

# Willmar Public School's Employee Handbook



August 2024

Updated by:

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## **Letter of Introduction**

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to provide you with this handbook and hope that it will become a used and useful reference. It is intended to provide clear guidelines for day-to-day issues that arise in a school setting.

We ask you to take some time to review the contents of this document carefully, and to talk with your principal or supervisor about any areas about which you have concerns or questions. We also ask you to

take the contents of this handbook seriously – and be assured that we take it seriously as well, as we view it as an effort to define shared understandings about professional standards and conduct.

Thank you for your commitment to the children and families of our school community and we look forward to working with you throughout the coming year.

The Willmar Public Schools Administrative Team

**Note: In the event of any conflicts, language in a collective bargaining agreement or state or federal law supersedes language in this handbook.**

## **About this Handbook**

### **Employees Covered:**

This Handbook is provided as a reference document for the Willmar School District's (hereinafter referred to as "District") employees.

### **Disclaimer:**

The contents of this Handbook are presented for information purposes only. The plans, policies and procedures described are not intended to promise or guarantee specific terms or conditions of employment. The District reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate, or change any or all such plans, policies, or procedures, in whole or in part, at any time with or without notice. The language which appears in this Handbook is not intended to create, nor is it to be construed to constitute, a contract between the District and any one or all of its employees. Nor, should this handbook be interpreted to promise continued employment. Notwithstanding any provisions of this Handbook, employment may be terminated at any time, with or without cause, except as explicitly provided for in any other pertinent section of this Handbook, individual contract, or relevant collective bargaining agreement.

In case of a direct conflict between this Handbook, rules, regulations or policies of the Board and any specific provisions of an individual contract or collective bargaining agreement, the individual contract or collective bargaining agreement shall control.

This Employee Handbook is intended to provide employees with summary information regarding policies, procedures, ethics, expectations and standards of the District. It is not, however, intended to replace a reading of the actual Board Policies or and Administrative Regulations, copies of which are available to all personnel in each administrative office and on the district website at [www.willmar.k12.mn.us](http://www.willmar.k12.mn.us). It is important that each employee is aware of the policies and procedures related to his/her position. The rights and obligations of all employees are governed by all applicable laws and regulations, including, but not limited by the following: Federal laws and regulations, Minnesota State Statutes, Rules, Administrative Code and the policies of the Willmar School Board.

Nothing contained in this handbook shall be construed to limit, impair or affect the right of any employee to the expression or communication of a view, grievance, complaint or opinion on any matter related to the conditions or compensation of public employment or their betterment, so long as the same is not designed to and does not interfere with the full, faithful and proper performance of the duties of employment or circumvent the rights of the employee.

## **Management Responsibilities**

It is the right and obligation of the District to efficiently manage and conduct the operation of the District within its legal limitations and with its primary obligation to provide educational opportunity for the students of the District. The School district is not required to meet and negotiate on matters of inherent managerial policy.

## **Effect of Laws, Rules, and Regulations**

Employees will perform services prescribed by the District and will be governed by relevant state and federal laws, School Board policies and the rules, regulations, directives, and orders issued by properly designated officials of the District.

# **District Operations and Information**

## Mission, Vision, Core Values and Strategic Direction

### **Mission Statement**

Inspiring and preparing all learners for their future in our community and the world.

### **Vision (*What we Intend to Create*)**

Willmar Public School District 347 will be the District of Choice to learn and work where:

- I am inspired and valued,
- I am supported in a culture of respect, and
- I am engaged through partnerships between families, community, and district.

### **Core Values (*Drivers of Our Words and Actions*)**

- High Expectations – Committing to excellence and achievement
- Respect – Working hard for self and being nice to others
- Perseverance – Overcoming challenges and setbacks
- Responsibility – Doing the right thing, in the right way
- Relationships – Caring and connecting with others
- Unity – Valuing our differences with shared goals and vision

### **Strategic Directions (*Areas of Focus for Improvement*)**

- Strengthening Family and Stakeholders Engagement
- Aligning Academic Curriculum, Assessments, and Delivery
- Strengthening Instructional Design and Delivery
- Strengthening School Climate and Relationships
- Refining Our Systems to Better Meet Unique Student Needs
- Managing Our Resources Responsibly and Innovatively

## Board of Education

The Willmar Public School District is governed by a seven-member [Board of Education](#). The role of the board is to represent the children of the district through the creation of policies and programs that support excellent teaching, a positive and inclusive school environment, and high student achievement.

### **School Board Members:**

Justin Bos – Chair  
Mike Reynolds – Vice Chair  
Tammy Barnes - Treasurer  
Scott Thaden – Director  
Dr. Mary Amon –Director  
Jay Lawton – Director  
Randy Frederickson – Director

## Policies & Administrative Procedures of the School Board

### **Policies**

[Board policies](#) are available for viewing on the district website. Policies especially relevant to teachers and staff are included in [Appendix A](#). It is the responsibility of all employees to know, support and implement district policies. Any questions or suggestions regarding board policies should be referred to the building Principal or the District Administrator. All policies and procedures are expected to be reviewed on a regular basis by all employees.

### **Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings of the Board of Education are scheduled for 4:30 PM on the second Monday of each month (exceptions & additions determined by the school board). The [meeting agenda](#) and background information are posted by the Friday prior to each meeting on the district website, at each building, and in the local paper, the West Central Tribune. Faculty wishing to have an item placed on an agenda is asked to have it approved by their Principal prior to submission.

All [school board agendas](#), [meeting notes](#), and recorded videos are available on the district website. This also included archived notes.

### **Committees**

Three board members are assigned to each committee; community members may also be appointed. A copy of the current committee membership is available on the district website. There are seven standing committees of the board:

- Budget and Finance
- Facilities/Transportation

- Curriculum, Goals and Standards
- Labor Management
- Personnel; Policy
- Public Relations.

The committees meet on an occasional basis. Notice of committee meetings is made a minimum of 24 hours prior to the meeting and posted outside the district office. Faculty and staff members are encouraged to attend committee meetings of interest to them.

## **Administrative & Leadership Team**

The School District's Administrative Team is composed of the Superintendent; school building administrators, including Principals; the Director of Teaching and Learning; Director of Business and Finance, Director of Human Resources, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, Director of Instructional Technology, Director of Student Services, and the Director of Community Education.

The Administrative Team works for and with faculty, staff and the [Board of Education](#) to keep the focus of the district on student learning. Towards this end, they act in collaboration to review and enhance the operation of the schools, analyze and create policies, troubleshoot issues and areas of concern, and resolve problems. Faculty members are invited to talk with their Principals about the agendas for the Administrative Team meetings. The following is a list of leadership positions within the District:

### **District Leadership:**

Superintendent - Dr. Bill Adams  
 Director of Business and Finance – Kathryn Haase  
 Director of Human Resources – Elizabeth Windingstad  
 Director of Teaching and Learning – Carrie Thomas  
 Director of Special Education – Melissa Wilson  
 Buildings & Grounds Manager – Aaron Pilarski  
 Community Education Director –Alex Wolter  
 Director of Instructional Technology – Jason Hulstein  
 Director of Food & Nutrition Services – Danaca Jensen  
 Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning – Karen Douglass  
 Assistant Director of Food & Nutrition Services – Bobbi Varichak  
 Director of Student Services - Melissa Wilson

### **Principals:**

Roosevelt Elementary -- Lori Lockhart  
 Kennedy Elementary -- Shelly Boelter  
 Lakeland Elementary -- Gretchen Baumgarn  
 Willmar Middle School -- Mark Miley  
 Willmar Senior High & Alternative Programs -- Paul Schmitz

### **Assistant Principals**

Roosevelt Elementary -- Jana Anderson  
 Kennedy Elementary – Tyler Steen  
 Willmar Middle School -- Amy Sack & Kali Preisinger  
 Willmar Senior High – Scott Hisken & Nick Clasemann  
 ALC - Katie Schieck  
 Prairie Lakes & Lake Park - Carmen Carpenter

### **Dean of Students**

Lakeland Elementary - Rikka Williamson

# Calendar & Schedules

The most [current school calendar](#) can be found on our website. Please refer to this calendar often as approved changes will be reflected in the most current adopted version.

School Calendar 202-2025 as of August 2024 :

# 2024-2025 DISTRICT CALENDAR

AUGUST 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

OCTOBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

JANUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

MAY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

JUNE 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

JULY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## KEY DATES

- Aug. 20 - 22 \_\_\_\_ New Teacher Induction
- Aug. 26 - 29 \_\_\_\_ Teacher Workshop (PreK-12)
- Sept. 2 \_\_\_\_ NO SCHOOL - Labor Day (Holiday)
- Sept. 3 \_\_\_\_ First Day of School (6-12)
- Sept. 5 \_\_\_\_ First Day of School (K-5)
- Sept. 9 \_\_\_\_ First Day of School (PreK)
- Oct. 4 \_\_\_\_ PreK-12 Teacher In-Service; NO SCHOOL
- Oct. 17-18 \_\_\_\_ NO SCHOOL - Fall Break
- Oct. 31 \_\_\_\_ End of Term 1
- Nov. 1 \_\_\_\_ PreK-12 Teacher In-Service; NO SCHOOL
- Nov. 28 - 29 \_\_\_\_ NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break
- Dec. 6 \_\_\_\_ PreK-12 Teacher In-Service; NO SCHOOL
- Dec. 23 - Jan. 3 \_\_\_\_ NO SCHOOL - Winter Break
- Jan. 6 \_\_\_\_ School Resumes
- Jan. 17 \_\_\_\_ End of Term 2
- Jan. 20 \_\_\_\_ PreK-12 Teacher In-Service; NO SCHOOL
- Feb. 14 \_\_\_\_ PreK-12 Teacher In-Service; NO SCHOOL
- Feb. 17 \_\_\_\_ NO SCHOOL – President’s Day (Holiday)
- Mar. 21 \_\_\_\_ End of Term 3
- Mar. 24 - 28 \_\_\_\_ NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
- Mar. 31 \_\_\_\_ PreK-12 Teacher In-Service; NO SCHOOL
- Apr. 1 \_\_\_\_ School Resumes
- Apr. 18 \_\_\_\_ NO SCHOOL - Teacher Conference Comp Day
- May 2 \_\_\_\_ PreK-12 Teacher In-Service; NO SCHOOL
- May 26 \_\_\_\_ NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day (Holiday)
- May 30 \_\_\_\_ Last Day for Seniors
- June 1 \_\_\_\_ WHS Commencement
- June 4 \_\_\_\_ End of Term 4 (Last Day of School K-11)
- June 5 \_\_\_\_ PreK-12 Teacher Work Day
- June 6 \_\_\_\_ Teacher Conference Comp Day

**NOTE:** Inclement weather days will follow the district e-learning plan.

■ NO SCHOOL





## Building Schedules:

<b>Building</b>	<b>Student Instruction Time</b>	<b>Staff Report Time</b>
<b>Roosevelt Elementary</b>	8:30am to 3:20pm	7:30am to 3:30pm
<b>Kennedy Elementary</b>	8:30am to 3:20pm	7:30am to 3:30pm
<b>Lakeland Elementary</b>	8:30am to 3:20pm	7:30am to 3:30pm
<b>Willmar Middle School</b>	8:00am to 2:45pm	7:15am to 3:15pm
<b>Willmar Senior High</b>	8:00am to 2:45pm	7:15am to 3:15pm
<b>Jefferson Learning Center</b>	8:30am to 3:30 pm	7:45am to 3:45pm
<b>Area Learning Center</b>	8:00am to 4:50pm	7:15am to 4:50pm Monday-Thursday
<b>Prairie Lakes</b>	8:00am to 2:40pm	7:15am to 3:15pm
<b>District Office- Willmar Education &amp; Arts Center (WEAC)</b>	<b>Building Hours:</b> 8:00 am to 4:30 pm <b>Summer Hours:</b> Vary	Varies based on position

## Communications

### Communication Expectations and Responsibilities

1. All employees are required to know and use Gmail, our email system.
2. Upon arrival at school, or as soon thereafter as work duties allow, all employees should check their voicemail, email and mailbox.
3. Before leaving at the end of the day, all employees should check their voicemail, email, and mailbox.  
Note: If the nature of your responsibilities does not allow you to do items 2 and 3 above, you should check your voicemail, email, and mailbox once per day. If this remains a struggle, please communicate with your direct supervisor to get the support necessary to accomplish this.
4. When leaving voicemail or email messages, do not expect them to be heard or read until the next "check" time, i.e., the beginning or end of the day.

### Appropriate Use of School Communications

It is important to clarify the acceptable use of school communication systems, such as voicemail, email, telephone, mailboxes, etc. Here are several principles to use as a guide.

- Occasional use of school communication systems for personal reasons is acceptable. However, the key word is "occasional." Moreover, it is never permissible to use the district's

communication system to send messages which contain profanity or include vulgar, profane or discriminatory content.

- You cannot control what you receive, but you must control what you send. If you receive something inappropriate, delete it or dispose of it, and inform the sender that you do not wish to receive such communications.
- Regardless of the communication medium, send messages to others on a “need to know” basis as opposed to sending messages meant for a few to all box holders.
- Using school communications to make a profit or to conduct a business is unacceptable. It is acceptable to advertise items for sale or services you may offer in a designated area in the staff lounge/workroom.
- Use of school communications to share beliefs of a personal, religious, or political nature is inappropriate.
- Use of school communications to build staff morale, advertise staff functions, etc. is acceptable. However, be cautious about the type of humorous or entertaining message you access or share. Anything with sexual, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc. overtones are unacceptable.
- All electronic communication on district equipment can be requested and is discoverable.

### **Email Communication Guidelines**

- All Willmar Public Schools employees are established on the district email communication network and are responsible for checking their email.
- Please contact the HR Department, to obtain your initial password if you did not receive it upon hire. Once you have accessed your email account, you are responsible for changing your password for secure access to your email messages.
- All building and district-wide announcements are made via email.
- Remember that any email you send always carries the name of the Willmar Public Schools. Treat it as if you were sending a letter on Willmar Public Schools’ letterhead.
- Employees must always be cognizant that electronic mail messages constitute “data” under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. This means that they must be retained by the District, pursuant to the District’s data retention schedule. It also means that messages that relate to students and/or their parents are considered student data, to which parents must be provided access, upon their request. Messages must always remain professional and objective and be free of disparaging and/or subjective comments about parents or students.
- Include an AutoSignature with email you send to anyone outside the building. (The equivalent of signing your name on letterhead.)
- Do not assume that email is private or confidential. All email done on school computers is potentially subject to “open records” laws and may have to be divulged if requested by a citizen. If you need to communicate sensitive information, do not use email.
- Don’t key email messages in all caps.

### **Telephone and Mail**

You are encouraged to use district telephones, computers, fax machines, and other communication devices for school district business purposes only. Employees may use personal cell phones to make personal telephone calls/text messages or other electronic correspondence during their breaks, meal periods or prep periods, but may not use them during scheduled work time. All communication with students should be professional and related to the education process.

Personal correspondence should be written on your own time. The district is not to be used as a personal mailing address.

### **District Cellular Phones**

For information regarding appropriate usage of district owned telephones, see the “[Appropriate Use of School Communications](#)” section above.

### **Paging (Public Address) System**

In our continued efforts to minimize the number of interruptions to our teaching and learning environment, we will page students with emergency messages ONLY at the beginning and the end of the school day. If you have an emergency situation and need us to relay a message immediately, please let us know and we will do so. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us streamline our announcements and decreasing the number of disruptions for everyone. Announcements of individual classroom administration such as reminder of classroom assignments due or field trip permission slips being returned will not be read nor will repetitive daily announcements be made.

### **Staff Meetings**

Staff, team and other meetings are an important link for employees. Talk with your supervisor about the frequency and location of meetings and plan to attend. Periodically, staff meetings may be held for the purpose of hearing guest speakers, holding open forums, obtaining new information, the opportunity for employee input and/or education/training or receiving updates on what is happening in the school district.

### **Other Communication Methods**

- An individual physical mailbox may be assigned to employees at their work site.
- Email, Extranet and Internet use are for school business use only.

### **Good News Communication (Certified Staff)**

Effective school-home communication is key to helping our young people be successful. We encourage positive phone calls and notes to parents/guardians--try to "catch the students being good" and let parents know that you noticed. A goal of one positive contact per year per student is within reach. It is helpful, though not essential, to let your Principal know that you had contact with a student's home for this purpose.

### **General Correspondence with Home via Notices or Newsletters (Certified Staff)**

#### **(Get your principal's approval before you send communication home with students)**

Home-school communication is encouraged and sometimes essential in helping our students succeed. Use discretion in copying your building Principal on e-mails to parents, especially if the student's progress, grades, or behavior are at issue. It is helpful for the Principal to have some background when/if the parent contacts him or her. Using the Campus system to reflect notes or communications to parents is a good tool. You must also check the school and district calendar with your Principal prior to scheduling any events or sending notices out. All events must be recorded on the school calendar of events in the office. The Principal should receive a final copy of all notices going home. Keeping parents informed facilitates the smooth operation of the school and often has a significant positive effect on student behavior. It is our obligation as educators to keep parents informed of student progress in all areas. In keeping with this philosophy, the following procedures will be followed:

- Parents must be notified by telephone when a student is performing or behaving poorly in the classroom. This communication should take place early enough to allow for correcting the situation prior to the end of the grading period.
- Communicating with parents on a regular basis will enhance your classroom management, give you more information about the student and his/her environment, and show your interest in the student as an individual.

### **Basic Communication Tips & Ideas for Teachers to Parents**

Classroom teachers influence the public relations image of the schools more than almost any other group. Here are some tips and ideas classroom teachers can use to communicate to parents:

- Send a note during the summer to parents of students for the upcoming year. Or, make a telephone call to the home. Introduce yourself, extend an invitation to call with questions, and indicate that you are looking forward to having the student in your class.
- During the year, send "good news from school" cards, or make positive telephone calls to note a student's improvement in academics, behavior, or attitude.

- Keep parents informed about anything new or different in the classroom using planners or notecards. Projects, extra homework, and long-term assignments requiring special work are examples.
- At the end of the class day, review with students what they have done. This helps them respond to parent's questions about what they did in school today.
- Be alert to classroom projects that warrant newspaper or social media activity.
- Correct papers with comments and correction marks that can be understood by students and parents.
- Contact parents whenever there is a problem. Contact with a spirit of cooperation to work on solving the problem together.
- Have a convenient suggestion box for parents and students.
- Arrange displays of student work in the hallway for parents to view.
- Return all phone calls and respond to all notes as soon as you can.

### **Web Page**

All departments/grade levels/classrooms are encouraged to develop web pages. However, it is essential that everyone who contributes to the development of the website do their part to ensure that all web pages stay current. Not having a web page is better than having an out-of-date web page. Please see your building tech, if you have any questions about the website.

### **Crisis Communication and Steps to Support and Ensure Safe Schools**

The purpose of these steps is to support our students and to help ensure that the schools they attend are as safe as possible from any form of violent communication. We believe our youngsters are yearning to be part of a caring community and can, with our guidance and support, become active and committed members of this community.

When a threatening or violent message is heard or observed (e.g., in a conversation, class presentation, journal, or an art project) the following steps should be taken.

1. The person who observes the violent message should bring the student(s) responsible for creating, delivering or repeating the message to the building Principal.
2. The Principal will interview the offending student(s). At his/her discretion, the Principal may ask the school psychologist, guidance counselor, social worker or school nurse to also be present at this interview. The student will be informed of the reason for specific concern that brought them to the Principal's office. The goal will be to help the student(s) understand that they can talk safely with school personnel and that school personnel want to help them deal with hard feelings and situations in their lives.
3. As a general rule, the Principal will notify each student's parent(s)/guardian(s) that contact was made with their child and why. The student will be given the choice to meet with the Principal and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the situation.
4. The Principal, parent(s)/guardian(s) and any other support people will discuss the situation and make a decision together about the most appropriate next steps to follow. This may include contacting other community agencies (e.g., local law enforcement and/or social service agencies), as well as assigning appropriate school discipline.
5. The Principal will ask an appropriate school adult to check in with the student(s) on a regular basis to help ensure that s/he is connected, protected and feeling cared about.

# Emergency School Closing/Late Start/Early Dismissal

## **ELEARNING**

E-Learning Days are designed for a continuation of learning when school is canceled due to inclement weather. E-Learning Days allow for the school calendar not to be extended due to school cancellations. An e-learning day means a school day where a school offers at home instruction provided by students' individual teachers due to inclement weather. An e-learning day is counted as a day of instruction and included in the hours of instruction under state statute 120A.41.

### **How will an e-Learning Day be communicated to parents and students?**

Each fall, parents and students will receive a letter detailing plans for that year's e-Learning days. Notice of school cancellation will occur at least two hours prior to the start of the school day and will be provided through Campus messenger system, Operation Snow desk, TV and radio stations, and school and district social media.

### **How will teachers communicate e-Learning instructions and expectations?**

Materials and instructions will be preloaded and updated in iPads prior to an e-Learning day for grades 7-12 students and packets for grades PreK-6 students.

### **How will the e-Learning day affect activities?**

All after school evening activities will be canceled on e-Learning days.

### **Employees with scheduled leave on e-Learning Day**

If an employee has scheduled leave time and an e-Learning Day is called, the employee may cancel their leave time in the absence management system by 6:30 am or by contacting their administrators (and building secretary) via email to notify them of the change by 7:30 am. To participate in the e-Learning day, employees must be able to meet all expectations specified in the e-Learning plan including being available for contact via phone (for teachers - voicemail forwarded to email) and email. School staff for grades 7-12 may also be available via videoconference (Google Meet or Zoom) as feasible. If the employee remains on leave and is not available to fulfill their assigned duties, the employee must ensure the leave time is accurately accounted for. For teachers, arrangements must be made for announcements to students / families and an alternative contact if needed.

### **When will the District use e-learning?**

If the first cancellation due to inclement weather is prior to President's day, it will be made up on President's day. All subsequent school closures will be replaced with e-learning days up to five days. If all e-Learning days are exhausted, employees must reference the information under Inclement Weather Days. Make up days will be determined by school board action.

### **What work do I do on e-Learning days?**

Employees should reference the [e-Learning Days](#) chart for guidance on work to be accomplished on e-Learning days. All work is required to be done remotely from home. If an employee does not have access to the necessary technology, or does not feel comfortable using the technology, the employee is responsible to contact their supervisor for guidance.

\*\*Please note: These guidelines and procedures may be adjusted as needed. Please refer to the communication sent by the district for guidance.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS**

On days when the District is closed by the Superintendent due to snow or other adverse weather beyond the eLearning days, employees will be required to make up the work day in accordance with School Board approval of the school calendar.

### **Notice of closing/late start/early dismissal is done through the local media**

Employees may choose to be entered into the Campus system which has an automated calling system for Emergency school closing situations.

Be sure to check with your local radio or TV station whenever you are in doubt about school being open because of inclement weather conditions. Please do not call your Principal or the District Administrator unless there is an emergency. The District Administrator will make closing decisions as early as possible; including the evening before if it is at all feasible.

### **School closings/delays are heard on the following radio and television stations:**

**Radio FM:** 102.5, 104.7, 95.3,

**Radio AM:** 1340 KWLM

**Television** CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox

## **REPORTING TO WORK**

**School Calendar Day employees or Student Day Only employees** (*Employees covered by a bargaining unit must refer to their Master Agreement*):

- **School Closing:** If school does not open on a given day because of inclement weather, it is not necessary for the employee to report to work. These school days will be made up in accordance with School Board determination on the school calendar.
- **Late Start:** If school opens one or two hours late, employees are required to report to work the corresponding amount of time after the building start time.
- **Early Dismissal:** If school is dismissed early because of inclement weather, employees are expected to remain on duty to the end of their scheduled shift, unless excused by the building Principal. Employees will be paid for their actual time worked and should clock out when they leave.

### **Year Round employees:**

- **School Closing:** If school does not open on a given day because of inclement weather, it is not necessary for the employee to report to work. If the employee feels it is critical to report to work on this day the employee **MUST** receive approval from their supervisor prior to working and will be paid at a double time rate of pay for the hours worked. The employee will only receive snow pay (regular rate) for their regular scheduled number of hours or to fulfill their scheduled hours should they be approved to work and receive double time pay for hours worked.
- **Late Start:** If school opens one or two hours late, employees are required to report to work the corresponding amount of time. If an employee feels it necessary to report to work at their regular scheduled time, the employee shall be paid at a double time rate of pay for actual hours worked prior to the late start time. (This **MUST** be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor.)

- **Early Dismissal:** If school is dismissed early because of inclement weather, employees are expected to remain on duty to the end of their scheduled shift unless excused by their building administrator or Superintendent. The employee will be paid their regular rate of pay to fulfill the remaining hours in their schedule. Should the employee continue to work after being excused by the building administrator the employee will continue to be paid their regular rate of pay.

Employees may refer to the [Inclement Weather Chart](#) for a concise explanation of Inclement Weather Guidelines & Procedures.

\*\*Please note: These guidelines and procedures may be adjusted as needed. Please refer to communication sent by the district for guidance.

## Employee Rights

### Federal and State Wage and Hour Standards

To the extent that the terms and condition of a district employee's employment is not governed by an existing individual or collective bargaining agreement, he or she is an hourly, non-exempt employee under Federal and State wage and hour standards, based on verification of hours worked.

### At-Will Employment Status

All non-contract employees are employed at the will and discretion of the district. As such, there shall be no individual continuing contract status, in fact or implied. Non-contract employees may be employed, promoted, demoted, or terminated at the will of the district so long as the requirements of cause, procedures, and the rights of the individual as mandated under law have not been violated.

### Rights to Views

Nothing contained in this handbook shall be construed to limit, impair or affect the right of any employee to the expression or communication of a view, grievance, complaint or opinion on any matter related to the conditions or compensation of public employment or their betterment, so long as the same is not designed to and does not interfere with the full, faithful and proper performance of the duties of employment or circumvent the rights of the employee.

### Equal Opportunity Employer

The Willmar Public School District prohibits discrimination in any form on the basis of race, color, creed, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status or status with regard to public assistance. This policy includes, but is not limited to, the following: employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, recall, corrective actions, termination, rate of pay, other compensation, and the application of policies and training.

Please refer to School Board Policy 401 – [Equal Employment Opportunity](#) for more information.

Employees who engage in discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If you feel you have been the victim of discrimination, please contact an Administrator or the Director of Human Resources.

### Immigration Law Compliance

The Willmar Public School District is committed to employing only United States Citizens and Aliens who are authorized to work in the United States, and to comply with the Immigration and Nationality Act as updated through March 2010. As a condition of employment, you must properly complete, sign and date the first section of the Immigration and Naturalization Service Form I-9 and provide documentation of information requested within three (3) business days of the date employment begins. Newly re-hired employees must also complete the form (I-9) prior to beginning work if: they have not previously filed an I-9 with the school district; if their previous I-9 is more than three years old; or if their previous I-9 is no longer valid.

Employers cannot specify which documents an employee can use for Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification.

### **Employment of Minors**

No one under 18 years of age will be employed without providing proper proof of age through an age certificate, birth certificate, or driver's license. Minors will be employed only in accordance with the state child labor laws and school district policies. No one under 16 years of age (15 in special circumstances with approval of HR) will be employed in any capacity.

This policy is in accordance with both state and federal laws that regulate hiring of minors - persons less than 18 years of age. In the Fair Labor Standards Act the minimum age of 16 was set for general employment, but for those occupations that the Secretary of Labor determined to be hazardous, the minimum age is 18.

A high school student under the age of 18 will not be permitted to work after 11 p.m. on an evening before a school day or before 5 a.m. on a school day.

Background checks for minors require a parental release form completed and returned to the HR office prior to running a background check.

### **Retaliation**

The law forbids retaliation when it comes to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, fringe benefits, and any other term or condition of employment in response to filing a charge of discrimination; making a complaint to an employer or other covered entity about discrimination; or because of participation in a discrimination proceeding.

The school district will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged harassment, violence, or discrimination in accordance with School Board Policy or any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or who testifies, assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, harassment, or intentional disparate treatment.

### **Comparable Worth/Pay Equity**

It is the policy of the Willmar Public School District to comply with the Minnesota State Law on comparable worth/pay equity.



## Discrimination, Harassment, Violence

### Purpose

The purpose of these policies are to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination, and harassment and violence on the basis of race color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, familial status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or disability.

The Willmar Public School District is an equal opportunity employer. Personnel hiring and administration in the District are conducted so as to not discriminate against applicant or employee on the basis of age, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation, color, marital or parental status, pregnancy, citizenship, handicap or disability, creed, arrest or conviction record, national origin, ancestry, political affiliation, membership in the National Guard, state defense force or any other reserve component of the military forces of Minnesota or the United States, use or non-use of lawful products off school premises during non-working hours, or any other reason prohibited by state or federal law.

Reasonable accommodations shall be made for qualified individuals with a disability or handicap, unless such accommodations would impose an undue hardship to the district. Application forms, hiring practices and personnel administration shall be periodically evaluated to identify and eliminate existing stereotypes and biases.

Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures.

For the detailed and most current policy information, please refer to the [District website>District>Policies](#).

### Employee Discrimination Complaint Procedures

Any employee or applicant for employment who believes that the Willmar Public School District or any part of the school organization has in some way violated the district's equal opportunity employment policy may bring forward a complaint as outlined below. Harassment complaints shall be processed in accordance with procedures outlined in board policy.

#### A. Informal Procedure

Anyone who believes he has a basis for complaint shall discuss the concern with the building principal, who will investigate the complaint and reply to the complainant. If this reply is not acceptable to the complainant, he may initiate formal procedures according to the steps listed below.

#### B. Formal Complaint Procedure

- **Step 1:** The formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Director of Human Resources, using the [Discrimination/Harassment Complaint Form](#). The Director of Human Resources shall immediately undertake an investigation of the suspected infraction. Either the Director of HR or their designee shall review with the building Principal(s) and other appropriate persons the facts comprising the alleged discrimination, decide the merits of the case, determine the action to be taken, if any, and report in writing the findings and the resolution of the case to the complainant.
- **Step 2:** If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Director of Human Resources, he or she may appeal the decision in writing to the Board of Education. The Board shall hear the appeal at its next regular meeting, or a special meeting may be called for the purpose of hearing the appeal. The Board shall make its decision in

writing. Copies of the written decision shall be mailed or delivered to the complainant and filed in the district office.

- **Step 3:** If at this point the complaint has not been satisfactorily settled, further appeal may be made, as appropriate, to the U.S. Office of Civil Rights (Region V, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street Suite 1475, Chicago, Illinois, 60661, U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, the Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (Labor Standards Division), or the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.

Nothing in these procedures shall preclude an employee or applicant for employment from pursuing other avenues afforded by law to deal with a workplace or student complaint.

### **Title IX – Sex Nondiscrimination Policy, Grievance Procedure and Process**

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, and it is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and its implementing regulations, not to discriminate in such a manner. The requirement not to discriminate in its education program or activity extends to admission and employment. The school district is committed to maintaining an education and work environment that is free from discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment.

Any employee, student, parent, or guardian having questions regarding the application of Title IX and its regulations and/or this policy and grievance process should discuss them with the Title IX Coordinator. The school district's Title IX Coordinator(s) is:

Elizabeth Windingstad, Director of Human Resources,  
Phone: 320-231-8520  
Email: [windingstade@willmar.k12.mn.us](mailto:windingstade@willmar.k12.mn.us)  
Address: Willmar District Office, 611 5th St SW, Willmar, MN 56201

Questions relating solely to Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator(s), the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education, or both. Additional information can be view in [School Board Policy #522 – Title IX Sex Nondiscrimination Policy, Grievance Procedure and Process.](#)

## **Bullying Procedures**

The procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviors in Willmar Public schools are in support of the Minnesota legislation that prohibits bullying in all Minnesota schools. The entire policy can be found on the District website, under Board Policies, [Policy #514](#). Additional resources will also be located on the District's website.

This policy applies solely to student vs. student bullying. Behavior that occurs at school, on buses, or at school events are covered by this policy. Electronic behavior that occurs on or off school premises but substantially and materially disrupts education and learning in the school can also be disciplined according to this policy.

### **Bullying by definition has 4 key components –**

- Bullying is intimidating, threatening, abusive or hurtful conduct.
- It is objectively offensive.
- The conduct involves an imbalance of power and is repeated or
- The conduct materially and substantially interferes with a student's education or ability to participate in school activities.

## **This definition creates 2 distinct categories of bullying –**

Category 1: Bad behavior that involves an imbalance of power and pattern or

Category 2: Bad behavior that significantly affects a student's ability to participate in school, classes, or events.

All staff members in Willmar Public schools must make a reasonable effort to address bullying when they see it or know about it. Investigations into reported bullying will commence within 3 days of the receipt of the report. Parents of the bully and victims will be contacted with information from the investigation.

The problem of bullying can be effectively controlled but it will take the combined efforts of the administration, staff, parents, and students of the school district. With proper education, prompt reporting, and effective interventions, Willmar Public Schools will be a safe and secure place for all students to learn.

## **Drug Free Schools**

Refer to [School Board Policies](#) for the most current policies and information related to policies including:

- 418 – Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free School
- 416 – Drug And Alcohol Testing
- 417 – Chemical Use And Abuse
- 419 – Tobacco-Free Environment

## **Mandated Reporting- Child Abuse and Neglect**

It is the policy of the state of Minnesota “to protect children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through physical abuse, neglect or sexual abuse. While it is recognized that most parents want to keep their children safe, sometimes circumstances or conditions interfere with their ability to do so. When this occurs, families are best served by interventions that engage their protective capacities and address immediate safety concerns and ongoing risks of child maltreatment.” [M.S. 626.556, subd. 1]

Any school employee who knows or suspects that a child's health or welfare has been or appears to have been harmed, as a result of child abuse or neglect, has a legal responsibility and duty to report the case in accordance with these procedures. If you have any questions regarding your responsibilities or role, you must contact your immediate supervisor for assistance.

Please refer to the [Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines](#) or Minnesota Statute 626.556 – Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors for more information. The Minnesota Child Maltreatment Screening Guidelines includes information on the State Policy, where to report information, definitions and how to handle the processing of reports.

*Please also refer to the [Board Policies](#) for more information:*

- **414** – Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect of Physical
- **415** – Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults

Report suspected child abuse and neglect **IMMEDIATELY!**

The reporter should be the person who took the information directly from the child.

## **Where Do I Report?**

### **During Business Hours, M-F, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. call:**

1. Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services, 320-231-7800 ask for intake
  - a. Fax 320-231-7800
2. Emergency 911

### **After Business Hours, Weekends, and Holidays call:**

1. Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office, 320-235-1260
2. Emergency 911

**Reminder to Mandated Reporter:** A verbal report is required within 24 hours of receiving knowledge of abuse/neglect, followed by a written report within 72 hours.

## **What do I do if I think someone is abusing or neglecting a child?**

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused or neglected by someone, it is important that you be aware of your reaction to their disclosure and....

### **DO**

- Support the Child
- Validate his/her feelings
- Listen to the Child
- Believe the Child

### **DO NOT**

- Investigate
- Ask leading questions (i.e. "That man touched you didn't he?")
- Make promises

### **SOME QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT ASK:**

What happened?

Who did this to you?

Where were you when this happened?

When did this happen?

A resource Guide for Mandated Reporters can be found at:

<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrver/Public/DHS-5144-ENG> (or SPA for Spanish)

## **Attendance & Time Off**

### **Basic Information**

#### **Attendance Policy for Employees**

The interaction between employees and students is the most influential factor affecting student academic success. It is critical that employees be available to provide continuous high-quality instruction. However, it is understood that there are times when it is necessary to be absent because of illness or personal obligations. In those cases, the employee must adhere to time off reporting procedures:

Willmar Public Schools has established Red Rover as the official Time and Attendance system for all certified employees and the sole method for arranging substitute coverage. All certified

employees are mandated to report absences to Red Rover, whether or not substitute coverage is required. Timely reporting is essential. The guidelines for reporting absences are delineated in the Red Rover reporting procedures.

## Reporting Requirements

- **Deadline:** The deadline for reporting a same day absence is 30 minutes prior to your building start time. (At the secondary level, building start time is 7:15; therefore the cutoff is 6:45 a.m. At the elementary level, building start time is 7:30; therefore the cutoff is 7:00 a.m.)
  - **If unable to Report by the Deadline:** In the unlikely event that circumstances prevent the employee from reporting by the deadline, the employee will then be required to notify the Building Principal, or Building Designee, by calling with the reason for the absence, e.g. personal illness, personal day, etc.
- **Long-term Absence:** Long-term absences are processed through the Human Resources (HR) office based upon submission of the proper documentation. Generally, a long-term absence is defined as continuous absence exceeding three (3) work days. At least thirty (30) work days in advance, when possible, you must notify the Director of HR preferably by email, of the initial date and reason; e.g. medical illness, maternity leave, etc. HR will make the entry in Red Rover and communicate with the Building Principal.
- **Professional Development:** An employee may not report a professional development day to Red Rover. The Principal will authorize the professional development day on the basis of the PD guidelines.
- **Substitute Coverage Arrangements**
  - All substitute coverage should be arranged through the Red Rover system. If an employee secures a substitute by other means, the employee must communicate this with the building secretary in order to have that substitute attached to the employee's absence in the Red Rover system.
- **Compliance Standards**
  - Failure to comply with the reporting requirements may lead to disciplinary action.
  - Compliance with the reporting procedure is essential in order to facilitate continuity of instruction at the school and maintain a safe, orderly environment.
  - The Principal will follow up in cases where an employee does not report an absence to Red Rover.

The attendance records of each employee will be considered individually, inclusive of requirements and boundaries of ESST time, with reference made to the following types of attendance problems:

- **Frequency of Absence:** Frequent short-term absences often indicate basic poor attendance habits.
- **Pattern of Absence:** Unscheduled absences that reflect a pattern of Monday or Friday absences, or absences on the day before or after a holiday or long weekend or other suspicious patterns related to operational conditions (e.g. weather, workload, etc.)
- **Cause of Absence:** The nature of frequent absences is unrelated and may reflect a poor attendance record.

The primary responsibility for maintaining a satisfactory attendance record rests with the employee. An employee's attendance record shall be considered when evaluating an employee's job performance, and in determining eligibility for promotions.

Personal and vacation absences beyond the days/hours provided by contract will be considered unexcused. Pre-approval needs to be sought for provision of an excused absence beyond the days/hours provided. Such approval will be limited to rare occasions that are outside of the employee's control (annual requests will not be approved). The expectation is for employees to plan to be in attendance for all scheduled days along with provided sick, personal and vacation days.

## **ATTENDANCE STANDARDS & PROCEDURES**

### **Definitions:**

#### **Chronic Illness**

An illness requiring periodic visits or treatment by a clinician that continues over an extended period of time and which causes an episodic rather than continuous period of incapacity.

An absence attributable to a chronic illness will be a factor considered when imposing discipline pursuant to this guideline, if the employee suffering from such an illness can provide documentation from a treating clinician reflecting that the absence was a direct result of said illness. The clinician's documentation must reflect the illness as chronic (as defined above) and severe enough to prevent the employee from performing his/her duties. **Prior to imposing discipline pursuant to this guideline for absences that *may be caused by a chronic illness; the Principal must consult with the Director of Human Resources.***

#### **Clinician's Documentation**

Any absence for three (3) school days may need to be validated by a doctor's certificate. A doctor's statement(s) and any other medical records for an employee shall be maintained in the employee's medical file. The information in this file shall be maintained as confidential unless disclosure is necessary for the health and/or safety of other personnel (such as issues of dangerous contagious disease) or for purposes of disciplinary or any other action taken pursuant to this policy.

#### **Family and Medical Leave/Maternity Leave**

Any sick time taken by an employee on an approved family and medical leave, or an approved maternity leave, shall not be considered when imposing discipline pursuant to this policy.

#### **Absence Due to Military Leave or Jury Duty**

Any time taken by an employee to serve in the Military or to serve on a Jury as a result of being summoned shall be recognized as a patriotic duty and shall not be considered when imposing discipline pursuant to this policy.

#### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits employers from discriminating against "qualified" individuals with disabilities. The Board of Education relies on district Administration to ensure non-discrimination in all terms and conditions of employment. Prior to imposing any discipline, beyond an oral or written reprimand, Principals must consult with the Human Resources Office to ensure compliance with this Act. Employees may contact the Human Resources Office with any questions concerning the ADA.

#### **Employee Records**

Documentation of any action taken pursuant to the guideline and procedures established herein shall be returned to the employee's personnel file.

Any questions concerning this guideline shall be directed to the Human Resources Office.

## Hours of Service

The District reserves the right to determine hours of employment, assignment, location, and annual authorization of all employees.

To be considered a full-time employee, the employee shall be employed for a minimum of 35 hours per week, exclusive of lunch. All employees will be assigned starting times and shifts as recommended by the principal or supervisor and approved by the Director of Human Resources. Employees shall be provided a duty free lunch period of at least 30 minutes, the lunch period to be exclusive of the workday as designated.

The School District reserves the right to employ such personnel as it deems desirable or necessary on a part-time or casual basis.

When deemed necessary by the School District, appropriate training sessions may be provided for employees at full pay.

Library/General Paraprofessionals are entitled to breaks of up to 15 minutes in each a.m. and p.m. shift.

## Leaves of Absence

### **Basic Information and Procedures- Leave of Absence (LOA)**

#### **Childcare Leave –**

An unpaid child care leave may be granted by the School District subject to the provisions of this section, to one (1) parent of a child, provided such parent is caring for the child on a full-time basis.

Any period of leave for which the employee is medically disabled will be charged to the employee's earned and accrued sick leave. Per the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA), any period for which the employee is not medically disabled will be charged to leave without pay.

An employee making application for child care leave shall inform the Director of Human Resources in writing of intention to take the leave at least three calendar months before commencement of the intended leave. [See this link for the procedure for requesting a leave of absence.](#)

If the reason for the childcare leave is occasioned by pregnancy, an employee shall utilize sick leave pursuant to the sick leave provisions of this handbook during the period of physical disability. However, an employee shall not be eligible for sick leave during a period of time covered by childcare leave. The pregnant employee shall also provide at the time of the leave application, a statement from her clinician indicating the expected date of delivery.

Such leave of absence as stated in this section shall be without compensation of expense allowance from the School District funds. Continuance of group insurance protection shall be maintained at the employee's expense, if the employee chooses to continue these. Upon initiation of the leave, the School District shall assess the absent employee the actual cost of the group

hospitalization and income protection for that period covering the leave of absence. The employee shall pay to the School District this assessment according to a schedule mutually agreed upon between the School District and the employee. Upon resumption of duties in the school district, the cost of these benefits shall be resumed by the School District.

#### **Other Leaves of Absence –**

Upon request to the Director of Human Resources ([See the requesting process for a leave of absence](#)), an employee may be granted a leave of absence not to exceed two (2) years for personal prolonged illness beyond accrued sick leave; post-secondary study related to his/her field, etc.

The employee shall not accrue additional experience credit (longevity) during the leave of absence period.

Library/General Paraprofessionals Only - Absence for a Short Period of Time: An employee who finds it necessary to be absent for a short period during the day, may do so without salary deduction if satisfactory arrangements have been made beforehand with the employee's immediate supervisor, and if there is no expense to the School District.

### **Basic Regulations and Conditions of Leave of Absence:**

#### **Medical Certification**

The district will require medical certification to support a claim for leave for an employee's own serious health condition or to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, or parent.

For the employee's own medical leave, the certification must include a statement that the employee is unable to perform at least one of the functions of his or her position. For leave to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, or parent, the certification must include an estimate of the amount of time that the employee is needed to provide care.

The district may require a second medical opinion and periodic re-certifications at its own expense. If the first and second opinions differ, the district may require the binding opinion of a third health care provider, approved jointly by the district and the employee and paid for by the district.

#### **Intermittent or Reduced Leave**

Leave may be taken on an intermittent or reduced-leave schedule if it is medically necessary for a serious health condition of the employee or his or her spouse, child or parent. However, if leave is requested on this basis, the district may require the employee to transfer temporarily to a part-time schedule or an alternative position that better accommodates recurring absences. The alternative position will have equivalent pay and benefits.

#### **Spouses combined Leave**

Spouses who are both employed by the district are entitled to a joint total of 12 weeks leave (rather than 12 weeks each) for the birth or placement for adoption or foster care of a child. For any other qualifying FMLA reason, each eligible spouse will be entitled to the full 12 weeks of family medical leave, or that portion of leave remaining in the relevant 12-month period.

#### **Notification and Reporting Requirements**

When the need for leave is foreseeable, such as the birth of a child, the placement for adoption or foster care of a child, or planned medical treatment, the employee must provide reasonable prior notice and make an effort to schedule leave so that it does not unduly disrupt district operations. Employees, who are on leave as a result of illness, will be required to report periodically on their status and their intention to return to work.



### **Status of Employee Benefits during Leave of Absence:**

This section describes the effect of a medical leave on an employee's benefits. In the event of a conflict between this, the applicable Master Agreement, plan document and/or summary plan description, will govern.

### **Medical, Dental, & Long Term Disability:**

While on leave, an employee may continue health care coverage as follows (if operating under a Master Agreement, the continuation of health care coverage follows the Master Agreement):

- During the first twelve weeks of the leave, employees may continue coverage under FMLA (if approved) at active employee rates (e.g., paying the same premiums employee would pay if he/she were an active employee); and
- During a non-FMLA leave or between the end of the FMLA period and the end of the requested leave of absence, the employee may continue benefits at the full cost of the premium.

Continuation of health care coverage is conditioned on timely payment of the applicable premiums. If an employee is unable to pay his or her premium during the FMLA period by the specified due date, the employee may contact the HR Department - Benefits and request a grace period of up to 2 months. If the employee fails to make this request and/or fails to make timely premium payments, coverage will be dropped for the remainder of the leave period.

Employee can continue his/her insurance coverage under the provisions of COBRA if:

- he/she remains on leave at the end of his/her FMLA period; or
- he/she begins a leave while he/she is not eligible for FMLA leave.

A COBRA notice will be mailed to the employee's last known home address. Continuation of health care coverage under COBRA is conditioned on timely payment of the applicable premiums. If premiums are not paid by the specified due date by the employee (5th of the month), coverage may be dropped and cannot be reinstated.

The employee must make any changes to benefits within 30 days of the event or by June 1st to begin a new plan year. Coverage may be postponed for LTD benefits while on unpaid leave of absence.

### **Health Care Flexible Spending Account**

For Health Care Flexible Spending Account (HCFSA) while on a Medical Leave, employee may:

- Continue contributing while on paid leave as contributions will be automatically withdrawn from paychecks.
- Continue contributing for the remainder of the tax year (plus the applicable grace period) during which the leave begins pursuant to COBRA. The COBRA period starts at the earlier of:
  - the end of your FMLA period,
  - the date benefits are canceled while on Leave; or
  - your employment termination date.

A COBRA notice will be sent to the employee at his/her last known address.

- While on unpaid leave, employees may not contribute to HCFSA's; and
- The district's contributions will cease.

If an employee is within the FMLA leave period during annual enrollment, the HCFSA coverage he/she enrolled in during annual enrollment will start when he/she returns from leave. If an employee is in a COBRA leave period during annual enrollment, he/she would not be able to enroll into the HCFSA while on a leave. Employees would have to enroll within 30 days of returning from leave.

### **Dependent Day Care Flexible Spending Account**

While on unpaid leave, employees cannot continue to contribute to their Dependent Day Care Spending Account. Contributions will end on the last day of the pay period in which the employee goes on unpaid leave.

If an employee returns from unpaid leave within the same calendar year in which his or her leave began, his/her payroll deductions will be automatically reinstated at the same full-year goal amount. This means the semi-monthly contribution level will be higher so that the elected annual goal amount can be reached before the end of the calendar year. If employee returns from leave and would like to decrease his/her goal amount so that payroll deductions remain at the same biweekly level as before the leave, he/she may decrease his/her payroll deductions for the remainder of the calendar year by contacting the HR Department - Benefits within 30 days of his/her return from leave and filling out a modification change form.

If an employee returns from leave in a subsequent year, he/she can enroll in the Dependent Day Care Spending Account within 30 days of his/her return from leave.

### **Life Insurance Coverage**

For the duration of a paid or unpaid leave, an employee may continue his/her life insurance coverage at active employee rates. If the employee is unable to return to work at the end of his/her leave, he/she can continue his/her life insurance coverage through portability by paying the full premium, provided the employee has maintained coverage during the leave.

Continuation of life insurance coverage during the leave is conditioned upon timely payment of the applicable premiums. If premiums are not paid by the 5th of the month, coverage may be dropped due to nonpayment. This applies to all voluntary life coverage.

An employee may elect to increase his/her life insurance coverage during any rolling 12-month period. If the employee terminates his/her employment at the end of the leave, the employee may be eligible to convert to an individual term life policy if they contact the HR Department - Benefits within 30 days of the coverage end date.

### **403(b) Contributions**

If employee is participating in the 403(b) match, he/she may choose one of the following options while on an unpaid leave of absence:

- Reduce contributions.
  - Stop contributions and leave the money in his/her account to purchase shares at the end of the Plan (no cash back).

### **Coverage Upon Return from Leave**

If employee returns from an unpaid leave in the calendar year following the year the leave begins:

- The Basic Term Life, Supplemental Term Life, Basic AD&D, and Long-Term Disability coverage that the employee had before leave will be reinstated.
- The Medical and Dental: Coverage that the employee was enrolled in when he/she began the leave will continue after he/she returns from leave. If the employee does not have coverage(s) when he/she returns from leave, he/she can enroll within 30 days of the date he/she returns from leave.

### **Pay and Leave Time During LOA**

An employee may be required to supplement unpaid leave time with accrued and available paid sick leave if it is available for any medical related leaves of absence. Personal leave and vacation time are not required to be used during a leave of absence; however, the employee may select to do so in order to have income during this period of time.

An employee's pay will be adjusted for the unpaid time. Hourly employees using unpaid leave will not be paid during the leave period. Salaried employees will be adjusted for the anticipated amount of unpaid leave time during the period of unpaid time. Salaried employees do not have the option to have their unpaid leave deductions spread over the entire length of their assignment for the year.

Employees should reach out to Rachel Ree, HR Coordinator, [reer@willmar.k12.mn.us](mailto:reer@willmar.k12.mn.us) regarding their leave and to receive an estimate of how unpaid leave will affect their paychecks.

### **Requesting Procedures**

To request a leave of absence, log on to [Frontline Central](#) and complete a Leave of Absence Request Form preferably as soon as you are aware a leave of absence will be needed. Please contact Rachel Ree at [reer@willmar.k12.mn.us](mailto:reer@willmar.k12.mn.us) in the HR office with questions. Additional information can also be found on the District website, HR Department, Leaves of Absence webpage.

<https://www.willmar.k12.mn.us/Page/4251>

## **Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993**

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

Refer to Policy 410 - Family and Medical Leave on our website under [District Policies](#).

#### **Basic Leave Entitlement**

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

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

#### **Military Family Leave Entitlements**

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active 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 single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

#### **Benefits and Protections**

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

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

### **Eligibility Requirements**

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

### **Definition of Serious Health Condition**

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

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

### **Use of Leave**

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

### **Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave**

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

### **Employee Responsibilities**

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

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

### **Employer Responsibilities**

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

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

### **Unlawful Acts by Employers**

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

### **Enforcement**

An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

**FMLA section 109 (29 U.S.C. § 2619) requires FMLA covered employers to post the text of this notice. Regulations 29 C.F.R. § 825.300(a) may require additional disclosures.**

**For additional information:** 1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627  
[WWW.WAGEHOUR.DOL.GOV](http://WWW.WAGEHOUR.DOL.GOV)

## **Nursing Mothers, Lactating Employees, and Pregnancy Accommodations**

Minnesota's Nursing Mothers, Lactating Employees, and Pregnancy Accommodations law (Minnesota Statutes § 181.939) gives pregnant and lactating employees certain legal rights. Pregnant employees have the right to request and receive reasonable accommodations, which may include, but are not limited to, more frequent or longer breaks, seating, limits to heavy lifting, temporary transfer to another position, temporary leave of absence or modification in work schedule or tasks. An employer cannot require an employee to take a leave or accept an accommodation. Lactating employees have the right to reasonable paid break times to express milk at work unless they are expressing milk during a break that is not usually paid, such as a meal break. Employers should provide a clean, private and secure room that is not a bathroom near the work area that includes access to an electrical outlet for employees to express milk. It is against the law for an employer to retaliate, or to take negative action, against a pregnant or lactating employee for exercising their rights under this law. Employees who believe their rights have been violated under this law can contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry's Labor Standards Division at [dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us](mailto:dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us) or 651-284-5075 for help. Employees also have the right to file a civil lawsuit for relief. For more information about this law, visit [dli.mn.gov/newparents](http://dli.mn.gov/newparents).

## **Rest Breaks**

### **Rest Breaks**

Employees will be given a paid rest break of 15 minutes for every four (4) hours worked. Failure of an employee to take an allotted rest break will not result in additional compensation.

### **Duty-Free Lunch**

Employees working 5 or more consecutive hours per day are required to take an unpaid thirty (30) minute duty-free lunch. Employees who are expected to work during their lunch break will be paid.

### **Time Clocks**

Employees required to use the Red Rover time clock system must ensure that their time is accurate. This includes correcting any errors to their start/end times as well as lunch break periods. Errors can

be corrected using the Time and Attendance Change forms that are located in your [Frontline Account](#) by going to My Forms>Forms I Can Start.

## Time off

### Personal Leave (PL)

On July 1 of each year, if eligible, employees will qualify for two (2) days of paid earned personal leave, accumulating to a maximum of three (3) days. Beginning with the 15<sup>th</sup> year of employment, an employee will be granted three (3) days of Personal Leave per school year accumulating to a maximum of 5 days.

Personal leave shall not be granted for the day preceding or the day following holidays or vacations; however, exceptions may be granted for unusual or unavoidable circumstances.

Confidential Employees: Starting with the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of service, each confidential employee shall be allowed three (3) days per year of Personal Leave and accumulate any unused PL up to a total of 5 days.

Library/General Paraprofessionals: Part time employees are entitled to personal leave on a pro-rata basis.

**Requests:** Requests to use earned personal leave will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis at the discretion of the employee's supervisor, taking into consideration staffing needs. Personal leave shall not be granted for the day preceding or the day following holidays or vacations; however, exceptions may be granted for unusual or unavoidable circumstances.

**Advance Notice:** It is highly recommended that employees apply for approval to use earned personal leave as far in advance as possible.

### Earned Safe and Sick Time

Updated

- [Earned Safe and Sick Time Employee Notice](#)

ESST was effective January 1, 2024 and has had legislative updates since inception. To view the most current information as the Rulemaking process continues to occur, please visit the [Mn Department of Labor and Industry](#) website for additional information.

#### **Usage:**

- the employee's mental or physical illness, treatment or preventive care;
- a family member's mental or physical illness, treatment or preventive care;
- absence due to domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking of the employee or a family member;
- closure of the employee's workplace due to weather or public emergency or closure of a family member's school or care facility due to weather or public emergency;
- when determined by a health authority or health care professional that the employee or a family member is at risk of infecting others with a communicable disease; and
- to make funeral arrangements, attend a funeral service or memorial or address financial or legal matters that arise after the death of a family member.

#### **Which family members are included?**

1. their child, including foster child, adult child, legal ward, child for whom the employee is legal guardian or child to whom the employee stands or stood in loco parentis (in place of a parent);
2. their spouse or registered domestic partner;
3. their sibling, stepsibling or foster sibling;
4. their biological, adoptive or foster parent, stepparent or a person who stood in loco parentis (in place of a parent) when the employee was a minor child;
5. their grandchild, foster grandchild or step-grandchild;
6. their grandparent or step-grandparent;
7. a child of a sibling of the employee;
8. a sibling of the parents of the employee;
9. a child-in-law or sibling-in-law;
10. any of the family members listed in 1 through 9 above of an employee's spouse or registered domestic partner;
11. any other individual related by blood or whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship; and
12. up to one individual annually designated by the employee.

**Accrual:** Employees working 6.75 hours or more per day for the full school year will earn 80 hours of ESST/Sick Leave. The leave time will be front loaded. Leave time will carry over year-to-year to the maximum allowed by the employee group.

Employees working less than 6.75 hours per day for the full school year will accrue 1 hour of ESST for every 30 hours worked.

**Notice:** Seven (7) days advance notice is required when the need to use ESST is foreseeable. If the need is unforeseeable, notice as soon as practicable is required. Employees must follow the absence request procedures as outlined in the How to Request an Absence shared below.

**Documentation:** More than three (3) consecutive scheduled workdays supplemented by ESST may require reasonable documentation.

### **Sick Leave**

**Sick Leave Hours accrued prior to the 2024-2025 school year may be used in the same capacity as ESST listed above.**

**Beginning July 1, 2024 new sick leave hours will be referred to as SL/ESST and follow the ESST information as listed above. Minnesota Statutes related to ESST will supercede all bargaining unit language related to Sick Leave. Sick Leave information listed below is for reference, and will be updated upon completion of the Rule Making Process through the Department of Labor and Industry related to ESST.**

**Usage:** Sick leave with pay shall be allowed whenever an employee's absence is found to have been due to illness or disability, which prevented the employee's attendance at school and performance of duties on that day or days.

**Accrual:** Employees will earn sick leave prorated to hours worked at the rate of one (1) day for each calendar month to a maximum annual accumulation of twelve (12) days. Sick leave may accrue as specified by bargaining group limits. (Note: Sick leave shall be pro-rated for part time employees and shall accumulate on a pro-rata basis.)

**Confidential Employees** shall earn sick leave at the rate of 1 1/4 day per month for a total of 15 days for each year of service while employed with the School District. New employees shall have one year's sick leave credit when they begin work. Starting the second year, sick leave shall

accumulate at 1 1/4 day per month. Sick leave shall be prorated for part-time employees and shall accumulate on a prorated basis.

### **Use of Sick Leave**

- Employees may use accumulated sick leave for themselves or their dependent children (under age of eighteen (18) or under age of twenty (20) still attending secondary school) for the following reasons: medical illness, dental emergencies, medical disability associated with childbirth, and routine appointments that cannot be scheduled outside the workday.
- For routine appointments that cannot be scheduled outside the workday, however, it is highly recommended that employees schedule these appointments at the beginning or at the end of the workday.
- Employees may use sick leave up to their daily authorization. Payment will be based on the number of hours that the employee is scheduled or contracted to work. Sick leave allowed will be deducted from the accrued sick leave days earned by the employee.
- Employees may use accumulated sick leave, during a 12-month rolling period from the date of use, as stated in M.S. 181.9413, to care for their: (1) child, including biological child, stepchild, foster child, adopted child and child under 20 years of age who attends secondary school; (2) adult child; (3) spouse; (4) sibling; (5) parent; (6) grandparent; or (7) stepparent.
- Unused sick leave days may accumulate to a maximum of 180 days of sick leave per employee. Sick leave pay shall cease when the long term disability insurance plan becomes operative after four consecutive months for those offered this benefit.
- The School District may require an employee to furnish a medical certificate from a qualified clinician as evidence of illness, indicating such absence was due to illness, in order to qualify for sick leave pay. However, the final determination as to the eligibility of an employee for sick leave is reserved to the School District. In the event that a medical certificate will be required, an employee will be so advised within a reasonable time.
- Time off in this section shall be allowed in accordance with State statute and/or federal law.

Confidential Employees may accumulate to a maximum credit of 150 days of sick leave per employee. After accumulation of 150 days, sick leave earned and unused shall accrue with accumulation to 30 extra days, in a special sick leave reserve. This is to be used by the employee for catastrophic illness upon request to the Superintendent. Sick leave pay shall cease when the income protection insurance plan becomes operative. Also, Leave will be granted with pay for up to six (6) days per year, deductible from sick leave, in the event of serious illness or injury in the immediate family of the employee which requires the employee's attention. For the purpose of this section immediate family includes spouse, parents, children, children's spouse, brothers and sisters. If you have used all six (6) of these days you may utilize 1/2 day of sick time and 1/2 day as a pay deduction, vacation, personal or comp time.

Library/General Paraprofessionals: Illness or injury in the immediate family for which an employee requests time off shall be allowed. (One-half the daily rate of pay shall be deducted from the wages of that employee and one-half day shall be allowed from accrued sick leave. However, a full day of sick leave shall be allowed for the care of a sick spouse or adult child.)

### **Examinations**

The District may request a physical or psychological examination to determine an employee's capability to perform their assigned duties. The District will select the clinician or psychologist and pay for the examination. Employees experiencing repeated absences due to illness may be required to furnish medical proof of illness.

### **Vacation**

Vacation time will accrue on July 1 of each year for eligible employees. In order to be eligible for vacation leave, employees must work a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week and a full year (minimum of fifty (50) weeks or two hundred fifty (250) days, including scheduled workdays, holidays, and vacation. Employees hired on or after January 15<sup>th</sup> in a given school year, will be on



year one of the vacation schedule until the following year of service. A maximum of ten (10) days of vacation may be carried over year to year. Unused vacation days beyond the ten allowed days of carryover will be lost.

Please refer to the [Vacation Accrual Grid](#) for specific and up-to-date information regarding vacation time and accruals.

\*\*An employee shall not forfeit vacation under this section if a vacation request, consistent with this section, is denied by the School District.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Bereavement leave shall be granted to an employee in the event of a death using the list below with the corresponding number of leave days. Part time employees are eligible for this benefit on a pro rata basis. (Note: step relationships are irrevocable)

Up to five (5) days (can be non-consecutive) will be granted for those listed below.

- spouse
- parent (step), former guardian
- child (step), present or former legal dependent
- mother-in-law (step), father-in-law (step)
- sibling (step)
- son-in-law (step), daughter-in-law (step)

Up to two (2) days (can be non-consecutive) will be granted for those listed below. In the event an employee is in charge of funeral arrangements a maximum of five (5) days (37.5 hours) of leave shall be granted.

- grandchild (step)
- grandparent (step) of employee and spouse
- brother-in-law (step), sister-in-law (step)

One (1) day of bereavement will be deducted from sick leave for those listed below. In the event an employee is in charge of funeral arrangements a maximum of five (5) days (37.5 hours) of bereavement leave (not deducted from sick leave) shall be granted.

- nephew, niece, uncle, aunt
- spouse of brother-in-law (step), spouse of sister-in-law (step)
- ex-spouse

In the event an employee is in charge of funeral arrangements for death of a person not listed above, a maximum of three (3) days (22.5 hours) of bereavement leave shall be granted.

Requests to use vacation will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis at the discretion of the employee's supervisor, taking into consideration staffing needs. Conflicts in requests will be resolved through consensus. Employees shall submit their request electronically in advance.

**Termination of Employment:** Vacation shall be prorated, if termination occurs before the end of the fiscal year. Upon termination of employment, if the employee has completed one full year of service, accrued vacation time shall be paid to the employee. Any vacation time taken and not earned shall be deducted from the employee's final check.

### **Holidays**

Employees must work a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week and two hundred fifteen (215) days to be eligible for holiday pay for those holidays that fall within their authorized work year. Employees on leave of absence without pay will not receive holiday pay for days that fall within their leave.

The twelve(12) holidays will include: Independence Day; Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day; the Friday after Thanksgiving; Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day; New Year's Eve Day; New Year's Day; President's Day (if school is not in session); Good Friday; Memorial Day; and Juneteenth.

**Confidential Employees:** If school is in session on President's Day, each employee will receive a floating holiday at their discretion.

**Work Before and After Holiday:** To be eligible for holiday pay, employees must have been compensated for all scheduled hours of their last scheduled workday before the holiday and for the first scheduled workday following the holiday. Exceptions may be granted by the employee's supervisor based upon workload, but all scheduled hours in a holiday week must be accounted for.

**Rate of Pay:** A day of holiday pay will be an average workday, as calculated by dividing the employee's total authorized weekly hours by five (5).

**Holiday Schedule:** A holiday which falls on a Saturday will normally be celebrated on the preceding Friday. A holiday which falls on a Sunday will normally be celebrated on the following Monday. If an observed holiday falls on a scheduled student day, the Superintendent may designate an alternative day as the holiday, determine that each employee will receive a floating holiday to use at their discretion, or determine that the holiday will be paid out. If a paid holiday falls during an employee's vacation an additional day of vacation will be granted.

### **Jury Duty**

Employees shall be granted a leave of absence with pay any time they are required to report for jury duty. Employees shall be paid the difference between jury duty (excluding travel allowance) and their regular wage.

### **Emergency Leave**

**Library/General Paraprofessionals Only** - Leave will be granted with pay for up to three (3) days per year, deductible from sick leave, in the event of serious illness in the immediate family of the employee which requires the employee's attention. Immediate family is defined as spouse, parents, children, children in-law, brothers and sisters and includes the spouse's immediate family.

### **Leave of Absence without Pay**

At the discretion of the District, employees may be granted a leave of absence of up to two (2) years without pay or benefits. Employees returning from an unpaid leave will be placed at the discretion of the District. Please note that if an employee is eligible for leave under the Federal Medical Leave Act, the District will require sufficient documentation to support the leave. An employee may request a leave of absence by submitting a Leave of Absence Request form through Frontline Central. Please refer to the [section for Leaves of Absence](#) for more information and procedure on requesting the leave of absence.

### **Failure to Report to Work**

Any unapproved absence or failure to return to work from an approved leave will constitute failure to report to work and, as such, at the discretion of the District, will be considered a voluntary resignation by the employee.

### **Work Year**

Adjustments will be made if the work year is more or less than 260 days. If a fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) has less than 260 work days, an adjustment will be made by way of using a vacation day or a pay deduct. If a fiscal year has more than 260 work days, an adjustment will be made by way of time off or additional compensation. See copy of [fiscal calendar](#) to determine work days for the respective year.

### **How to Make Requests for Time Off:**

Employees should use the following information to request time off through Red Rover, the district's absence request program.

### **Red Rover**

To use the Red Rover system for time punches and absence entering, employees should go to the [Red Rover Login Page](#) or click on the Red Rover link on the district website under the HR Department, [Important Links](#).

### **Sub Calling System**

For those employees needing substitutes and RedRover for absences, you must log on to the [Red Rover login page](#) or you may call Teachers On Call (TOC – 800-713-4439) to enter your absence. The substitute line is available 24 hours a day.

It is essential to notify the substitute caller as early as possible. The best thing to do is to call the evening before your anticipated absence. If you are not certain that you will be out and decide to wait until morning, call before 6 AM. Waiting too long will not allow you to enter the absence into the sub caller and you will be required to call the building Administrator directly.

Be prepared to give the date and time of your call, your name, the school at which you work, the grade or subject that you teach, the reason for your absence (illness, sick child, emergency, etc.) and how many days you expect to be gone.

You may attach lesson plans to the absence by using the online system, or make arrangements to have plans picked up by another staff member, fax or email them to your school or call your building secretary. Note that in the section ([Substitute Teacher Information](#)) you are asked to keep an emergency plan in your desk drawer in case you are not able to prepare one. When you know you are going to be absent ahead of time (conferences, medical appointments, etc.), enter the absence into [Red Rover](#) as soon as possible.

### **TimeClocks Plus - Time Off Request**

Employees should use the following information to request time off through TimeClocks Plus, the district's absence request system for staff not requiring a substitute.

### **Splitting and/or Doubling of Classrooms Due to Absences (Teachers Only)**

Teachers who are assigned additional students due to splitting or doubling classrooms because of absences will receive additional compensation. Teachers who spend two (2) or more hours in front of additional students due to these circumstances will receive an additional \$80. Teachers who spend less than two (2) hours in front of additional students due to these circumstances will receive an additional \$40

Updated

## **Substitute Employees**

In the interests of consistency for the students and substitutes in an absence, teachers and employees requiring a substitute are expected to keep a folder in his/her desk or area that contains information to support the substitute in an absence. The following items are examples of things that could support a substitute in an absence:

- Lesson plans
- Class lists/seating charts
- Instructional grouping lists
- Class and team schedules
- Teacher schedule, *including any duties (except for bus duties)*
- Fire drill, intruder, bomb threat and tornado information
- Extra activities for substitutes

- Medical information for special needs students
- School rules
- Behavior rules
- Any special instructions for mainstreamed students
- First aid information

The Building Administrative Assistants can reasonably assume that this information will be available for your substitute; please be sure communication for your substitute is in place.

## **Data Information**

### **Data Privacy**

Most information obtained as the result of employment with the school district is classified as confidential or private under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The same is true of data which relates to current or former students. Respect for the privacy of our students requires that you discuss any student issues only with those staff members and parents who need to know the information. In addition to student information, confidentiality is expected in other areas, including staff information or school district business information. The District will comply with requests for public information as they are received in accordance with state law and school district policy. Requests should be directed to the proper department for processing.

Please refer to [Board Policies](#):

- 515 – Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records
- 406 – Public And Private Personnel Data

### **Data Retention- Employee Records**

During your employment with the school district, information about you must be kept on file. Your confidential personnel record will include basic information such as your address, phone number, social security number and employment related information – performance reviews/assessments, applications, salary data, corrective action records, etc. A separate medical file is maintained for each employee, which has limited access. You may review your personnel file by contacting Human Resources for an appointment and making a written request.

Integrity is a core value in the Willmar Public School District. Intentional inaccuracies on official school district documents, such as time sheets, job applications, etc. are prohibited and are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Data Retention- Student Records**

A general rule on all records is to retain all data generated on or about a student in the Student's Cumulative file. Please refer to the following information as you determine what should be kept in regards to student data. If you have questions, please seek out the assistance of an administrator.

### **What needs to be kept?**

#### **Educational Data (any document maintained as a result of a student's attendance)**

- Teacher notes
- Test results
- Health records

- Enrollment information
- Disciplinary and attendance records
- Grading books
- emails/voicemails in which the student is the subject
- Parent correspondence

Specifically:

- Student Accident Reports
- Achievement and standardized test results
- Emergency care information
- Membership data
- Health and immunization information
- School nurse notes
- Health room log
- Cumulative File (including record of access, log in/out, record for review or transfer of student records)
- Demographic Info (district census, student directory info, student family info- includes dissolution or custody orders)
- LEP reports (language)
- Extra and Co-curricular participation records
- Homeschool records
- Preschool screening
- Nonresident pupil attendance applications/agreements
- School performance data (yearly report cards and transcripts)
- Auxiliary organization records (Clubs, interest groups, student councils, athletic assoc., graduation programs, activity funds- treasurer's records, bylaws, membership records, meeting minutes)
- Driver education files

What does not need to be kept?

Records kept in sole possession of the maker, used as a personal memory aid, and not accessible or revealed to others. (must be thrown away at the end of the school year).

Keep:

- Keep all records with respect to services provided by the district
- Understand the "desk drawer" exception and its limited application
- Keep teacher notes on students that were shared with another person
- Keep all email messages in which a student is the subject of the email. (print it)
- Transcribe all voice mail messages in which a student is the subject. (notate date received & transcribed, & transcriber)
- Keep records central and locked
- Use restraint when writing emails or leaving voicemails
- Allow parents/guardians access to testing materials of their student
- Review and follow the school district's data retention schedule.

Do Not Keep:

- Destroy records outside of the retention schedule
- Disclose educational data outside of the MGDPA regulations
- Use the "desk drawer" for numerous records of students

- Show your “desk drawer” protected records to others
- Create teacher records with the expectation that they won’t be included in the students file
- Assume emails or voicemails won’t be discoverable
- Delete email or voicemails of which a student is the subject (outside of records retention policy)
- Assume emails forwarded to the attorney are “privileged”
- Destroy test protocols which identify a student (outside of records retention policy)

## Employment Information

### Budget Requisitions

The primary purpose of a budget is to translate the district’s educational goals into fiscal terms. Applying the available budget to those goals is vital to effective school operation. All faculty, staff and administrators, in cooperation with the members of the school board and the community, play important roles in the planning and budget design process. We believe that involving faculty, staff, administrators and the school board in the preparation and implementation of the budget is vital as it acknowledges the critical nature of the connection between the district’s resources and the children it serves.

Each building Principal is responsible for the portion of the budget that is specific to her/his site. All expenditures must be approved by the building administrator prior to the dollars being committed to a purchase. Staff may not purchase or obtain materials or services without the proper authorization. Staff members purchasing items with an approved purchase order will be personally responsible for the costs of the purchase.

#### The Requisition Process

You may obtain requisition forms from your building secretary. They **must be submitted** to the Principal for approval. After being approved by the Principal, the building secretary will type the purchase order and send it to the district office for approval. Once it is approved, the order is submitted. Please allow two to four weeks for an average order. With the approval of the Business Official/Bookkeeper, you may obtain a blanket purchase order to cover several small purchases made over time from a particular vendor. Blanket purchase orders are issued for a maximum amount (“Not to Exceed...”) and/or an expiration date (“Valid to...”). You must reference your blanket purchase order number on any receipts subsequently submitted to the district office. Receipts from all purchases made under a district purchase order must be submitted to the business office immediately after purchase. If you need to retain the receipt in the event of needing to make a return, you may submit a photocopy to the business office.

### Complaints

Willmar Public Schools strives to be an employer of choice. Employees who are concerned about a specific employment situation or have questions regarding a policy or procedure should direct their concern to their immediate supervisor. If, after an initial conversation, the concern is not resolved, the employee should request to meet with their building administrator.

An employee should discuss their concern with the building administrator and seek resolution of the concern. If concerns remain after this contact, the employee may contact the Director of Human Resources with the concern. The Director of HR will strive to mediate the concern and seek resolution.

If an employee still feels the concern has not been addressed they may request to meet with the Superintendent. The Superintendent will have final say in any matters outside of Master Agreements.

Please refer to [Board Policy](#):

- 103 – Complaints – Students, Employees, Parents, Other Persons

## District Wide Committees

Circumstances sometimes call for the creation of district-wide committees. Faculty members are encouraged to join and actively participate on these committees. Information about committee purposes and meeting times may be obtained from your building principal.

Some of the District Wide Committees include:

- Insurance Committee
- Safety Committee
- Staff Development
- Wellness Committee (Employee)
- Wellness Committee (Student)

## Dress Code

It is important that students, parents and community have confidence in the staff of the school district and that staff members have confidence/pride in themselves while providing students quality educational services. These educational services are provided by: certified staff, secretaries, custodians, cafeteria staff, paraprofessionals and administrators. It is the district's expectation that district staff present a professional image to parents, students and the community. To help present this image and foster confidence in the district, staff members are expected to dress in a manner which is appropriate for the position they hold in the district. Supervisors will discuss appropriate dress with individual staff members.

Clean, neat, professional dress is expected for student contact days. Suggested dress includes: clothes that are clean, not torn, worn or faded out, cover the midriff and appropriate for special student activities.

Business formal is preferred for conferences, open houses and/or parent community contacts. Suggested dress includes: dress slacks, skirts, jumpers, blouses, knit shirts, dress shirts, etc.

Each site may choose to have casual Fridays or spirit days for special events. The following are examples of inappropriate attire on student contact days:

Low cut tops, short skirts, shorts (unless knee length), strapless, tank top (unless with an over shirt), or spaghetti strap tops, tee shirts (underwear type) or tee shirts with inappropriate (offensive type) logo for school settings, sweat suits or sweat pants (P.E. may be an exception during class time), soft/plastic footwear (beachwear) rubber/plastic flip flops and hats worn indoors.

Visible tattoos and piercings must not contain profane or obscene language or graphics nor should they interfere with the learning environment.

A building Principal may make exceptions to the dress code rules, set forth above, inappropriate attire under extenuating circumstances (caps/hats for medical reasons, etc.) on a case by case basis.

## Extra-curriculars & Co-curriculars



Employees are encouraged to apply for positions with extracurricular and co-curricular positions. All positions are posted on the district website under Employment Opportunities and then under Athletics.

### **Salaried Employees**

Salaried employees that coach or are involved in activities associated with Willmar Public Schools must report to their practice or event as soon as possible upon student dismissal. Staff must not miss student contact time for regular practice. If there is a scheduling issue, the employee/coach should work with the Activities Director and their Building Principal to come to a resolution that is in the best interests of student academic achievement.

Salaried employees are excused 1 hour prior to the bus leaving for away events as stated in the [Athletics and Activities Handbook](#). Salaried employees are excused 1.5 hours prior to the start of home events unless unique circumstances exist and are approved by the Activities Director and Building Principal. They must ensure their absences are entered into Red Rover and that a substitute (if needed) is communicated with or arrangements have been made prior to their absence.

Salaried employees will not be deducted paid time for their roles in extracurricular activities or events for which they are identified as a board approved coach.

### **Hourly Employees**

Hourly employees that coach or are involved in activities associated with Willmar Public Schools must report to their practice or event as soon as possible upon student dismissal. Staff must not miss student contact time for regular practice. If there is a scheduling issue, the employee/coach should work with the Activities Director and their Building Principal to come to a resolution that is in the best interests of student academic achievement.

Hourly employees are excused 1 hour prior to the bus leaving for away events as stated in the coaching handbook. Hourly employees are excused 1.5 hours prior to the start of home events unless unique circumstances exist and are approved by the Activities Director and Building Principal. They must ensure their absences are entered into the absence management system and that a substitute (if needed) is communicated with or arrangements have been made prior to their absence.

Hourly employees should make up for any time missed due to extracurricular events in order to meet the terms of their letter of assignment. This must be discussed with the employee's direct supervisor. If an hourly employee does not want to make up this time they must use their personal leave or vacation time or seek approval for unpaid time.

Hourly employees will not be deducted paid time for their roles in extracurricular activities or events for which they are identified as a District approved coach unless they choose not to make up their assigned time.

**Note:** Willmar Public Schools will work with individuals who wish to coach to determine if a temporary flexible schedule to meet the academic and extracurricular needs of students as well as the department in which their work can be made.

These positions will be paid based upon the rate tables established in the Teacher Master Agreement. Please refer to the most current [Master Agreement](#) for updated information. (Note:



Extra-Curricular pay rates are currently within the Teacher's Master Agreement and are therefore subject to bargaining. Adjustments to the compensation and updates to the table will take place in conjunction with the settlement of the associated Teacher contract.)

## Field Trips

School funded field trips often require additional chaperone support. This is handled in a few different ways. Parents may volunteer or staff could be asked to chaperone the trip. Parents that are employed by the district may also volunteer to chaperone their child's field trip. In those circumstances, the following requirements and expectations apply:

### Expectations of a volunteer chaperone:

- Responsible for a group of kids throughout the event.
- Ensuring kids are in appropriate places at the appropriate times.
- Handle basic accountability and discipline needs.

### Expectations of a school funded chaperone:

- Responsible for a group of kids throughout the event.
- Ensuring kids are in appropriate places at the appropriate times.
- Handle basic accountability and discipline needs.
- Support volunteer chaperones with their responsibilities.
- Support and train volunteer chaperones with basic accountability and discipline needs.
- Handle higher level discipline needs.
- Work with and report to the event leader the needs of other chaperones.

## Background Checks & Bullying Training

All volunteers chaperoning a field trip must have an approved background check on file and must have completed the required bullying training. A volunteer/chaperone can complete all of this on the district website under the [Volunteer](#) webpage.

### Employees supporting students:

Employees that support a student on a regular basis will have the first opportunity to support the student on a field trip, extra-curricular or co-curricular event. If that employee is not able or does not want the opportunity, the opportunity will be opened up to other employees in the same field. If more than one employee wants the opportunity, the decision will be the administrator's decision taking into account the number of times each employee has had the opportunity, specific student need, and the employee's performance.

Example: A sign language interpreter works with a student who is going on a field trip to the Capitol in St. Paul. This interpreter would have the first opportunity to accompany the student on the field trip. If they are not able or willing to go, the field trip opportunity will be offered to the other sign language interpreters.

## Food & Nutrition Services

**Come join us for a school meal!** Here is some key information you should know:

**Nutrition:** The Director of Food & Nutrition Services and staff plan Breakfast and Lunch menus for each site. Input for menus is received from students, parents, Head Cooks and school staff. Menus are planned to meet the Meal Pattern Requirements for Breakfast and Lunch established by the United States Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Department of Education. Our goal is

to serve meals to all students, offer meals to staff, and encourage good health/wellness habits per the District's [Wellness Policy \(Policy 533\)](#).

**Meal Payment Options:** If you would like to set up a meal account to receive a PIN (Personal Identification Number), please contact the Food and Nutrition Services Business Coordinator at 231-8526 or [wpsfns@willmar.k12.mn.us](mailto:wpsfns@willmar.k12.mn.us).

- You can also complete an [Auto Withdrawal form](#) (found on the district website) to have money taken from your checking or savings account,
- Pay via credit or debit card or
- Sign up to Pay Online using Parent Portal.

**PIN Number:** Students and staff enter their PIN number into a keypad after they make their meal selections which is matched with picture identification. Your PIN number is confidential – please do not share with others.

**Meal Account Balances:** When your account balance becomes zero (\$0.00), you will receive notification that your account balance is low or negative. You are expected to keep your meal account in the positive and reimburse the district in a timely manner.

**Meal Account Deposits** - The funds will be in the account before Lunch in most cases:

- The school office – before 9:00 am
- WEAC (District Office) – between 8:00am-4:30pm or the WEAC District Office Drop Box (On the Front of the Building)

**Adult Meals from Home:** We encourage healthy options if bringing meals from home. No pop or soda is allowed in the cafeteria in front of students. Milk may be purchased for \$.65 per carton. Breakfast is available for purchase for \$2.40. Lunch is available for purchase for \$5.00. Staff can also purchase ala carte items offered in the Cafeteria.

**Please Note:** All lunches are a “closed lunch” to students. This means students are NOT allowed to leave the building to purchase lunch and then return to the building. Students are not allowed to order or receive takeout food. Employees wishing to leave the building on lunch may do so only on their 30 minute unpaid lunch break.

## Fundraisers

Fundraising for any event, project or material must be approved in advance. Employees wishing to fundraise should communicate with their building principal regarding the need, the fundraising activity(s), and the financial implications. Other questions regarding fundraising should be directed to the Business Office located at the District Office.

Please refer to Board Policy #511 for more information: [Student Fundraising](#)

## Gifts & Gratuities

As a representative of a public employer, it is essential that your work be perceived as being free from external influences. It is important to avoid the appearance of impropriety or the appearance of a conflict of interest with respect to gifts given to school district employees.

### General Statement of Policy

- The school district recognizes that students, parents, and others may wish to show appreciation to school district employees. It is the policy of the school district, however, to discourage gift-giving to employees, and to encourage donors instead to write letters and notes of appreciation or to give small tokens of gratitude as memorabilia.

- It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee to solicit, accept or receive either by direct or indirect means, a gift from a student, parent or other individual or organization of greater than nominal value.
- It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee to solicit, accept, or receive a gift from a person or entity doing business with or seeking to do business with the school district. Employees may accept items of insignificant value of a promotion or public relations nature. The Superintendent has discretion to determine what value is “insignificant.”
- Teachers may accept free samples of textbooks and related teaching materials from publishers.
- This policy applies only to gifts given to employees where the donor’s relationship with the employee arises out of the employee’s employment with the school district. It does not apply to gifts given to employees by personal friends, family members, other employees, or others unconnected to the employee’s employment with the school district.

**Definition**

“Gift” means money, real or personal property, a service, a loan, a forbearance or forgiveness of indebtedness, or a promise of future employment, that is given without something of equal or greater value being received in return.

**Procedures**

Any employee considering the acceptance of a gift shall confer with administration for guidance related to the interpretation and application of this policy.

**Violations**

Employees who violate the provisions of this policy may be subject to discipline, which may include reprimand, suspension, and/or termination or discharge.

**IEPs, 504 and Re-evaluations**

Please refer to your building leadership, the Assistant Director of Special Education, or the following School Board policies for more information:

- [504 Section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)
- [FERPA \(Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act\)](#)
- [Selection/Re-Evaluation of Resources Procedures](#)

**Identification Badges**

Your ID badge is an important part of your work attire. It lets students, parents, co-workers, vendors, and the general public know who you are. It is an important part of providing a secure environment for our students, and to ensure that everyone who enters our schools is identified. Your ID badge must be worn anytime you are at work. It should be worn in a visible spot on the upper portion of your body. Badges will be reprinted from the District Office each year during the summer in preparation of the upcoming school year. The photo used will be from the previous school year’s school photo. Once completed, they will be sent to the buildings for distribution. New hires will have their picture taken at the District Office upon hire.

Those employees not wearing ID badges in district facilities should be questioned as to their purpose within the facility to encourage safety of our students and employees.

Employee badges also serve as free entry to most athletic events in the district. The badge will not serve as free entry to Sub-Section, Section or State events, or events not taking place on district property.

## Layoffs & Seniority

The Willmar Public School District prides itself on its fiscal responsibility. Should layoffs or non-renewals be necessary, the District will follow procedures within master agreements and/or state statute. Teachers being non-renewed for any reason will be notified as early as possible and in accordance with the Teacher Master agreement.

Library/General Paraprofessionals: In the event it becomes necessary to lay off employees, employees shall be laid off in the inverse order of their seniority standing on the applicable full-time or part-time seniority list. A full-time employee may bump an employee on the part-time list with equal, or closest to equal, number of hours provided the full-time employee has more seniority in the School District. Part-time employees may not bump into a full-time position.

Employees whose positions are eliminated or whose hours are reduced shall receive written notification from the district. Employees shall then be permitted to exercise their seniority standing to displace the most junior employee with the same, or closest to, number of hours on the applicable full-time or part-time seniority list. The employee shall indicate to the employer in writing the intent to bump within five (5) working days following receipt of layoff notice.

An employee must have the qualifications for the position assumed under the above procedure and the competency to perform in the position. The decision on qualifications and competence shall be made by the School District and is grievable. An employee who assumes a different position as a result of the above procedure assumes the classification wage schedule and hours, which apply to that position.

An employee who exercises bumping as stated above and starts work in another program shall be on a probationary period for forty (40) working days. During the probationary period, the employer shall retain the right to transfer the employee to another program or position if the employee's performance is not satisfactory.

As an alternative, the employee whose position is eliminated may accept layoff. An employee on layoff will be recalled to any open position for which the employee holds qualifications and competence.

Layoff notices will be provided to employees determined to be without a position after the bumping process is completed.

Recall: Recall shall be in reverse order of layoff sequence.

Full-time employees who have exercised their above stated rights and receive fewer hours and/or wages as a result shall be entitled to a preference, even over people on layoff, for any subsequent full-time position opening for which the employee is qualified and has the requisite competence.

An employee may refuse to return to an open position not equal in hours and/or at a lower wage rate than the position previously held by the employee before being laid off without jeopardizing further recall rights.

### **Seniority for Library/General Paraprofessionals:**

Library/General Paraprofessional: The School District will maintain seniority lists for employees in the appropriate unit. There will be a full-time and part-time seniority list. When a full-time employee is laid off and is offered and accepts a part-time position, the said employee will continue to accrue

seniority as a full-time employee for a period up to two (2) years if the employee is not reinstated or offered reinstatement to a full-time position in the interim.

When an employee voluntarily moves from a full-time position to a part-time vacancy or vice versa (not a result of layoff), the employee will continue to retain seniority previously accrued in the previous status but will not accrue additional seniority in the previous status. In such cases, the employee will accrue seniority in their new status as a full-time or part-time employee. Past-accrued seniority will be reinstated when an employee resumes active duty in either of full-time or part-time classifications.

An employee will earn seniority credit beginning with his/her contract date. In the case of ties in seniority, the last four digits of the employee's social security number will determine the order of seniority. The higher numbers will be deemed to have more seniority.

Individuals hired on a substitute or a limited appointment basis shall not accrue seniority.

## Meet & Confer

Employees and employee groups may request the employer to meet and confer concerning non-negotiable items of concern to their employment.

Employees and employee groups may request such a meeting by submitting a request in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance of a proposed meeting date and shall include with such notice a proposed agenda outlining in detail the items requested to be discussed.

The goal of meet and confer is to seek resolution to non-negotiable items of concern. This is accomplished through discussion, brainstorming and implementation of ideas or resolutions. The meet and confer process will not be subject to any grievance procedure and will not include discussion of grievances.

## Opportunities

Positions which meet or exceed three and a half (3.5) hours a day and seventeen and a half (17.5) hours a week will normally be posted internally for a period of not less than three (3) calendar days, or externally for not less than five (5) calendar days, including Saturday and Sunday. Vacancy notices will be posted at the District Office of Human Resources and on the District internal website.

### **Web Site and Job Postings**

All open positions are advertised on the district Web site under the About Us tab then selecting [Careers](#). If you are interested in being considered for one of the jobs posted you are asked to apply for the job electronically through the [Careers](#) link on our website. All qualified applicants who apply are considered for job openings as they occur. If you are chosen for a different position a transfer form is completed to complete the process.

Library/General Paraprofessionals: Postings for all new or existing vacancies will be sent directly to all Library/General Paraprofessionals. If there is a change of job description, it will be noted in the vacancy posting. Current employees including employees on lay-off status will be given first consideration for any position or vacancy based on qualifications. Where qualifications of two or more current employees are equal, the most senior employee shall have rights to the position. Employees must submit a written or electronic application. When vacancies and unit employees' applications occur resulting in multiple staff assignment changes, the School District may utilize the following procedure: Vacancies will be posted pursuant to information above; normally, any assignments resulting from the original vacancy will not be officially filled until the entire vacancy

process resulting from the original vacancy has been completed, unless the position change results in an increase of salary or hours of work.

### **Transfers**

Employees interested in transferring to an open and posted position should express their interest through the internal application process on the district website under [Careers](#).

Employees interested in transferring to a position that is not open or posted should complete an [Assignment Preference request form](#) available on the district website under Human Resources forms.

### **Hiring of Relatives**

The school district may employ immediate family of employees provided they are not placed in positions with direct supervision of one another.

### **Right of Assignment**

The school district has the right of assignment of all employees in the district.

### **Background Checks**

Any person offered employment in the district for any kind of position is required to complete a background check. Employment will be contingent on successful completion and review of the background check.

Employees have the right to request and obtain a copy of the background check report from the district, which may be provided to the employee at a cost not exceeding the actual cost of the report. Employees have the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of information contained in a background check report. MN Statute 123B.03 BACKGROUND CHECK.

Please also refer to Board Policy 404 – [Employee Background Checks](#) for more information.

## **Parent Concerns**

Regular communication between teachers and parents is essential to a positive understanding between the school and the home. When a parent/guardian (or a concerned citizen) wishes to talk with you, remember you are responsible for creating an open and supportive environment that encourages the honest expression of concerns and enables you to assist the parent/guardian in resolving any problems. While you may feel it is desirable to request that an appointment be made for such conversations, please remember that such meetings are a part of your job, and be as flexible, honest, and receptive as possible whenever they occur. In no case, however, should meetings be held during class time or in the presence of students (unless the student is specifically involved).

The suggested process is as follows.

1. Set an appointment with the parent(s)/guardian(s), yourself, and any other staff members involved. Whenever practical, the student in question should be present. Consider informing the principal of the appointment in case s/he has any insights or information to share with you.
2. Be prepared for the meeting. Take a few minutes to create a hospitable space for the conversation. You may want to have student work, copies of textbooks, progress reports, and/or other relevant information available.
3. Ask the parent if s/he has discussed this matter thoroughly with the student and ask the student to tell you how s/he understands the situation. Listen closely. Take notes if it will help you be clear. Remember that all parents love their children and they are there, talking with you, because they know you care about the child too.

4. Try to come to a mutually agreeable solution. You might begin by asking the student and parent what they see as the next step(s) and work with that as a starting place. Remember - it is your responsibility to facilitate the success of the meeting.
5. If the parent/guardian is still not satisfied with the conclusions reached at this level, suggest that the parent request a conference with yourself and the principal. Let the principal know as soon as possible.
6. If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached at the building level, the principal may suggest a meeting with the District Administrator.

Remember, a parent with a concern is a parent who has information we need in order to make our schools better. Such occasions are also opportunities to build positive relationships with people about whom we care. While we hope that good communication will minimize parent concerns, we believe positive relationships are the way we deal with the concerns that do arise.

## Performance

### **District Expectations**

The District expects its employees to produce quality work, maintain confidentiality, work efficiently, and exhibit a professional and courteous attitude toward other employees, parents, and students. The District expects employees to comply with all applicable Board policies, work rules, administrative regulations, job descriptions, terms of this Handbook and legal obligations. Violation of any policies, regulations and guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

### **Job Responsibilities**

Your position has specific responsibilities which you are expected to perform. It is important that the responsibilities of each job are fully understood. Please speak with your supervisor if you have any questions about the functions you are able to perform in your job. In addition, most jobs will require employees to be flexible and willing to take on new assignments as a result of their responsibilities changing over time. Therefore, it is very important that you clearly understand what your supervisor expects of you and that you keep abreast of changes in your job. Check with your supervisor if you have questions regarding your job description duties.

### **Corrective Action**

Corrective action may be taken by supervisors to address the behavior or performance of employees whose conduct disrupts the activities and goals of the school district. Corrective action may also be taken to address work rule violations and other prohibitive acts. This process may include oral warnings, written warnings, suspension, demotion or termination.

### **Your Supervisor**

We encourage open communication throughout the district. Your supervisor should be the first person you talk to regarding most questions or concerns you may have. He/she can explain operations, protocols and procedures and can refer you to written materials or other resources for additional information.

### **Initial Evaluation and Performance Review**

Evaluation of administrators, non-teaching professional personnel, non-certified and auxiliary personnel job performance is a continual process that focuses on improvement and is based on assigned job-related criteria and duties. Employees will be informed of the criteria upon which the appraisal shall be based and evaluators will be appropriately trained in the use of the relevant appraisal instrument. Except for teachers (see next paragraph for process), all employees will participate in an annual evaluation process, completed on District-approved forms, with their supervisor. Memoranda, correspondence, and reports can be used to document employee performance. An employee, other than a teacher, who receives a 'Needs Improvement' rating on



an annual performance evaluation will have his/her salary frozen at its current rate for one year and shall be ineligible for an increase in salary for the upcoming year.

The initial performance evaluation and periodic performance review varies by contract/agreement. Please check your contract to see how the evaluations are completed, and whether you are under a probationary period and the length of that probationary period. Evaluation of probationary and continuing contract teachers is described in the Teacher's Master Agreement. For non-certified personnel that do not have an agreement, performance evaluations will normally take place annually by your direct supervisor or the building principal.

### **Staff Development**

The district has an established Staff Development program to assist you in remaining current and up-to-date in your job duties. Work time is scheduled on the school calendar each year for staff development. You are encouraged to take advantage of this time to increase your knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform your job, which is a benefit to you, our students, and our coworkers.

Please refer to School Board Policy 425: [Staff Development](#). Offsite staff development is also available by supervisor approval.

The district staff development funds are also utilized in this manner. Please refer to School Board Policy 412: [Expense Reimbursement](#).

## **Progressive Discipline**

During the first twelve (12) months of employment, the District will have the unqualified right to terminate an employee. After completion of the twelve (12) months, employees may be disciplined or terminated for cause, based on a finding by the District. Except in cases of termination, the goal of discipline will be remediation. Discipline will normally be prescribed in the following manner, unless circumstances warrant otherwise:

- Step 1. Oral Reprimand
- Step 2. Written Reprimand
- Step 3. Final Written Reprimand
- Potential Step 4. Suspension without Pay
- Step 5. Termination

Please note, it is the District's discretion to bypass any or all of the normal discipline steps based on the severity and nature of a violation. The District will normally bypass the progressive steps and proceed directly to termination where serious misconduct occurs, including but not limited to, instances of time theft or other fraudulent conduct. Please refer to School Board policy 403 for more information: [Discipline, Suspension and Dismissal of School District Employees](#)

The District also reserves the right to non-renew the employment of at-will employees as it sees fit.

## **Transportation & Travel**

### **Driving for Work Related Purposes**

If you use your vehicle for work related purposes you are expected to:

1. drive defensively;
2. wear your seat belt;



3. allow plenty of time;
4. make accommodations for bad weather; and,
5. carry appropriate equipment in your vehicle to ensure your safety (i.e., in the winter: blankets, boots, shovel, etc.).

### **Transporting Students:**

Only district vehicles may be used to transport students. In order to transport students an employee must complete specific, on-line training at school district expense, relevant to the transport of students. Also, a driving record check will be completed prior to being approved for use of the school vehicle. In order to receive this training, please contact Megan Carlson at the front desk of the District Office by calling 320-231-8515 or emailing her at [carlsonme@willmar.k12.mn.us](mailto:carlsonme@willmar.k12.mn.us)

The use of school district vehicles may be used in limited capacities to transport students and student families. Transporting students and families is a last resort and must be used sparingly. All other avenues should be exhausted prior to the use of transporting students/families with approved district vehicles. All drivers must have approved and active Type III Driver certification on record at the district office. These situations open the district to greater liability and this should be considered in the decision-making process. At no time is an employee's personal vehicle allowed to be used to transport students and/or families.

The following is guidance on when approved school district vehicles and approved drivers may be used to transport students and/or families.

Instances a district vehicle may be used:

- IEP meetings
- Re-entrance meetings
- Pre-school screening

Instances when a district vehicle may NOT be used:

- Family nights
- Conferences
- Appointments – dental, medical, immigration meetings, etc.
- Before/after school activities
- Crisis situations – the police should be contacted

### **Seat Belt Use**

All employees are required to use seat belts when operating or riding in a motor vehicle on school district business.

### **Cell Phone & Electronic Equipment Use**

On August 1, 2019 a new law became effective regarding the use of cell phones and electronic use while operating a motor vehicle. All staff are required to comply with this law while conducting company business.

For more information on the law, refer to the MN Department of Public Safety website for the Hands-Free Law: <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ots/hands-free/Pages/default.aspx>

The actual law, MN Statute 169.475 can be found at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/169.475>

### **Vehicle Insurance**

All employees who use a vehicle for work related purposes must carry insurance on their vehicle as required by the State of Minnesota. You may not use your vehicle for work related purposes if your vehicle is not covered by the required insurance. You may be required to show proof of current vehicle insurance.

### **Driver's License**

All employees who use a vehicle for work related purposes are required to have a valid driver's license.

### **Parking**

Please see your supervisor or site/department for the specific policy on parking issues.

### **Mileage**

Mileage will be paid for travel conducted for District purposes and during an employee's regular work hours unless otherwise approved. School vehicles should be utilized prior to any mileage being entered. Mileage should be turned in on a regular basis using the Employee Reimbursement Claim Form (Form F412) which is inclusive of the Mileage Record Form (Form F 031) located on the [District Website under Forms](#).

- **Mileage between district buildings:** Mileage between buildings will be calculated using the charts below.
- **Inconsistent Travel or Travel to Homes:** Mileage that is conducted for the District on an inconsistent basis or to homes of students or families should be kept track of using the actual mileage.
- **Consistent Travel:** Mileage that is conducted on a regular basis and between buildings should be calculated based on the charts listed below and considered for a **Mileage Stipend**.

**Mileage Stipends:** Stipends will be paid to employees whose position requires regular and consistent travel between District buildings. The amount of the stipend will be calculated using the charts below and taking into account the number of days the travel will occur. Any other type of travel stipend should be negotiated and/or clarified on the employee's letter of assignment.

### **Travel Time**

Travel time between District buildings should be calculated based upon the chart below and should be included during an employee's duty day. This chart takes into account an approximate average of the necessary time to travel between buildings inclusive of weather, parking, etc. There will be instances where less time is needed based on the season or specific instance criteria, just as there will be instances where more time is needed. This is considered an average and should be used as a guideline when creating schedules and to pay employees for associated travel time.

### Mileage Chart

Actual Mileage	District Office	Senior High	Middle School	Roosevelt	Kennedy	Jefferson	ALC	Lakeview	Prairie Lakes	Focus House	CCS	Lakeland
District Office		4	1	2	0.5	0.75	0.3	3	3	0.6	2	2
Senior High	4		5	6.5	5	5	4.5	1.5	1.5	4.75	6	3.5
Middle School	1	5		2	0.75	1.25	1.25	3	3	0.25	1.5	1.25
Roosevelt	2	6.5	2		1.75	1.25	1.75	5	5	1.75	0.5	3
Kennedy	0.5	5	0.75	1.75		0.5	0.5	3.25	3.25	0.5	1.25	2
Jefferson	0.75	5	1.25	1.25	0.5		0.5	3.5	3.5	1	1.25	2.25
ALC	0.3	4.5	1.25	1.75	0.5	0.5		3	3	0.85	1.75	2.25
Lakeview	3	1.5	3	5	3.25	3.5	3		0.5	3.25	4.5	2.25
Prairie Lakes	3	1.5	3	5	3.25	3.5	3	0.5		3.25	4.5	2.25
Focus House	0.6	4.75	0.25	1.75	0.5	1	0.85	3.25	3.25		1.25	1.5
CCS	2	6	1.5	0.5	1.25	1.25	1.75	4.5	4.5	1.25		2.5
Lakeland	2	3.5	1.25	3	2	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.25	1.5	2.5	

MINUTES	District Office	Senior High	Middle School	Roosevelt	Kennedy	Jefferson	ALC	Lakeview	Prairie Lakes	Focus House	CCS	Lakeland
District Office		15	10	10	5	5	5	10	10	5	10	10
Senior High	15		15	15	15	15	15	10	10	15	15	15
Middle School	10	15		10	5	10	10	10	10	5	10	10
Roosevelt	10	15	10		10	10	10	15	15	10	5	10
Kennedy	5	15	5	10		5	5	15	15	5	10	10
Jefferson	5	15	10	10	5		5	15	15	10	10	10
ALC	5	15	10	10	5	5		10	10	5	10	10
Lakeview	10	10	10	15	15	15	10		5	15	15	10
Prairie Lakes	10	10	10	15	15	15	10	5		15	15	10
Focus House	5	15	5	10	5	10	5	15	15		10	10
CCS	10	15	10	5	10	10	10	15	15	10		10
Lakeland	10	15	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	

\*\*\*Mileage and Travel time for stipends as well as day to day travel will be determined using the charts above. Scheduling for purposes of positions shared between buildings will be based on the amount of time listed in the Minutes section. All charts above are based on a one -way trip. <1mile=5 min, 1-3miles=10 min, 3+miles=15 min

## Payroll & Benefits

### Basic Information

#### Exempt and Nonexempt Employees

Each employee is designated as either exempt or non-exempt from federal and state wage and hour laws. Non-exempt or hourly employees are entitled to overtime pay under specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. Non-exempt employees are entitled to time and one-half their "regular rate" of pay for each hour worked over a 40-hour period in a work week period.

Exempt or salaried employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. Exempt employees must meet the criteria of specific tests outlined in wage and hour provisions.

#### Personal Information Changes

For a variety of reasons (such as tax, pension, or benefit reporting) it is important that your records are current. If there are any changes in your name, address, telephone number, number of dependents, insurance beneficiaries, etc., it is your responsibility to notify Human Resources and/or Payroll. You must make a request for a name or address change by using the Frontline Central system and completing the corresponding request form.

## **Payday**

Employees are paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> (or the closest work week day to it) and the last working day of the month in which they work. In the event the pay date falls on a weekend or holiday, employees will be paid on the last work day prior to that date.

**Non-exempt employees** are paid for time worked in the previous pay period. For example, an employee works 36 hours between May 1 and May 15. They will be paid for these 36 hours on May 31st. Time worked between May 16 and May 31 will be paid on June 15.

**Teachers (exempt - salaried)** receive their first check on the fifteenth (15th) day of September. Teachers are scheduled to receive nineteen or twenty-four semi-monthly paychecks and must make their selection prior to the start of the contract year. ([Refer to the Teacher Master Agreement for more details.](#)) Teachers may select upon hire.

Please refer to the district website under the HR department, [Payroll Information](#) for the specific payment dates each school year. For additional information, employee's should also refer to their [Master Agreement](#).

When there are more than 260 "payable days" in a fiscal year, the district makes payroll adjustments and pays year-round employees for all days worked in a year.

All hourly employees will be paid using a straight hourly process. Employees will be paid based upon the days and hours they work in a given pay period.

## **Overtime**

Ideally, all jobs will be structured so that normal work assignments can be completed during a regular workweek. There may be instances, however, when employees will need to work overtime to meet special demands. Overtime is paid at the rate of one and one half times the non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay for hours worked in excess of 40 in a workweek. Only time actively worked will count toward the calculation of overtime. District overtime guidelines are:

1. All overtime must be authorized by your supervisor in advance, and
2. Exempt employees are ineligible for overtime.

Willmar Public Schools work week begins on Monday at 12:00 am and ends on Sunday at 11:59pm.

If you have questions regarding your overtime eligibility, please contact Human Resources.

## **Comp Time**

The use of comp time is eliminated effective August 1, 2012. Employees will be paid the appropriate rate of pay for time worked beyond their scheduled time. Comp Time is no longer an acceptable option for handling hours beyond the employees regularly scheduled work day.

## **Time Clocks**

All Non-Certified employees are required to use the time clock system and are responsible to ensure their time is accurate. This includes correcting any errors to their start/end times as well as lunch break periods. Employees should look at their time on a weekly basis to ensure its accuracy.

They should contact the appropriate person (as stated in the table below) with questions or changes.

Should a salaried employee not fulfill their contract hours on a daily and/or weekly period, the amount of time missed will be deducted from the employee’s assignment. At the same time, should an employee work beyond their assignment, this amount of time worked over the contract will be compensated in accordance with their Master Agreement. Hourly employees will be paid for all hours worked. Overtime will be paid beyond 40 hours in a week – Monday through Sunday.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Secretaries	All Buildings	Direct Supervisor
Custodians	All Buildings	Head Custodian or Buildings and Grounds Manager
Special Ed Paras	All Buildings	Special Education Coach
Food Service Employees	All Buildings	Head Cook or Food Service Director
Confidential	District Office	Direct Supervisor
Library/General Paras	All Buildings	Building Administrator
Liaisons & Bilingual Paras	All Buildings	Building Administrator
Other Miscellaneous	All Buildings	Building Administrator

A non-contract employee will be paid strictly pursuant to the time they turn in to payroll via the time clock system. The pay cycle for non-contracted employees will be paid out one pay cycle behind the actual dates worked. A calendar of these pay dates is located on the District website under [Human Resources>payroll](#).

## Benefits - Insurance

The Willmar Public School District is dedicated to offering competitive benefits. Some of these benefits are listed previously as sick leave, personal leave, vacation and holidays. The following is an explanation of benefits related to group insurances.

The selection of the insurance carrier and policy shall be made by the School District taking into consideration recommendations from the district’s insurance committee. To participate on this committee, please contact the Benefits Specialist for information and meeting dates.

**Health Insurance:** The Willmar Public School District offers its eligible employees health insurance through a provider selected by the District with input from the Health Insurance Committee. Employees will be eligible for participation in District group insurance starting the first day of the month after their Hire Date through the last day of the last month of employment. The opportunity for enrollment is within the first thirty (30) days of initial employment or within thirty (30) days of a change in employment status or life changing event.

The School District has available to all eligible employees a high deductible health plan who elect to participate. The School District’s contribution amounts to the combination VEBA coordinated health insurance plan described in this section. Any additional cost shall be borne by the employee and paid by payroll deductions.

When both husband and wife are employed as full-time employees and desire family coverage (as opposed to single coverage for each), the full amount of both single premiums shall be applied to their family coverage premium.

Employees on a half-time basis or more are eligible for health and hospitalization insurance on a pro-rata basis. All employees employed less than 12 months but at least 9 months will receive the School District's contribution for the summer months.

Confidential Employees: Coverage for medical insurance may continue after retirement or while on leave of absence if the employee so chooses and the insurance carrier approves. Payment of the insurances by the School District or by an individual after retirement or on requested leave of absence will be determined by state and/or Federal regulations.

Contributions to the Active Employees' Plan: The School District will make an annual contribution to individual accounts under the health reimbursement arrangement in accordance with the following schedule:

The School District shall make contributions to individual health reimbursement/savings accounts on a prorated basis consistent with payroll cycles. The first contribution will start the month after the date of hire and will be prorated based upon the employee's Full Time Equivalency and the number of months remaining in the plan year.

All contributions on behalf of a VEBA or H.S.A. plan participant shall cease on the date the participant is no longer covered under the high deductible health plan.

Payment of Administrative Fee: Administrative fees allocable to individual accounts of active employees who are active participants in the VEBA Plan shall be paid by the individual employee account. Administrative fees allocable to the individual accounts of former employees shall be paid from their account. Administrative fees allocable to the individual accounts of retirees shall be paid from their account. Administrative fees shall be paid from the account if the VEBA or H.S.A. Plan is terminated or the Employer Contributions.

With the transition to WEX for these services, the ability to deduct the administrative fee from the employee account has lapsed. The district will pay these fees until an alternative solution is found, or WEX has updated their systems to accommodate this need.

**Health/Hospitalization Insurance and Dental Insurance:** Full-time and part-time employees will be eligible for the District Health/Hospitalization Insurance and Dental Insurance Plans, as defined below:

- **Full-Time:**  
Employees authorized for no less than thirty five (35) hours per week and no less than one hundred seventy (170) days per year (based upon a school year position; year round positions will be prorated).
- **Part-Time:**  
Employees authorized for less than thirty five (35) hours per week, but no less than seventeen and a half (17.5) hours per week, and no less than one hundred seventy (170) days per year.  
**Note:** Part time employees will be eligible for health coverage in compliance with Affordable Healthcare regulations. Should a part time employee be employed under more than one "group", the district will offer benefits based upon the total number of hours/days an employee is scheduled to work. Benefits will be offered based upon the group contribution in which the employee has the majority of their part time hours/days. If the hours/days are equal between two groups, the employee will receive the benefit contribution from the group with the highest benefit contribution.
- **Plan Year:**  
The Plan year will run from July 1 to June 30.
- **Deductible Year:**

The Deductible year will run January 1 to December 31.

- **Newly Hired:**

In the school year first employed, the District will contribute a prorated amount of Health Insurance and VEBA or H.S.A. funds.

- **Spouses employed by the district:**

When both spouses are employed by the district and desire family coverage (as opposed to single coverage for each), the full amount of both single contributions shall be applied to their family coverage. Any set asides for deductibles based upon agreements will occur first, and the remaining single contributions will go toward premiums. The District's contribution to any health plan shall not exceed one family premium plus deductible. This is inclusive of any District contribution available to employees on a single plan or a family plan when both spouses or dependents are employed by the district. Employees may not be "double covered" under the District's health plan while on the District's health plan. This should not be misconstrued to mean that an employee may not be "double covered" while on a spouse's plan who is employed outside of the District.

**VEBA:** Both full-time and part-time employees will be eligible for a VEBA through the District-selected vendor.

**Health Savings Account (HSA):** Both full-time and part-time employees will be eligible for HSA through the District-selected vendor for the health plan option(s) that allow for it. Employees may contribute to their HSA as allowed by IRS regulations.

**Dental Insurance:** Dental insurance is offered through a provider selected by the District for eligible employees (refer to contract/agreement for eligibility). Employees will be eligible for participation in District group insurance starting the first day of the month after their hire date through the last day of the last month of employment. The opportunity for enrollment is within the first thirty (30) days of initial employment or within thirty (30) days of a change in employment status or life changing event.

**Term Life Insurance:** The School District will provide the amount listed in the table below of term life insurance for all employees who are employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week.

**Long-Term Disability (LTD) Insurance:** Only full-time employees (as defined above) will be eligible for the District LTD Insurance Policy. Long Term Disability Insurance covering loss of time due to an accident or illness is also provided for select groups of employees. The benefit will equal 66 and 2/3% percent of the employee's salary after a qualifying period of four consecutive months (three for Teachers). Compensable loss will be reduced by payments under Workers Compensation, Social Security, or any other disability income plan or retirement program. The disability insurance coverage is available to all employees who are employed on a regular basis for a minimum of 30 hours per week. The School District will contribute up to the amount listed in the table below per year per employee as payment of the premium.

- **Eligibility:** Employees must qualify for the benefit as per the Long Term Disability policy requirements.
- **Amount:** LTD Insurance purchased by the District will be based on income support of sixty-six and two-thirds percent (66 2/3%) of the employee's basic wage, as defined by the Policy.
- **Waiting (Elimination) Period:** Employees who are disabled and absent from work for one hundred and twenty (120) [Teachers have ninety (90)] consecutive calendar days will convert to LTD on the first day of eligibility.

- **Exclusion for Pre-existing Conditions:** No benefits will be paid for disability due to a pre-existing condition, if the employee becomes disabled during the first twelve (12) months from Hire Date. A pre-existing condition is defined by the Policy.
- **Benefits:** Employees who convert to LTD will not receive District wages, paid leaves, or vacation effective the first day of LTD eligibility until such time as the employee returns to active employment.
- **Use of Sick Leave:** Employees may use accrued sick leave, if available, during the waiting period, and thereafter.

**AD&D:** The Policy will include an accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) policy.

**Additional Life Insurance:** Additional term life insurance is available to employees through payroll deduction paid in full by the employee.

**Termination:** Upon termination of employment, all District contributions for group insurance will cease on the last day of the month, except as provided for in retirement or by the insurance plans/policies.

**Selection of Carriers:** The District will make the selection of the insurance carriers and insurance policies.

**Flexible Spending Accounts:** The school district maintains a flexible spending plan to which eligible employees may contribute pre-tax dollars from their pay to cover any or all of the following three areas:

1. Unreimbursed Medical Expenses
2. Child Care Expenses.
3. Health Insurance Premiums.

The flexible spending plan year will run concurrent with a calendar year, from January 1 – December 30. Please note this does not coincide with the health insurance plan year. Employees hired during that time may participate for the remainder of the plan year. By participating in the FSA, employees can receive reimbursement of these before tax dollars and save themselves money. If employees are planning to participate in the HSA health insurance plan they need to contact the HR Coordinator, Rachel Ree during benefits enrollment prior to enrolling in the Flexible Spending Account.

**District Contributions:** Employees covered under a contract/agreement should refer to their document for district contribution amounts. For all other employees, the following is a summary of the district's contributions (full time is based upon 7 hours per day; benefits are prorated if less than full time; no insurance benefits offered if less than half-time):

- **Health Insurance** – Full cost of a single contract under the \$2600 deductible plan. Should an employee choose another health plan option, the employee will be responsible for the difference in premium.
- **VEBA/H.S.A.** - \$740.00
- **Life Insurance** - \$10,000 policy (employee must work a minimum of 30 hours per week)
- **Long Term Disability** - This is an available benefit for employees working 30 hours or more. The premium is paid by the employee.
- **Dental** – none
- **403(b) Match** – none

Confidential Employees, beginning July 1, 2004, who are regularly employed at least 12 months and at least 30 hours per week, shall be eligible to participate in a 403(b) matching program contribution plan pursuant to M.S. 356.24.



- The School District shall contribute, on a monthly basis, an amount (not to exceed \$575 per year) equal to the amount contributed by the employee. The School District shall make the matching contribution to a company, which the employee shall select. Employees working less than 30 hours per week may participate in the matching contribution plan on a pro-rata basis.
- The maximum career matching contribution by the Employer shall be \$15,000.
- Employees must complete a salary reduction authorization agreement by July 1st each school year for an employee to implement any changes toward the 403(b) matching plan for the next school year.
- Employees on unpaid leave may not participate in the matching program while on leave.
- Employees hired prior to July 1, 2004 will continue to be covered under the severance language for confidential employees in this handbook. The employer shall subtract the Employer contribution to the 403(b) matching contribution plan from severance pay. The balance of the severance, if such amount exists, shall be paid by the Employer.
- Employees hired after July 1, 2004 will not be eligible for severance as described in this handbook.
- Management of the portfolios of individual investments and the employer's contribution shall be solely the responsibility of the employee in whose name the investments have been made. The Employer assumes no current or future liability for contributions made to these plans or investments earnings or losses, which may accrue to these portfolios as a result of investment decisions made by the employee.

**Click the Classificiaton Grid link below for an easy to understand summary of benefits by employee group. [Benefits by Classification Grid](#)**

### **Employee Assistance Program**

The Willmar Public School District Employee Assistance Program is available to all district employees and their immediate household members. The program provides help to employees and family members with personal problems such as marital and family issues, mental or emotional problems, finances, alcoholism, drug abuse, legal problems or other concerns.

All information shared with the EAP Coordinator is held in a confidential manner and may not be disclosed to anyone without a signed release from the employee. Participation in the Employee Assistance Program is voluntary and there is no charge for assessment interviews.

Current access to EAP programs can be viewed on the District Website under [Departments>Human Resources>Employee Benefits> Employee Assistance Program](#).

### **Worker's Compensation**

All employees are covered by Workers' Compensation. If you are injured on the job, report the injury immediately to your supervisor. Seek necessary medical attention if needed. Employees are required to report an injury to the SFM Work Injury Hotline by calling 855-675-3501. You will speak with a nurse and the injury will be triaged immediately. The nurse will complete the report of injury by asking you questions and will submit the report to the work comp carrier and the district. This report needs to be made by calling the number even if medical attention is not sought. There are strict timelines to complete the report of injury in order to be covered (generally, absent extraordinary circumstances, within 14 days of injury and no later than 180 days after injury) and failure to report or file the form on a timely basis could result in a rejection of a Workers' Compensation claim.

Worker's Compensation will provide compensation for the following:

- Medical care for your work injury as long as it is reasonable and necessary
- Wage-loss benefit for part of your lost income (Three (3)-calendar-days waiting period)
- Compensation for permanent damage to or loss of function of a body part
- Benefits to your spouse or dependents if you die as a result of a work injury

- Vocational rehabilitation services if you cannot return to your pre-injury job or employer

Each contract should be reviewed for specific information regarding compensation during the three (3) day waiting period and subsequent loss of work time due to an injury.

Upon request of an employee who is absent from work as a result of a compensable injury under the provisions of the Worker's Compensation Act, the School District will pay the difference between the compensation received pursuant to the Worker's Compensation Act by the employee and the employee's regular rate of pay to the extent of the employee's earned accrual of sick leave. The employee must present evidence of receiving the check to the School District's payroll office. A deduction shall be made from the employee's accumulated sick leave accrual time according to the pro-rata portions of days of sick leave which is used to supplement worker's compensation. Such payments shall be paid by the School District to the employee only during the period of disability. In no event shall the additional compensation paid to the employee by virtue of sick leave pay result in the payment of a total daily, weekly, or monthly compensation that exceeds the normal compensation of the employee.

## Direct Deposit

Direct deposit of payroll checks is required for all employees. Requests not to use direct deposit will be considered on a case by case basis. Employees using direct deposit can access a pay stub on payday that contains the same information as a paycheck does. This pay stub is located on [ESS \(Employee Self Service\)](#). Direct deposit is a convenient and secure way to quickly access your pay.

### Common questions you may have about direct deposit

**How do I enroll?** You must complete a Direct Deposit form in [Frontline Central](#). Once completed, it will route to payroll for processing. Ensure the data you enter in the form is correct! You may also submit a voided check to payroll for confirmation of your routing and account numbers. The payroll department will need this at least 12 days in advance of your first direct deposit; otherwise a paper check will be issued.

**Must my financial institution be in Minnesota?** No, we can send your net pay to any federal or state chartered bank, savings and loan association or credit union that is a member of the Automated Clearing House (ACH) network. Most financial institutions are members.

**How will I know my check has been deposited?** You will be able to track your deposit electronically through [Employee Self Service](#) (more information later in handbook). Your monthly statement from your financial institution will also provide a record of deposits.

**When will I have access to the funds deposited?** It varies by financial institution, but generally funds are available at the start of business on payday.

**Who do I contact if the deposit is not posted to my account?** Initially, please contact your financial institution to be sure they are not late in posting to your account. If they are not late, contact the Business Official/Bookkeeper or AP/Payroll Representative in the district office.

\*\*Please refer to [Employee Self Service](#) in this handbook for further information.

## Employee Self Service

Willmar Public Schools' payroll is directly deposited into an employee's checking or savings account. All payroll information can be viewed and printed, if necessary, from the district Employee Self Service site. The online viewing of this information can be accessed through the Internet at <https://swscer.swsc.org/Smarter/login.aspx?dn=0347>.

Login by using your employee number for the User ID. Your employee number is emailed to you upon hire after you have completed your onboarding process. A temporary password is also given to you in that document. You must create a new password after you log in. You may also access the site by going to the district website at [Departments>Human Resources>Important Links > then select ESS](#). Once at ESS, use the same login procedure as previously identified.

Through this secure website, you will be able to view and print the following information:

- Current and historical payroll information, by paycheck date
- Year-to-date pay summary
- Payroll deduction and benefit information
- Leave history (summary and detail of leave earned and used)
- W-4 tax withholding information showing marital status, exemptions and extra tax, if applicable

Steps to obtain this information:

1. Enter ESS site
2. Click on My Payroll
3. It will open the full menu of options. Select your option.
  - Click Pay Stub to review your paycheck information.
  - Click TimeOff to view your leave balances.
  - Click W2 to print your W2s.
  - You may Print your stub by clicking Print Entire Pay Stub.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Racquel Skindeliem ([skindeliemr@willmar.k12.mn.us](mailto:skindeliemr@willmar.k12.mn.us)) in Payroll or Dena Horning ([horningd@willmar.k12.mn.us](mailto:horningd@willmar.k12.mn.us)) in Human Resources.

## Extended time project requests

All extended contracts or extra duty time must go through a pre-approval process. Contact your administrator with questions.

## Longevity

Longevity pay is most often a collectively bargained benefit. Longevity pay will be effective on July 1 of each year or as clarified in the group's master agreements. Employees hired on or before January 15th will advance at the beginning of their employment for the following school year. Those hired after January 15th will remain on in their longevity year placement until one year following the upcoming fiscal year.

Click the link for [Longevity Pay Grid](#) to view the most current longevity rates by employee group.

\*\*For bargaining unit longevity questions, please refer to the Master Agreement.

## New Employee Forms, Requirements and Information

As a new employee, the following forms need to be filled out for payroll and employee benefit purposes.

**W-4 & WT4 withholding form:** This information is needed in order for you to be placed on payroll.

**I-9 form:** We are required by law to have this on file before employment but absolutely no later than the first day of employment.

**Direct Deposit:** The district strives to be green and efficient. This information is needed in order to set you up for direct deposit.

**Application for health and ancillary benefits:** This information has to be filled out whether or not you desire coverage. An electronic packet from the district office explaining coverage will be sent to you upon hire. If a benefit is paid for by the district, such as life insurance, an employee will be automatically enrolled unless they opt out by filling out the proper forms.

## Hours of Service

The District reserves the right to determine hours of employment, assignment, location, and annual authorization of all employees.

To be considered a full-time employee, the employee shall be employed for a minimum of 35 hours per week, exclusive of lunch. All employees will be assigned starting times and shifts as recommended by the principal or supervisor and approved by the Director of Human Resources. Employees shall be provided a duty free lunch period of at least 30 minutes, the lunch period to be exclusive of the workday as designated.

The School District reserves the right to employ such personnel as it deems desirable or necessary on a part-time or casual basis.

When deemed necessary by the School District, appropriate training sessions may be provided for employees at full pay.

Library/General Paraprofessionals are entitled to breaks of up to 15 minutes in each a.m. and p.m. shift.

## Re-employment

Employees, if re-employed without a break in service, will (a) be credited with their previously accrued sick leave, (b) be placed on their previous salary step or pay rate, (c) be reinstated with their previous hire date, and (d) receive benefits based on their previous hire date. Employees re-employed with a break in service will “start over” for all intents and purposes.

## Resignation from Employment

### Notice of Resignation

The school district requires notice if you are resigning from employment. The district requests as much advance notice as possible in order to have some time to advertise and hire your replacement. This notice should be in writing utilizing a personal letter with your signature and effective date of the resignation.

Failure to give notice may jeopardize a future reference.

## **Timing of Separation Bonus**

The purpose of the separation bonus is to allow the school district the opportunity to plan staffing and fill vacant positions while competing with other school districts in an age of teacher shortages. It also provides a financial incentive for employees who communicate their plans early to the district.

Non-probationary certified (Teachers and Administrators) staff is eligible for a one-time separation bonus for early written notice to the Superintendent's office of their intent to leave employment at the end of the current school year. This bonus also extends to non-probationary certified staff who intend to leave during the following school year. The reasons for leaving employment are inclusive of retirement or resignation.

The bonus will be paid after their separation date has occurred. Requests for bonus payment that do not meet the deadlines will not be approved, as doing so would violate the purposes related to planning for vacancies. The bonus will be paid through payroll and all regular payroll deductions will be taken (FICA, TRA, etc. not health benefits or other benefits.)

The bonus pay deadline and corresponding amount is:

- Written or Email Notification by 4:30 p.m. January 15 = \$2,000
- Written or Email Notification by 4:30 p.m. March 1 = \$1,000

The District reserves the right to modify and/or cease this bonus at any time.

Questions may be directed to the Human Resources Office.

## **Return of District Property**

At the time of resignation or retirement, and prior to leaving the district, you will need to return all district property to your supervisor. Keys, key fobs, identification badges and all other district property are to be given to your supervisor, who will ensure that all property is returned to the department where it originated.

## **COBRA Benefits**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) requires that most employers sponsoring group health plans offer employees and their families the opportunity for a temporary extension of health coverage (called "continuation coverage") at group rates in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end (called "qualifying events").

If you are covered by the district's group health insurance plan and lose your coverage because of a reduction in your hours of employment or the termination of your employment, whether voluntary or involuntary (except for reasons of gross misconduct on your part), you have the right to choose continuation coverage. If you choose continuation coverage, you will be provided with coverage that is identical to the coverage being provided to similarly situated employees (or their family members). If you do not choose continuation coverage, your group health insurance coverage under the plan will end.

COBRA requires that you be offered the opportunity to maintain continuation coverage for three years unless you lost group health coverage because of a termination of employment or reduction in hours. In that case, the required continuation coverage period is 18 months, unless the Social

Security Administration determines that you (either employee or dependent) were disabled at the time termination or reduction of hours, and you inform Willmar Public Schools before the end of the 18-month period, in which case your coverage may be extended up to 29 months.

If you are covered by the district's group health insurance plan, your spouse will have the right to choose continuation coverage for him/herself if group health coverage is lost for any of the following four reasons:

1. Your death;
2. Termination of your employment with the district (for reasons other than gross misconduct) or reduction in your hours of employment with the district;
3. Divorce or legal separation from you; or
4. You become entitled to Medicare.

Your dependent children have the right to choose continuation coverage if group health coverage is lost for any of the following five reasons:

1. Your death;
2. Your termination from employment with the district (for reasons other than gross misconduct), or reduction in your hours of employment with the district;
3. Your divorce or legal separation;
4. A parent becomes entitled to Medicare; or
5. The dependent ceases to be a "dependent child" under the terms of the group insurance plan.

You or your family member has the responsibility to inform the Plan Administrator of a divorce, legal separation, or a child losing dependent status under the Plan, within sixty days of the date of the event or the date on which coverage would end under the group Plan because of the event, whichever is later. The district will notify the Plan Administrator of your death, termination of employment, reduction in hours of employment or Medicare entitlement.

You have sixty days from the later of (1) the date you ordinarily would have lost coverage because of one of the events described above, or (2) the date of the notice of your right to elect continuation coverage to inform the Plan Administrator that you want continuation coverage.

Additional qualifying events can occur while the continuation coverage is in effect. Such events may extend an 18-month continuation coverage period to 36 months, but in no event will coverage extend beyond 36 months after the initial qualifying event. Under certain circumstances, your continuing coverage may be cut short.

If you or your family member elects to continue coverage, you must pay the district the cost of continued coverage monthly. Once your continuation coverage terminates for any reason, it cannot be reinstated.

For further details concerning continuation of benefits under COBRA, contact the Human Resource Department.

1. The federal COBRA law applies to employers with 20 or more employees. Provisions for continuation of health benefits under Minnesota law have been amended to substantially follow the federal COBRA law, without the 36-month limitation for surviving descendants. The Minnesota Act applies to all group insurance policies.
2. COBRA ensures that employees and beneficiaries do not lose health insurance coverage because of death, termination, reduction of employment hours, divorce or separation, retirement, or other qualifying event. Employees are allowed to continue on the group health plan at their own expense after a qualifying event.
3. The employee has up to 60 days in which to decide whether to take advantage of this continuation coverage. No evidence of insurability is needed for such continued coverage.
4. Upon learning of a qualifying event, the district should provide the employee with a COBRA notice and election form.
5. Generally, former employees may elect to maintain their COBRA coverage for up to 18 months after their termination or reduction in hours, while dependents generally may elect to maintain their coverage for 36 months after the date of an employee's death, divorce, or legal separation, the employee's entitlement to Medicare, or a dependent's loss of dependent status.
6. Former employees or dependents that elect to continue coverage under COBRA must pay the entire premium for the continuation coverage.
7. In order to be certain that the district is complying with its obligation under COBRA it is important that the administrators/supervisors notify the Human Resources Department of any qualifying events to an employee in their department including an employee's termination whether voluntary or involuntary, an employee's reduction in hours, the employee's death, divorce, legal separation, the employee's entitlement to Medicare or a dependent's loss of independent status.
8. Employees who are laid off and who carry district health insurance may have a portion of their health insurance paid for a limited amount of time if they meet eligibility requirements. See Human Resources/Payroll for more information.

## Retirement

The school district requires notice if you are retiring from employment. The district requests as much advance notice as possible in order to have some time to advertise and hire your replacement. This notice should be in writing utilizing a personal letter.

Library/General Paraprofessionals wishing to retire must submit their written notice thirty (30) days in advance of their requested retirement date unless a lesser number of days is mutually agreed upon with the District.

### **District 403(b) Plan (Tax Sheltered Annuity)**

Upon employment, employees are eligible to participate in the District 403(b) plan without a District match, if authorized to work for no less than twenty (20) hours per week. Employees may contribute to these annuities with pre-tax (or post-tax) dollars up to the maximum allowed by law. In some contracts/agreements, the employer will match a portion of the employee contribution up to the maximum specified in the contract/agreement. Please check your contract/agreement to see if there is any employer match. Please contact Rachel Ree, HR Coordinator, if you are interested in signing up to participate in the 403(b) program or if you have further questions.

**Legal:** The 403(b) plan and District match will be subject to all applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

### **PERA & TRA**

All employees in the Willmar Public School District who meet minimum state plan requirements are covered under either the Public Employees Retirement Association or the Teacher's Retirement Association. The school district and the employee both contribute to the mandated state retirement plans in an amount set by law. Further information is available on the PERA Web site at [www.mnpera.org](http://www.mnpera.org) or the TRA Web site at [www.tra.state.mn.us](http://www.tra.state.mn.us).

### **Social Security (FICA)**

As an employee of the Willmar Public School District you are automatically covered under the Federal Social Security Act. The employee and the district contribute a percentage of the employee's gross salary to Social Security, up to a maximum gross earning specified by the law. Any earnings above this contribution are not subject to taxation.

Medicare, as part of Social Security, is also deducted from your check at the rate of 1.45% of gross earnings, with no maximum limit on earnings.

Social Security that is paid to you is based on a complex formula that uses your high thirty-five years of earnings. You may begin drawing it upon retirement as early as age 62. The longer you wait until retirement, the higher amount you are paid when you retire.

There are provisions built into Social Security for disability, death of spouse, etc. Social Security may be contacted directly for more information at its Web site at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

### **Retirement Group Insurance**

Eligibility of the retired employee, spouse, and dependents for continued participation in the District health/hospitalization insurance and dental insurance will be determined by applicable state and federal law.

### **Severance Pay for Library/Gen Paras and Confidential Employees**

Library/General Paraprofessional: A paraprofessional hired before July 1, 2018, whose combined part time and full-time FTE is not less than 15 total years of service in the Willmar School District and who has attained the age of 55 years, as of June 30, in the school year during which an application for retirement is made, shall be entitled to payment of severance pay following the submission of a voluntary resignation to the School District. For the purpose of this section, a full-time employee shall mean an employee working a minimum of seven hours per day for a minimum of 171 days during the school year.

Effective July 1, 2018, newly hired Library/General Paraprofessionals are no longer eligible for Severance Pay. Rather, employees may contribute to a 403(b) and receive a matching contribution of \$250 per school year with a maximum matching contribution of \$15,000.



For employees who are eligible to receive Severance Pay and elect to participate in the 403(b) matching contribution plan, the School District will subtract the amount of the employee match paid under the 403(b) matching contribution plan from the employee's severance pay.

An eligible employee shall receive severance pay in the amount obtained by multiplying 75% of unused accrued sick leave days but in no event to exceed 120 days, and then multiplied by the employee's daily rate of pay as of the date of such retirement.

In applying this section, an employee's daily rate of pay shall be the basic daily rate of pay at the time of retirement and shall not include an additional compensation for overtime or other extra compensation.

**Tax Deferral of Severance Pay.** All full-time paraprofessionals who are potentially eligible for severance pay shall receive 100% of the eligible amount to be placed into the employee's Health Care Savings Plan. The employee will not receive any direct payment from the School District for severance pay.

**Active Earning Capacity.** In order to be eligible for severance pay, an employee must be in an active earning capacity, i.e., employees on leave of absence are not eligible.

## Salary Information

**Salary Advancement:** Salary Advancement usually takes place upon settlement of all collective bargaining agreements. Advancement for employees not in a collective bargaining unit is at the discretion of the district. A salary increase is not automatic and is effective only upon affirmative action of the School District. The School District reserves the right to withhold a salary increase in individual cases as the School District shall determine.

Retroactive pay due to the timing of settlements will be issued to employees actively employed on the date the School Board approved the settlement and to employees who have retired from the School District during the affected dates. Retroactive pay will not be paid to inactive employees.

**Rates of Pay:** Rates of pay are determined in many ways. Employees covered under a contract/agreement have established rates of pay that are bargained and they should refer to their Master Agreement for detailed information. Other employees follow the guidelines established herein. A new employee must be employed on or before January 15 to be eligible to receive an increase in pay on July 1. If an employee is hired after July 15, they may receive an increase one year following the upcoming fiscal year. This new employee is, however, eligible for the new fiscal year base pay if there is an increase.

Please refer to the Rate of Pay Grids for specific information on start rates and/or pay ranges for various positions within the district. Click [Rate of Pay Grids](#) to access this information.

### **Library General Paraprofessionals:**

A new employee must be employed six months during the school fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) before being eligible to receive an increase in pay. This means that an employee or new employee will have to begin duties between July 1 and January 1 to receive an increase the following fiscal year. If an employee begins employment after January 1, this employee will receive an increase one year following the upcoming fiscal year. This new employee is, however, eligible for the new fiscal year base pay if there is an increase.

Bargaining unit employees substituting within the unit for the School District will receive their regular rate of pay.

An annual clothing stipend of \$50 will be paid to all paras who have playground duty of at least 45 minutes per day on a regular basis. The stipend will be paid ½ on October 15 and ½ on January 15.

**Seasonal/Summer Employees:** These are employees who are hired for a specific period of time usually related to the seasonal needs of the District. Examples of these employees would be the summer custodians who help in preparation of the buildings for the following school year. Please note: a person must be 15 years old by June 15<sup>th</sup> in order to work in a summer work study position.

**Moving Stipend -** Teachers approved to move a classroom upon district need **AND** are not offered time to do so during their contracted day, may receive a \$300 stipend to complete the move. Stipends will not be paid until after the Welcome Back Workshop Week in order to give teachers every opportunity to move during their contracted day. This must be submitted and approved through the building administrator. The District reserves the right to modify/cease this stipend and its process at any time.

## Safety

### Accidents & Injuries

**An accident report must be completed and given to the Human Resources department within 24 hours.**

All work-related accidents that involve personal injury or property damage **MUST** be reported to your direct supervisor as soon as possible following the accident. Prompt reporting of work related injuries is very important for protecting and preserving your access to worker's compensation insurance coverage.

Any employee who has been involved in an accident while working (no matter how slight) should submit a "First Report of Injury" by calling the Work Injury Hotline – 1-855-675-3501. If you are unable to file a report, someone who is knowledgeable of the incident must file the report on your behalf within the required 24-hour timeline. The Human Resources department will use the information provided for safety records and reporting. You will be authorized to see an appropriate doctor of your choosing. The insurer will determine if further medical treatment will be covered based upon the information provided in the accident report and the report submitted by the clinician. If you are unable to work as a result of the accident, compensation for lost time may also be available.

If you do not report an accident promptly or you do not have the authorization for an initial visit, the cost of the medical services may be denied and become your personal responsibility. Reporting all injuries is particularly important in circumstances where there may be medical problems that develop some time after the accident. A good example of this would be a fall on the job. If reported, you are assured of some protection, even if it is several days before a problem shows up. Failing to report promptly could jeopardize compensation for both medical service and lost time, should either become necessary.

More information on the Work Injury Hotline can be found on the District's website under the [HR Department > Important Links > Workers Comp.](#)

### Injury to Student

**A student accident report must be completed and given to the building principal within 24 hours.** When an accident involving injury to a student occurs, use good sense to maintain

classroom control and get the student the assistance s/he needs. If it is necessary to send the injured student to the office, an adult must accompany him/her.

If the student cannot walk to the office, call the office or, if necessary, send one responsible person to the office to request help. A student accident report form should be completed within 24 hours of the incident by the classroom teacher or other supervisor on duty and given to the building principal. A copy will be sent to the district office.

All staff members should keep first aid gloves on hand so that they can be accessed quickly in case of an emergency. Each classroom should also have a supply of bandages for minor injuries. At all times, follow blood-borne pathogens guidelines.

**The staff member in charge at the time of the injury is required to make phone contact with the parents/guardians the day of the injury.**

## **Asbestos Notification Requirements**

As a result of federal legislation (Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act - AHERA), each primary and secondary school in the nation is required to complete a stringent inspection for asbestos and develop a plan of management for all asbestos-containing building materials. Willmar Public Schools has a goal to be in full compliance with this law and is following the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law. As a matter of policy, Willmar Public Schools maintains a safe and healthful environment for our community's youth and employees.

In keeping with this legislation, all buildings (including portable and support buildings) owned or leased by the school district were inspected by EPA accredited inspectors and samples were analyzed by an independent laboratory. Based on the inspection, the district prepared, and the state approved, a comprehensive management plan for handling the asbestos located within its buildings safely and responsibly.

Furthermore, Willmar Public Schools has completed the three-year re-inspection required by AHERA. Any asbestos-containing materials are being addressed by the means of repair, and/or removal or are being managed by means of an Operations and Maintenance Plan.

Federal law requires that a periodic walk-through (called "surveillance") of any area containing asbestos be completed every six months. This is accomplished through the District's health and safety department. Short-term workers (outside contractors – e.g., telephone repair workers, electricians and exterminators) must be provided information regarding the location of asbestos with which they may come into contact. All short-term workers are required to contact the maintenance supervisor before commencing work to be given this information.

Willmar Public Schools has a list of the locations and types of asbestos-containing materials found in each school building and a description and timetable for their proper management. A copy of the Asbestos Management Plan is available for review by contacting the Building and Grounds Manager. Copies are available at \$0.10 cents per page. Questions related to the plan should be directed to the designated Asbestos Program Manager under contract with EMC. Please contact the district office for contact information.

## **Custodial or Maintenance Services**

A custodian is always available during the school day to assist in the case of an emergency. Please call the office to request to have a custodian paged.

Please encourage good housekeeping on the part of the students. Students need to be encouraged to recycle and place waste materials in the appropriate receptacle. Staff monitoring of building and classroom care will promote student pride and care of the school building and property. Bulletin

boards play an important part in the school climate. It is a good idea that they are interesting and change periodically. Displays of student work in the classrooms and the public areas are excellent teaching tools, promote student self-esteem, and enhance the school atmosphere. It is imperative that you take care of your room and office. Please keep it professionally presentable.

Each teacher is responsible for the condition of the furniture and equipment in the classroom. Please be sensitive to ventilation, light, heat, and concerns for general tidiness in each classroom. Turn off lights when leaving a room; report heating irregularities to the custodian. At the end of each day, please be sure to have students help restore your classroom and return all equipment used during a class period to its appointed place. **CLOSE** and lock all windows when you leave the room at the end of the day.

Teachers, who are involved with special activities such as athletics, clubs, band, etc., are responsible for the inventory of equipment and any equipment issued to students. Return and storage of equipment is also a responsibility of the coach or advisor.

The importance of keeping your room neat, organized, and professionally presented must be emphasized. Your classroom and office space should always be well kept! Note that your primary office and teaching space will be checked throughout the year and at the end of the year for check-out. Teachers are responsible for securing their room and all the contents within.

### **Hanging Of Materials in Building**

Tape and other adhesives are **not** to be used unless a custodian has approved its use. Absolutely no duct tape can be used.

### **Safety**

A safe, clean, attractive, and educationally conducive classroom environment needs to be maintained at all times. To ensure our schools are well maintained, please notify the custodial staff of unsafe conditions or items that need to be repaired. Any spills need to be reported immediately in order to prevent tracking of the material or a permanent stain on carpet. Classroom materials must be placed in a manner that promotes health and safety. Cords must be covered in a safe manner that prevents tripping. Boxes on high shelves must not protrude over the shelf or be stacked on top of other boxes in an unsafe manner. Staff care in monitoring the safety of students, equipment, and materials is vital and appreciated.

### **Work Orders**

Any work requested needs to have a work order. Complete the [Health & Safety Service Request](#) form on the district website. Please use the form when making a request for non-emergency custodial or maintenance services. While our custodians make every effort to respond to oral requests, please do not expect them to do so. Therefore, put all requests in writing.

## **Crisis Management**

We hope that a crisis never occurs in any school district or building. At the same time, a guide must be available to address a wide range of potential crisis situations. Please refer to School Board policy #806 – [Crisis Management](#) for more information.

## **Fire Safety**

The school district seeks to provide a safe environment for employees and students. Fire Safety is an essential element of this environment.

### **Employees should know:**

1. Location of fire alarms.

2. Location of fire extinguishers.
3. Evacuation routes.
4. Who to notify in case of fire.

Employees need to remain calm in situations involving danger to self and others, and to take precautions to prevent fires from occurring. In the event of a fire, the most important task is to sound the alarm and clear the building. Employees should not risk their safety in fighting fires.

## Lost Keys

Student and staff safety and security is of utmost importance to Willmar Public Schools. Keys and access to buildings is issued on the basis of need. Keys and key fobs are the property of Willmar Public Schools. Employees leaving employment must return all keys and key fobs. Key fob access will be removed upon termination of employment.

The key holder is responsible for their keys. If keys or key fobs are missing, employees must notify their supervisor immediately. Key fobs will be deactivated and a new fob may be issued. Physical keys may require re-coring of buildings or other appropriate action. Keys and key fobs must remain in the possession of the key holder at all times and shall not be used to open doors for anyone other than the key holder unless authorized and supervised. Keys and key fobs must not be loaned out.

## Property & Property Damage/Theft

The Willmar Public School District does not assume any responsibility for loss, theft or damages to personal property. In order to minimize risk, we advise you to not carry unnecessary amounts of cash or other valuables. If you bring personal items to work, you are expected to exercise reasonable care to safeguard them. Personal appliances such as refrigerators, coffee makers, lamps, etc. must also meet safety codes.

The school district may supply you with equipment or supplies to assist you in performing your job duties. You are expected to show reasonable care for any equipment issued and to take precautions for theft as well. Any equipment, keys and key fobs issued must be returned prior to your last day of employment. Lost equipment, keys, and key fobs will be replaced at the expense of the employee.

## Solicitations

Individuals, groups and organizations often wish to solicit employees to support a particular activity or organization. This solicitation may be charitable, political, union or for other purposes. Solicitations that are sanctioned by the district such as the Willmar Foundation or the United Way are permitted. All others need to be approved by administration in advance. The selling of tickets or merchandise by employees is permitted only on personal time in designated break areas.

Please refer to Board Policy 904 – [Distribution of Materials on School District Property by non-School Persons](#) for more information.

## Technology

## Basic Information

The recommended avenue of requesting technical assistance is by using the Help Desk website. It can be located on the district website at the very bottom by clicking on Track-It! (Help Desk). The Help Desk is monitored throughout the day and issues are then assigned to the appropriate individual.

The Technology Technicians provide first level technical support for staff and systems in their respective buildings.

The Technology Technicians are the primary means of communicating information to and from the Director of Instructional Technology. If they cannot correct the situation, they will escalate the issue.

The purchase of printers is a site-based decision and such purchases come out of local budgets. The IT department will help you identify the equipment that will best meet your needs. It does not approve the purchases. Nor is the department responsible for the purchase of printers. The purchase of printers and printing supplies, such as replacement ink cartridges is the responsibility of the local site. Due to the high cost of ink, the use of ink jet printers is strongly discouraged, even though the printers are significantly cheaper to acquire.

Building photocopiers are also networked and require the use of pass codes. The cost of printing on these machines is dramatically less than laser jet printers, let alone ink jets. You are encouraged to use these devices to their potential for your copying and printing needs.

### Logging In

The first time you log in to a district computer, it must be hard wired (i.e. plugged in to the network). Your user name and password was emailed to you (email from your application) after you have completed your hire paperwork and all of your system access has been set up. If you do not have it, please contact Renee Getz at [Getzr@willmar.k12.mn.us](mailto:Getzr@willmar.k12.mn.us) or extension 8514.

This will also be your login for Infinite Campus (if you have an Infinite Campus account).

### Network Folders

Your Network Folder provides you the ability to access your data from anywhere in the district and ensures backup protection. We encourage you to store your critical district files on the Network Drives. Please do not store any personal or non-critical files on the Network Drives. Use your local folders for those items.

#### Network Folders consist of the following: H: Drive

“My Documents” is not directed to your network folder. It is a local folder to store non-critical school and personal items, such as pictures and music. “Non-critical” means items which do not need to be backed up.

H: Drive is your personal network folder on the server. **Always save your critical curriculum based items to your H: drive otherwise they won't get backed up.** Staff network folders (H: drive) are limited in what can be saved to them.

W: Drive is a district public folder. Any district employee can use this drive in order to share items with the entire district. All contents are considered public information. No students will have access to this folder.

## **Local Folders**

Your local folders are used to store anything on your computer that is not in the network folders. Examples: My Desktop, My Documents, and the H: drive. Keep your personal items & non-critical school items in your local folders.

## **Personal Items**

Personal items may be kept on your district computer, at the risk of being “lost” if not backed up personally. We suggest that you use your own flash drives, iPods, or external hard drives to store these files to prevent losing your content due to system crashes and end-of-year maintenance. Also, please ensure your personal items are appropriate and within the technology use policy #524 – [Internet Acceptable Use and Safety](#).

## **Purchasing and the Use of Technology Hardware & Software**

All purchases, downloads of technology hardware and software are required to go through the Technology Department. Depending on the product, it may require curriculum approval as well. All software will go through a “test” lab scenario in order to avoid any issues with existing software and the network. If approved, the user is responsible for taking ownership of the product. Ownership means training, support, and general use of the product. The tech team can assist in the support of the product, but keep in mind the wide range of software throughout the district. It’s hard for the tech team to have an intimate knowledge of all software being used. You may be expected to work with the support team of the product but the tech team will be available to assist.

## **Anti-Virus Software**

Sophos is the District approved Antivirus software that is installed on all of our computers. Please do not remove it or alter it in any way.

## **SPAM**

We have a SPAM Security appliance in place. 90% of our incoming email is blocked because of SPAM. The remaining 10% is approximately 30 to 40% SPAM. That gives you an idea of how much SPAM is received and how much is blocked.

As long as you only email personal addresses and trusted business, your SPAM intake will be minimal. Here are a couple things you can do to reduce the amount of SPAM you get:

1. Don’t use your district email address on any websites including shopping, recipes, alerts, weather, etc.
2. Use caution when signing up for subscriptions. Only sign up on trusted sites.
3. Don’t add your email to forwarding lists or any type of “send to 10 friends” lists. (Bill Gates is not going to send you any money).

## **Web Filter Override Option**

When you get to a blocked website, you will have three options. You will have an option to override the filter. When you come across a blocked page, in blue it will say Web Page Blocked! Click on the “proceed” button and enter your name and password. If the writing is in Red, it means the category that the web site falls under is not a category deemed necessary to allow an override. At that time you will be given an option to request that the site be reclassified. Also, if a category is



blocked and you believe that the entire category should be unblocked, please submit a request through Track-It! (Help Desk).

### **Staff & Students Personal Computers on the District Network**

More and more staff and students are bringing personal devices to school. We now have a guest wireless network (WPS Guest) for use on these devices. Users will be able to access the internet, but will not be logged in to the district network. This means that users will not have access to network folders (H, N and W) or district printers.

### **Student Use of Staff Computers**

It is ISD 347's policy to not allow a student onto a staff member's computer while the staff member is logged on. If a student needs to use a staff member's computer for any reason, the student MUST login as themselves. Please remember that you are responsible for your computer and for ensuring the security of any student or employee data contained on it.

### **Computer LAB Time**

**Please supervise your students.** We have had many acts of vandalism and foul play with the computers in the labs. If you take students to a lab please remember to have them log off the computers. Failing to log off may result in the user's information being compromised.

### **Substitute logins**

Substitutes will receive a generic network only login (no email) with access to the public folder. This will be assigned to them by the building secretary on the days they come in to sub. Long term substitutes will be provided an email account and individual login information.

### **Printing**

If your print job doesn't print, before you attempt to print again, please check the printer to make sure it's online with no errors. Also, check the print queue on your computer. When contacting your tech support person, it's very helpful to include details of what is wrong and what steps you have taken.

### **Troubleshooting Tips**

1. Have you tried restarting the computer? -Usually this will clear up the problem.
2. Is the computer plugged in? Are the connections secured - going to both the wall outlet and the computer?
3. Is the data cord plugged securely into the wall and the computer? Do you hear a "click" when you attach the cords to both the computer and the wall port?
4. If you are using wireless, is your wireless turned on? If you are plugged in make sure your wireless is turned off.
5. If Email doesn't work – look at the bottom right corner of your monitor to see if you are online.
6. Logging on to a Windows computer – is your name in the username field? Are you logging in to willmarshigh, not the local computer?
7. If the monitor is black, is it on? Is it sleeping (press the spacebar)? Are the connections tight to both the back of the monitor and the computer unit? Blurry screens usually mean loose connections.



## Websites

**Main Web site** <http://www.willmar.k12.mn.us>

**Infinite Campus** <https://willmarmn.infinitecampus.org/campus/willmar.jsp>

District 347's Student Information System is also available from anywhere outside the District using the Internet.

## Be Green

**If you have an LCD monitor, please take a moment at the end of the day and turn it off. You can leave your computer on during the week and shut it down over the weekend.**

As a general rule, we want to keep the computers off the floor. They're magnets for dust when on the floor and they also have a tendency to get kicked and buried under personal and school items. Some exceptions can be made for those with limited desk space, standing them up can also be an option.

## Technology Staff

<p><b>Director of Instructional Technology</b> Jason Hulstein Ext. 8545 <a href="mailto:hulsteinj@willmar.k12.mn.us">hulsteinj@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>	<p><b>Technology/HR Administrative Assistant</b> Connie Jensen Ext. 8518 <a href="mailto:jensenc@willmar.k12.mn.us">jensenc@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>
<p><b>Network Administrator</b> Jayson Christoffer Ext. 8534 <a href="mailto:christofferj@willmar.k12.mn.us">christofferj@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>	<p><b>Systems Analyst- WEAC</b> Ryan Grothem Ext 8578 <a href="mailto:grothemr@willmar.k12.mn.us">grothemr@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>
<p><b>Network Administrator</b> Thomas Jensen Ext 8550/8426 <a href="mailto:jensent@willmar.k12.mn.us">jensent@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>	<p><b>System Analyst- WHS/Jefferson/PLEC</b> Abe Jacobson Ext. 8444 <a href="mailto:jacobsonabe@willmar.k12.mn.us">jacobsonabe@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>
<p><b>Technology Technician - WHS</b> Tim Whitemore Ext. 8344 <a href="mailto:whitemoret@willmar.k12.mn.us">whitemoret@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>	<p><b>Technology Technician - Lakeland</b> Nicholas Collins Ext. 5154</p>
<p><b>Technology Technician - Kennedy Elementary/ALC</b> Lori Tusa Ext. 6712 <a href="mailto:tusal@willmar.k12.mn.us">tusal@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>	<p><b>Technology Technician - WMS</b> Lisa Wendlandt Ext. 6078 <a href="mailto:wendlandtl@willmar.k12.mn.us">wendlandtl@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>
	<p><b>Technology Technician - Roosevelt Elementary/JLC</b> Nicholas Collins Ext 7585/5154 <a href="mailto:collinsn@willmar.k12.mn.us">collinsn@willmar.k12.mn.us</a></p>

## Copiers

Production of copies is the responsibility of the individual staff member. High speed copiers are available at Kennedy Elementary and the Willmar Senior High. You will need to plan ahead in order

to acquire mass quantities of an item as you will need to send it over, allow the printing, and have time for shipment through Inter-School Mail back to your location.

If you choose to use your building copier for 25 or less copies, you will be required to enter a passcode to use the machines. If you have questions about how to use the machine, ask for help from someone in your office. Do not, however, expect office staff to make your copies for you.

### **Copyrighted Materials**

The district directs its students and staff to comply with the federal copyright law. Federal law makes it illegal to duplicate copyrighted materials without authorization of the holder of the copyright, except for certain exempt purposes. Unauthorized reproduction or use of copyrighted materials by district employees or students is illegal and unethical. Violations of the copyright law may result in criminal penalties, civil suits and/or disciplinary action. Individuals violating provisions of the copyright law or this policy assume all liability for the action. Administrative guidelines have been developed to help educators interpret copyright law requirements.

## **Visitors**

Parents and community members are always welcome at school; they are asked to sign in at the office upon arrival and they should be wearing a visitor name badge. We ask and expect that parents or community members who wish to visit classrooms will make prior arrangements through the principal. However, this does not preclude drop-in visits by school administrators, board members or researchers...so be prepared.

All teachers are asked to take a few minutes on an occasional basis and remind their students of the common courtesy we extend to anyone who is visiting. This includes a class greeting (or an individual student who serves as the class ambassador and greets visitors), polite responses to any questions that might be asked, and silence if and when the visitor(s) and you may be talking. Help your students develop the social skills they need to be successful by reinforcing these behaviors.

### **Sales Representatives/Solicitors**

Sales representatives are not allowed to approach employees during the school day unless they have been cleared through the office and they either have an appointment with the employee or the employee wishes to talk with them during a free period.

### **Visiting Children**

Students from other schools may or may not be permitted to visit school while classes are in session. Check with your building principal regarding your school's policy.

## **Volunteers**

It is a school policy that all visitors and volunteers must report to the school office when they enter the building. Due to security reasons, insurance liability, and in case of an emergency, it is important to know who is in the building and why. A volunteer will be given a name tag to wear while they are in the school.

To ensure the safety of our students, we require criminal background checks on the following:

- Any volunteer who accompanies students off campus (i.e. chaperones for field trips).
- Any volunteer who is responsible for working with students on campus, but outside of the regular classroom structure.

- Any volunteer who volunteers on a regular basis for a long period of time. (If you are unsure whether a volunteer meets these criteria, contact Human Resources for further clarification.)

Volunteer background checks are required every five years. To inquire whether a person has a cleared voluntary background check on file or to determine when it was completed, please contact the Human Resources office.

The online criminal background check requires authorization for a variety of criminal background checks:

- National Sex Offense History: Provides a sexual offender registry check of all 50 states plus the District of Columbia.
- Criminal SuperSearch: A criminal search for 47 states plus the District of Columbia.
- Social Security Number Trace: Provides the name, aliases, 10 year address history, and all social security numbers associated with the individual. Verifies that the social security number is valid, gives year of issuance and state issued.

The background checks will be done at the volunteer’s expense and information will be kept confidential. Human Resources staff members will review the results of each background check. If there are any concerns regarding the results of a background check, Human Resources will let the Supervisor know of the results and the volunteer will be notified. The online form includes an option for volunteers to request a copy of their own report.

The volunteer must also maintain confidentiality and are required to complete the Bullying Training located on the district website.

Please have volunteers go to the [Volunteers webpage](#) on the District website for [background check information](#) and [Bullying Training](#) completion.

## Updates during the School Year

Section Updated	Information Updated	Page #	Date updated

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## Appendix A

**School Board Policies** referenced within this Employee Handbook can be found on our website, [www.willmar.k12.mn.us/domain/461](http://www.willmar.k12.mn.us/domain/461).

- 103- Complaints - Students, Employees, Parents, Other Persons
- 401- Equal Employment Opportunity
- 403- Discipline, Suspension and Dismissal of School District Employees
- 404- Employment Background Checks
- 406- Private and Public Personnel Data
- 410- Family and Medical Leave
- 412- Expense Reimbursement
- 414- Mandated Reporting of Child Neglect or Physical
- 415- Mandated Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults
- 416- Drug and Alcohol Testing
- 417- Chemical Use and Abuse
- 418- Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free School
- 419- Tobacco-Free Environment
- 425- Staff Development
- 511- Student Fundraising
- 514- Bullying Prohibition
- 515- Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records
- 522- Student Sex Nondiscrimination
- 524- Internet Acceptable Use and Safety
- 533- Wellness
- 806- Crisis Management
- 904- Distribution of Materials on School District Property by Non-School Persons

## **Quick Links to Forms and Websites:**

### Websites:

- [Willmar Public Schools District Website](#)
- [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)
- [Frontline Central](#)
- [Red Rover](#)
- [ESS \(Paychecks\)](#)
- [Workers Compensation Information](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Public Safety](#)
- [US Department of Labor- Wage and Hour Division](#)

### Quick Forms Reference:

- [Discrimination & Harassment Complaint Form](#)
- [District Website Staff Forms](#)
- [Frontline Central Forms](#)