home. Only pick up is allowed.
- This time cannot be used to run errands or handle any type of personal business. • Staff to student ratio must be maintained at all times. This may require additional coverage. • Teachers/Paras must be back on campus in time for PLCs (12:45).

### 3. Leaving Campus

- No employee may leave campus for any reason other than to get lunch between the time they sign in and dismissal time without prior administrative permission.
- Employees receiving permission to leave must sign out utilizing the NOVAtime clock, without having to be reminded to do so and must ensure the appropriate ratio is upheld in the classroom prior to departing.

### 4. Flex Time Log

- To reduce the need for employees to take a half or whole day absence to attend appointments scheduled at times that require only short absences from school, employees will receive a total of 4 one-hour passes and may take up to 60 minutes of time during the day. This will be tracked on your One Hour Pass Log on Google.
- If more than an hour is needed, you must take a half day.

- Employees will follow the procedures below:
  - Secure approval from the Principal prior to missing time from work.
  - The Principal will record it on your log.
  - Clock in/out.

## 5. Tardies

- Once you sign in you are considered to have begun your workday and should not have to park and unload your belongings after 8:00 a.m.
- If you are going to be late due to an emergency, you must notify the Principal.
- Arriving to work on time is mandatory and habitual violation of arrival time can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- 8:01 is considered tardy.
- If you are 15 minutes tardy it must be entered into NOVAtime as time absent.

# EMPLOYEE ABSENCES

## 1. Absences

- All teachers employed in the public schools of the State of Louisiana shall be entitled to and shall be allowed a minimum of ten (10) days of absence as sick leave or in case of other emergencies per school year without loss of pay. They are also entitled to two (2) days of personal leave. These two days may not be accumulated and are counted as two of the ten days sick leave.
- A teacher who is absent six (6) or more consecutive days shall be required to present a certificate from a physician certifying absence upon returning to work.
- Serious illness in the immediate family must be of such a nature as to involve an employee in the emergency. A maximum of two days continuous leave will be allowed because of illness in the immediate family. Any leave thereafter must be accounted for by a practicing physician's statement.
- Absence Procedures
  - Contact the Principal as soon as you know you will be absent.
  - Enter your absence request into NOVAtime at [time.apsb.org](http://time.apsb.org) as soon as you know you will be absent (no later than 24 hours after absence in emergency situations or extreme illness).
  - Contact your partner teacher/para to let them know you will be absent.
  - Half day absence starts at 11:45 a.m.
  - Teachers - Provide substitute with daily schedules, discipline plan, location of materials duty assignments, etc. Emergency lesson plans are non-negotiable and are to be kept in easy sight in the classroom. Be sure the paraprofessional knows where they are kept. Include in this folder all information a sub needs to keep your class flowing smoothly. Keep a class list and attendance sheet where it can be found and keep it up to date.
  - Turn in dr. excuses.
- Check your timesheet weekly for any errors. If there is an error, please print the timesheet and make the corrections on it. Place it in the Principal's box.

## 2. Types of Absences

- Professional Day:
  - Use this code only with approval from the Principal for non-Ascension professional development.
- Workshop:
  - Use this code for Ascension Parish workshops such as: Project Read, DIBELS training, DRA testing team, CPR training, SPED training, medication training, or CPI training. • Personal Leave:
    - Teachers and all other employees except bus drivers and those who receive annual leave are eligible for two days of personal leave during each school year, to be used for such purposes as may be determined by the individual. Notice must be given to the employee's immediate supervisor

at least 24 hours prior to taking such leave via email or in person. (See Form Section.)

- Personal leave may not be taken on the following days: Pre-planning days, Staff Development Days, the Last Day of School (Records Day). Personal leave on early dismissal days is discouraged.
- If leave is needed on restricted days, or if leave beyond the 2 allotted days, is needed in one school year, a written request to the principal must be made then a written request may be required to the Superintendent. Employees are reminded that personal leave beyond the two allotted days will be considered "Leave Without Pay" and will result in interruption of service, which could affect retirement benefits.

• **Bereavement:**

- Two (2) days bereavement leave shall be granted to employees in the event of the death of an immediate family member without the absence(s) being charged to either sick leave or annual leave.
- Immediate family shall be defined as spouse and children; mother and father or that of the spouse; brothers and sisters and their spouses or that of the spouse; and the employee's grandparents, spouse's grandparents, grandchildren, daughter-in-law, and son-in-law.
- You may want to use a personal day when attending funerals for Aunts, Uncles and/or cousins.
- If additional days are requested, the employee may utilize a maximum of 3 sick days if there are sick days remaining. If the employee has exhausted all sick leaves, the time will be deducted from pay.
- The principal will verify all bereavement leave requested.

• **Sick and Emergency Leave Regulations:**

- Sick Leave shall be granted in the case of personal illness of the employee. ○ However, upon initial employment, no employee shall be allowed any sick leave until s/he reports for duty and actually performs work. Such leave, when not used, shall be allowed to accumulate to the credit of the employee without limitation.
- Emergencies for sick leave purposes are defined by the School Board as: ○ Illness or death within the immediate family---husband, wife, children, mother, father, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, sister, grandparents, grandchildren (including step relations);
- Weather conditions - hurricane, tornado, snowstorm, flood, accident, when approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee;
- Court summons
- Other unusual circumstances as approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee. ○ All sick leave accumulated by a teacher or school employee, but not a bus driver, shall be vested in the teacher or employee. If a teacher or employee transfers to another public school system in Louisiana, s/he shall be credited with the number of days vested, according to Policy GBRIB.
- The School Board will pay an employee upon retirement or to the employee's heirs or assigns upon his /her death prior to retirement, for any unused sick leave, not to exceed 45 days. Such pay shall be at the daily rate of pay paid to the employee at the time of his/her retirement or death.

• **Vacation:**

- Do NOT use "Vacation" as an excuse for absence in NOVAtime. Only 12-month employees earn vacation time. If you enter vacation as your reason for absence, you will be docked by the payroll department.

## INJURIES ON THE JOB

- Notify the Principal IMMEDIATELY of injury. If you must seek emergency attention, do so, but let someone know of the injury.
- Have the secretary fill out the accident report unless it is an emergency situation; then the report may be filled out after the fact. She will fax the report to the School Board as well as call it

in. Employee accident reports are different from student accident reports.

- Upon reaching the doctor (if medical attention is sought), inform the doctor that this is workers comp. DO NOT PAY FOR ANY BILLS AND DO NOT PUT IT ON YOUR INSURANCE. The same holds true if the doctor gives you a prescription. Simply inform the pharmacist that it is workers comp. DO NOT PAY FOR ANY BILLS AND DO NOT PUT IT ON YOUR INSURANCE.
- If you seek medical attention, you must have a WRITTEN RELEASE FROM YOUR DOCTOR TO RETURN TO WORK (NO EXCEPTIONS). Should your return be with restrictions, you must obtain approval from the office of personnel before being allowed to resume work. If you are absent due to the injury that occurred, use the code for workman's compensation when calling in to the substitute management system.

## EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE

All faculty and staff serve as role models for students and have a significant influence on children's behavior and attitudes. Appropriate dress as a professional is expected. Since current fashion trends dictate our selection of clothing, everyone is required to make selections that do not take away from our focus of educating children. Extremes in fashion should be avoided. Although comfort is important, please keep in mind that children and parents will view you as a professional based upon the degree of professionalism with which you present yourself to them.

The following guidelines should be followed:

1. Tight fitting clothing that exposes your bottom, belly, bosom, or back when you move are not permitted.
2. Skirts and dresses must be an appropriate length.
3. Sleeveless tops and dresses may be worn provided they are not tank tops, spaghetti straps, scoop necks, or backless.
4. Shorts may not be worn.
5. Flip-flops are not allowed.
6. Crocs are not allowed.
7. Tennis shoes are allowed.
8. Clothing that advertises sex, drugs, alcohol, racism, promotes hatred, politics or ridicules others MAY NOT be worn to work or ANY FUNCTIONS where the employee is representing the school or school system.
9. Jeans may only be worn on Wednesdays and Fridays with a school-related shirt.
10. No leggings, joggers, jogging suits, sweatpants, or warmups may be worn. (Leggings can be worn under a dress of appropriate length.)
11. Scrubs may be worn any day. Either the full scrub set may be worn or the bottoms with a nice school shirt or polo or the top with professional pants (not colored jeans).
12. No ripped, torn, cut-out or distressed clothing may be worn at any time.
13. All employees are required to wear a picture identification tag, provided by the school, always.
14. Employees should dress in a professional manner when attending district level workshops and meetings.

Repeated violations will result in a conference documentation and further disciplinary action may be taken.

## REGISTER ME

All school based and district professional development must be registered for on Register Me in order for employees to get certification credit. It is the responsibility of the employee to register before the date of the professional development.

## TRANSPORTATION

1. Paraprofessionals serve as bus monitors and car rider monitors in the morning and afternoon.

2. Teachers may need to substitute as bus monitors when no paraprofessionals are available.
3. Teachers must record in the binder in the front office each time a student is returned to campus. Upon the third incident a conference with the Principal must be held.
4. Teachers must assure that third party forms are up to date at all times.
5. All teachers will utilize the Transportation Tracker to track how each student will go home. A current copy must be given to the secretary.

## HEALTH

### 1. Medication

- Medications will be administered to students in the front office by an authorized employee. The policies and procedures of the Louisiana Board of Nurses and the APSB will be followed. • If a student has any medication at school (pills, cough drops, ointment, eye drops, etc....), take the medicine from the child and send it to the office as quickly as possible.

### 2. Student Illness

- Attempt to keep students in the classroom unless you determine that the child is truly ill. • Escort sick students to the office.
- The parents will be called each time a student comes to the office unless the nurse or an administrator determines that it is not necessary. Therefore, it is imperative that you do not bring students to the office unnecessarily.
- DO NOT CALL the student's parents. It is important that you spend your time teaching and the office staff contacts the parents.

### 3. Bodily Fluids

- Neither teachers, paras nor students should clean up bodily fluids.
- Call the office so that the custodians, who are trained to do so, can clean the area.

## CUSTODIAL NEEDS

- Emergencies (bodily fluid clean-up, a/c or plumbing problems...) should be reported to the office immediately.
- If you have a non-emergency (repairs, replenish supplies...), complete the Maintenance Request form and put it in the Facility Manager's box outside her door.
- Utilize all trash cans in the cafeteria. If one or two cans are used, the bags become too heavy to lift. There is one can per table.
- Monitor children closely in the cafeteria in order to prevent large amounts of food on the floor causing an unsafe situation.
- Monitor children on the playground to prevent them from bringing the small rubber protective pieces on the pavilion or inside. We will have outdoor learning centers this year. This will require picking those supplies before you class goes inside.

## PARTIES

- Two days are designated for parties - the day before the Christmas holidays and the day before the Easter holidays.
- Birthday parties will not be celebrated.
- Parents may not bring class treats for their child's birthday.

## FIELD TRIPS

- Many field trips may be taken, but at least two field trips are required per year; one in the fall and one in the spring.
- The field trip form must be completed and sent to Mrs. McMahan for approval.
- The Cafeteria Manager, Facility Manager, and Mrs. Rosetta must be notified as soon as the trip is approved.
- Follow all field trip guidelines as outlined in the ECH Policy Guide.

