

RCW

Paraprofessional

Guidebook



2025-2026

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Paraprofessional Guidebook

PARAPROFESSIONALS

As a paraprofessional, you have an important and challenging role within the school system. Whether you are a general education, special education, or English Learner paraprofessional, you are an integral team member, assisting students in meeting their educational goals. The information provided in this handbook is intended to provide you with answers to your questions and guide you in your work with students. The resources in this handbook are a starting point for you. You are an important member of your district's education team. If you have questions that are not answered in this handbook, be sure to ask your supervising teacher(s) or another colleague.

Special Education Paraprofessionals: Students who have been evaluated and found to meet Minnesota eligibility criteria to qualify for special education. These assignments could include child-specific para and classroom support para.

Members of the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) team have access to the IEPs of students with whom they work. Copies of classroom accommodations and IEP goals may be provided in a manner that allows ready access. Implementing the IEP is a significant focus for all service providers and paraprofessionals. Some students may have specific paraprofessional and/or behavior plans as part of their IEP.

English Learner Paraprofessionals: Students who qualify as English Learners (ELs).

Paras who support English Language Learners with the guidance and direction of the English Language Teacher.

Supervision

Para duties may include supervision of the cafeteria, playground, locker room, bathrooms, hallways, crossing guard, etc.

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Working as a Paraprofessional: A Quick Guide

Paraprofessionals assist teachers and school staff to provide a quality educational experience. They support students, especially those with disabilities, who are learning English or facing learning challenges, to help them succeed in the general curriculum.

Professionalism

When students are present, you are considered on duty. If you are on break, please use the staff lounge. Avoid using personal devices when students are present, as it may not be clear that you are on break. Sign out in the office if you leave the building during your lunch break; you should not leave during a 15-minute break.

While on duty, demonstrate professional behavior:

- **Dress Appropriately:** Follow the district's dress code, consider the weather, and wear suitable attire (e.g., raincoats, winter gear, vests for recess duty).
- **Punctuality:** Be on time and in your assigned area. For example, if your day starts at 7:50, be ready in the lunchroom by 7:50.
- **Positive Attitude:** Promote a positive culture with staff and students. Follow the PBIS System.
- **Professional Conduct:** Avoid discussing other staff members or students with coworkers.
- **Food and Drink:** Be mindful of what you consume in front of students and follow the supervising teacher's guidelines.

Social Media Guidelines

- **Maintain Professional Boundaries:** Refrain from friending or following students to ensure a clear distinction between personal and professional relationships. If you do, exercise extreme caution.
- **Mandatory Reporting:** As a mandated reporter, you must report any inappropriate behavior or illegal activities involving students.
- **Privacy Settings:** Familiarize yourself with and use restrictive privacy settings.
- **Confidentiality:** Do not share or post confidential information, including student names or descriptions.
- **Positive Comments:** Keep any comments about the school district positive, even if you disagree with certain decisions.
- **Limit Communication:** Avoid direct messaging or instant messaging with students, even for school-related topics, to maintain professionalism.
- **Use During Breaks Only:** Access social networks only during your break times, not while working.

Consistency and Confidentiality

Paraprofessionals must support teacher methods, materials, and techniques, especially in

front of students, parents, and staff. If you have questions, please discuss them privately with the teacher, as confidential information may be involved.

Confidentiality Includes:

- **Privacy of Information:** Protect personal details and records.
- **Sensitive Information:** Handle sensitive data in files carefully.
- **Legal and Ethical Obligations:** Follow laws like FERPA, HIPAA, IDEA, and adhere to ethical standards.

What Information is Confidential?

- **Personally Identifiable Information:** This includes the student's name, parent's name, address, social security number, and any other details that can identify the student.
- **Education Records:** All institutional records used in decisions about a student, including special education files, reports, observations, and verbal disclosures from family or service providers. This also includes lists of students in special education.

Working with Teachers

- Communicate with the classroom and supervising teachers about student progress.
- Ask for clarification if unsure about tasks.
- Show initiative and support students as directed by the teacher.

Working with Students

- Reinforce what the teacher has taught
- Implement and support the teacher's behavioral management strategies.

District Procedures-

Absences:

- Enter your absence in Red Rover and Time Tracker for approval and payment (sick/personal time)
 - School Secretaries are not able to do this for you unless it is past your duty time.
 - ** Red Rover will not let you enter a time-off request if it is less than 1 hour before your scheduled duty time.
- Absences should be entered 24 hours in advance or by 6 am the day of. *If this is not possible, please contact the school office and notify an administrator or a member of the office staff.*
 - If you need to leave early due to illness, please speak with your supervisor before doing so.

For questions about Red Rover or Time Tracker, contact Tara Hinderks. Remember to log

unplanned absences in Time Tracker when you return.

Time Clock Punches:

- You must be inside the building to punch in and out, not from home or your vehicle.
There are 3 time clock stations in the building:
 - Student Office
 - Mailroom
 - Bathroom by the cafeteria

School Calendar:

- Check the 2025-2026 ESP calendar on the District website or in the mailroom.

Hours of Work:

- Hours are based on your assignment and will be set by your supervising teacher or building administrator.

Pay Periods:

- Paydays are the 15th and last day of each month. Enter clock-in/out times in Time Tracker for supervisor approval. For questions, contact Tara Hinderks.

Cell Phone Use:

- Do not use your cell phone during work hours unless you are on break. Keep it out of sight and silent.

Supervisors:

- Your supervising teacher and building principal are key contacts for information and evaluations.
- If you work in Elementary, you report to Principal Egge.
- If you work in High School, you report to Principal Mills.
- Your supervising teacher(s) will be the general education classroom you are working with and special education teacher. You will be communicating with these teachers on your daily routine and job duties within the classroom.
- Chain of Command- for concerns or conflicts you have not been able to resolve
 - Classroom Teacher
 - Case Manager
 - Principal
 - Superintendent

Supervision Duties:

- **Library**

- Help students check out books
- Check in books and return to shelves
- Monitor student behavior
- Transition students between music and pe
- Read Aloud to students
- Keep library organized and clean
- Repair damaged books
- **PreK Morning Supervision**
 - Supervise students as they arrive in the morning to play.
- **Hallway Duty**
 - Monitor Hallways and bathrooms
- **Crossing Guard Duty:**
 - Wear yellow safety vest
 - Pick up equipment (Stop Sign) from the office
 - Report to your assigned crosswalk
 - Remind students and parents to use crosswalk
 - Report any issues to the principals
- **Cafeteria Duty Expectations:**
 - Attend meeting in cafeteria with Mrs. Egge
 - Stay in your assigned area and monitor students
 - Present a friendly and positive attitude to all students
 - Wipe tables after each student
 - Sweep messes
 - Help students follow the Lunchroom Behavior Expectation Matrix
 - Alert custodial support of spills
 - Wear gloves if handling food or condiments
 - Report behaviors to Principal
- **Recess Duty Expectations:**
 - Attend meeting in cafeteria with Mrs. Egge
 - Yellow Safety Vest
 - Walkie- use to ask for medical or behavior assistance
 - Whistle
 - Weather Appropriate Clothing
 - Line up Students and transition in and out of the building following the Jaguar Way Matrix
 - Return all recess equipment to the building

 - Follow the Active Recess Plan
 - Stay in your assigned zone and supervise that area
 - Prevent issues before they occur if possible
 - Communicate behavior or safety issues to Principal

Lockers:

- You will be provided a school locker for your personal items. There are no locks on the lockers- you can request one if you plan to leave your purse and other items of value.

Crisis Manual / Procedures:

- Review emergency procedures and be ready to assist during drills and emergencies (lockdowns, evacuations, etc.). These will be practiced on District Day.

Discipline Policy:

- Follow the Discipline Flow Chart. Fill out incident reports if necessary and submit them to an administrator. Reports are in the mailroom. Refer to the online parent-student handbook for more details.

Email:

- You are provided with an RCW email address. Check your RCW email daily. You can access it from devices in the lounge or your assigned device. Just a reminder that school emails are public documents that can be viewed at any time. Professional use only.

Breaks:

- 15 minute breaks are paid and must be taken in the building. Lunch breaks are unpaid and can be taken in or out of the building. There is no need to punch in and out for breaks, however, you must report to the student office if you leave the building. 30 minute lunch breaks are automatically deducted. A refrigerator and microwave are provided for staff use. Please label any items you leave in the refrigerator and freezer.

Mailboxes:

- You are provided a school mailbox. Please check your mailbox at the beginning and end of your shift.

Evaluation:

- Paraprofessionals will be evaluated by an Administrator at the end of their first year. They will then be placed on an every other year rotation for evaluations.

Supporting Students:

- Be an active participant in the classroom and support your student. You should not be making copies or prepping materials for teachers or staff. Your priority is the student or student you are assigned to.

Devices:

- Paraprofessionals should keep work devices in the building and use them only for work purposes. They should be charged each day in a case manager's room.

*** For any other employment or contractually related information please see the ESP Master Agreement.**