

Employee Handbook



**Aberdeen School District 6-1
Aberdeen, South Dakota**

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Employment at Will:

No provision in this handbook is intended to create a contract between the Aberdeen School District and any employee, or to limit the right of the Aberdeen School District and its employees to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause. This handbook is a general statement of policy, to be modified and applied by the Aberdeen School District at its discretion.

Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the Aberdeen School District.

Whether you have just joined our staff or have been at the Aberdeen School District for many years, we are confident that you will find our district a dynamic and rewarding place in which to work and we look forward to a productive and successful association. We consider the employees of the Aberdeen School District to be one of its most valuable resources. This handbook has been written to serve as a guide for the employer/employee relationship.

There are several things that are important to keep in mind about this handbook. It contains only general information and guidelines. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies and procedures described. For that reason, if you have any questions concerning eligibility for a particular benefit, or the applicability of a policy or practice to you, you should address your specific questions to the Human Resources Office.

The procedures, practices, policies and benefits described here may be modified or discontinued from time to time. We will try to inform you of any changes as they occur.

Some of the subjects described here are covered in detail in negotiated agreements and School Board policy. You should refer to these documents for specific information.

For clarification or further explanation of policies, please contact the Human Resources Office at 725-7123.

All prior versions of this handbook are hereby revoked.

About Our Schools

The Aberdeen School District offers a well-rounded educational program which encourages excellence, individuality, and traditional values. The District operates six elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Current enrollment is approximately 4,400 students.

Students are fortunate to attend classes in equitable, up-to-date facilities. Each facility has a media center, computer labs, and gymnasiums or multi-purpose rooms and adequate, well-equipped outside play areas.

Mission Statement

Vision:

To provide all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to reach their potential in a global community through high expectations of academic achievement, diverse educational opportunities, and community involvement in a safe environment.

Mission:

Empowering all students to succeed in a changing world.

Beliefs:

- All students can succeed when given the opportunity to learn through appropriate instruction, academic experiences and involvement in activities.
- All students benefit from a safe and nurturing learning environment.
- All students benefit from positive role models.
- Student progress is achieved by holding all students, parents and the school district accountable.
- Students' success is enhanced when the school, parents and community work together as partners.

Employee Guidelines And Expectations

Job Postings

The Aberdeen School District believes in promoting employees from within, when possible, and gives all employees an opportunity to apply for positions for which they are interested and qualified.

Job postings generally include the title, salary, location, the minimum hiring specifications, the essential functions of the job, and the closing date for filing applications. Positions are posted for a minimum of five working days.

To be considered for a posted position, the employee must meet the minimum hiring specifications for the position, be capable of performing the essential functions of the job and be in good standing in terms of overall work record.

Employees are responsible for monitoring job vacancy notices. Vacancy notices are sent by e-mail to each school building to be posted on a designated bulletin board, and are posted at the District Service Center and on the District's website, www.aberdeen.k12.sd.us. Most vacancies are also advertised in the *Aberdeen American News* and through the South Dakota Department of Labor, www.dol.sd.gov.

Current employees interested in being considered for a posted job need to complete an on-line application available on the District's website, www.aberdeen.k12.sd.us, under the Employment tab.

Reference Checks

Supervisors are encouraged to direct all employment reference checks to the Human Resources Office. If Human Resources does not have a signed authorization from the current or former employee to release information, the only information that will be given are dates of employment, position(s) held, and current/last rate of pay.

Upon termination of employment with the Aberdeen School District, employees are given the opportunity to sign a form, "Authorization to Release Information," which authorizes the District to release and disclose to any future prospective employers any and all information requested.

Verification of Employment

The Aberdeen School District may receive inquiries from third parties regarding employees, such as a bank verifying employment for an employee applying for a mortgage or personal loan. All such requests should be directed to the Human Resources Office.

The Human Resources Office responds to written inquiries upon receipt of a request, along with a signed authorization from the employee. Telephone inquiries are answered with limited information after verifying and documenting the identity of the caller.

Resignation/Termination Procedures

The Human Resources Office will schedule an exit meeting with a terminating employee who has benefits and arrange for the return of District property including:

- Employee Identification Card
- Keys
- FOB
- Protective Equipment
- Credit Cards
- Tools
- Manuals
- Technology Equipment (laptops, pagers, cell phones)
- Any additional District-owned or issued property

If an employee does not return school district property an amount may be deducted from their final paycheck to cover the cost. Legal action may also be an option.

The school district provides the opportunity for employees to complete an on-line exit survey upon leaving employment. This survey gives the departing employee the opportunity to state how the District can improve working conditions, policies, supervisory techniques and other areas. It also gives employees an opportunity to state what positive experiences they have had.

Employees may choose the continuation or waiver of comprehensive medical coverage, dental, and vision coverage under COBRA. Specific information will be provided at the exit meeting.

If an employee participates in the South Dakota Retirement System, information regarding this plan will be provided at the exit meeting.

The employee's final salary/wages will be deposited in his/her account during the next normal pay period. If there are unpaid obligations to the District, the final earnings will reflect the appropriate deductions.

Confidentiality

Information you produce and receive as the result of your employment with the School District must be kept confidential. Respect for the dignity 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, payroll, or school district business information. We 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.

Employees should be instructed that upon receipt of materials marked Personal and Confidential, these materials should be left sealed, to be opened by the individual to whom they are addressed.

Media Relations

All contact with media will be done through the office of the Superintendent who may subsequently delegate the appropriate personnel to respond.

Attendance/Punctuality

We expect Aberdeen School District 6-1 employees to be reliable and punctual. You should report for work on time and as scheduled. If you cannot come to work or you will be late for any reason, you must notify your immediate supervisor as soon as possible. Any absences must be reported by employee on the absence management system.

Unplanned absences can disrupt work, inconvenience other employees, and affect productivity. If you have a poor attendance record or excessive lateness, you may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Nursing Mothers

As part of our family-friendly policies and benefits, Aberdeen School District 6-1 supports employees who desire to express breast milk during working hours by providing a reasonable amount of break time and private room to be used for this purpose.

In the event that an employee requires additional time, other than the scheduled rest or meal periods, additional unpaid time off will be provided for this purpose.

Worker's Compensation

Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment. The injured employee must provide notice of the injury immediately, but no later than 3 days after the accident, to the employer, the employer's representative, or the employee's immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. Questions may be addressed to the Director of Human Resources.

Work-Related Injury Procedures

Promptly report injury to your Supervisor or Principal
Evaluate the need for immediate and/or emergency treatment

- Complete a South Dakota Employer's First Report of Injury form and an Employee's Report of Injury form.

- Send both forms to the Human Resources Office.
- These forms will be sent to the District's Workers' Compensation carrier.
- You will receive a call from Claims Associates regarding your injury.
- You may receive a call or e-mail from the HR Director regarding your injury, if there are additional questions.

Suggestions for Medical Care:

- Your personal physician

- **Avera St. Luke's Business Health Clinic** ER Location

(simple strains and sprains, lacerations, repetitive motion injuries, back pain

– unless paralysis is involved)

Aberdeen, SD 57401

310 S Penn St., Door #2

(605)622-5858

Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm

- **Sanford Health Occupational Medicine**

(simple strains and sprains, lacerations, repetitive motion injuries, back pain

– unless paralysis is involved)

3015 3 Ave SE

815 1st Avenue SE

Aberdeen, SD 57401

(605)725-1770

Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm

- **Avera St. Luke's Emergency Room**

(injuries that involve chest pain, blood and body fluid exposure, open fracture of a limb, broken bone, eye injury)

305 State St S.

Aberdeen, SD 57401

(605)622-5100

- **Sanford Emergency Room**

(injuries that involve chest pain, blood and body fluid exposure, open fracture of a limb, broken bone, eye injury)

2905 3 Ave SE

Aberdeen, SD 57401

(605)626-4200

PLEASE NOTE: SD WORKER'S COMPENSATION LAW STATES THAT EMPLOYEES HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE THE INITIAL SELECTION OF A MEDICAL PROVIDER. ANY REFERRAL TO ANOTHER MEDICAL PROVIDER MUST BE PRE-APPROVED.

- If the injury is a Blood or Body Fluid Exposure, follow the District's Policy GBGA-R for procedures to exposure. Copies of this policy are available online at www.aberdeen.k12.sd.us.

- A Supervisor or another employee should accompany you, whenever possible, to the Clinic or Emergency Room or other arrangements should be

made. Supervisors should notify Human Resources as soon as possible of an employee needing treatment.

- Ask for a Return to Work (RTW) form or note from the doctor. A copy should be sent or faxed to the Human Resources Office (725-7199) and a copy given to your supervisor. Be sure to inform and discuss with your supervisor any limitations or restrictions your medical provider may have given you. If you are not able to return to work, contact your supervisor and the HR Office as soon as possible.
- Every attempt is made to provide transitional modified duty assignments to employees who have sustained a work-related injury which prevents them from performing the full range of their regular duties. We believe that modified duty tasks facilitate the transition back to full duty work.
- Please communicate regularly with your supervisor and the Human Resources Office regarding your injury. Your assistance is vital to this process.

Return to Work – Personal Injury/Illness

An employee who has been absent from work due to personal injury/illness may return to work upon providing a signed statement from his/her physician that states he/she is able to return to work with or without restrictions. The Supervisor and Human Resources Director will work with the employee to determine whether reasonable accommodations can be made that would enable the employee to return to work. The District need only make accommodations that are reasonable and do not create “undue hardship”. The District does not necessarily have to accept the accommodation an employee requests.

Unemployment Insurance

Aberdeen School District 6-1 pays the entire cost of unemployment insurance. This insurance provides a weekly income for those who may be laid off or who may have lost their job through no fault of their own. The amount of this income varies with the individual and state in which he/she resides because it is based on average earnings. Eligibility requirements and the amount of benefits that one may receive are specified by state law.

Personal Appearance/Attire

A work dress code is a set of standards that schools develop to help provide their employees with guidance about what is appropriate to wear to work. The key is to dress appropriately for the position enabling employees to maintain their professional distance from students.

Clothing that reveals too much cleavage, your back, your chest, your stomach or your underwear is not appropriate.

Certain days can be declared dress down days, generally Fridays. On these days, jeans and other more casual clothing, although never clothing potentially offensive to others, are allowed.

If an employee's appearance fails to meet these standards, as determined by the employee's supervisor, the employee will be counseled or in severe cases may be sent home to change clothes and will receive a verbal warning for the first offense. All other policies about personal time use will apply. Disciplinary action will be applied if appearance/attire violations continue.

Clean and Safe Classroom/Work Area

Employees are required to keep their work areas clean and orderly. Before departing at the end of their workday, employees should lock all files and cabinets and clear all work materials from desk surfaces, especially materials of a sensitive or confidential nature.

Employees should notify their supervisor or the custodial staff of unsafe conditions, items needing repair or spills requiring immediate attention.

Employee Identification Cards (See policies ECABA and ECABA-R)

It is the policy of the Aberdeen School District that all employees wear district-issued photo identification cards while in district facilities or on district property in an employee capacity. For staff who are eligible for employee benefits, this card will also serve as an activity pass.

All cards are to be worn on the person's upper torso in a safe, highly visible, non-offensive location.

Lost or stolen cards and Fobs must be immediately reported to the Technology Department. A new card will be issued at a cost to the employee of \$5.00.

Teamwork

Providing a quality education for students and a quality work experience for employees involves teamwork between every employee in the district. Some important actions are 1) get to know your co-workers and their capabilities, and 2) help create a pleasant, caring and enjoyable work atmosphere. Teamwork is demonstrated by showing respect, cooperation, and leadership at all times. Serving as an effective member of your team is key to accomplishing the district's mission.

Code of Conduct **(See policy GBEB)**

Aberdeen School District employees hold positions of public trust. They are responsible for the education of students and serve as examples and role models to students. All employees are responsible for the integrity and the consequences of their actions. The highest standards of honesty, integrity, and fairness must be exhibited by each employee when engaging in any activity involving the District and its students. Employee conduct should be such as to protect the person's integrity and/or reputation and that of the District. An unwavering commitment to honorable and ethical behavior by staff is expected.

Employees shall perform their jobs in a competent and ethical manner without violating the public trust or applicable law, policies, and regulations. It is not practical or possible to enumerate all situations that might fall under the guidelines of this policy. In addition to other policies, regulations, and approved practices that have been established, the absence of a law, policy, or regulation covering a particular situation does not relieve an employee from the responsibility to exercise the highest ethical standards at all times. Any person who believes staff has engaged in conduct which violates the code of conduct may report the alleged misconduct to his/her immediate supervisor.

District employees are expected to:

- Treat students, parents, fellow employees, and community members with dignity and respect. Conduct not meeting this expectation includes, but is not limited to:
 - Refusing to communicate or speak with another individual
 - Offensive verbal, visual, or physical conduct
 - Threatening another individual
 - Invading another's privacy
 - Purposely invading an individual's personal space
 - Knowingly blaming other individuals for mistakes they did not make
 - Spreading gossip about an individual
 - Taking credit for another individual's work or ideas
 - Sharing jokes that demean an individual or group of individuals
 - Any type of "bullying" behavior.

- Promote a safe, nurturing, and positive school and work environment. Conduct not meeting this expectation includes, but is not limited to:
 - repeated verbal, non-verbal, written or electronic communication
 - any conduct that is severe and objectively offensive so that it creates or results in an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment or has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an employee's or student's performance.
- Maintain confidentiality concerning students, families and employees.
- Follow supervisor's reasonable instruction.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and act in accordance with District policies and procedures, as well as legal and contractual standards, responsibilities, and obligations.
- Demonstrate a commitment to learning and professional growth.
- Model and promote appropriate language. Conduct not meeting this expectation includes, but is not limited to:
 - Name calling
 - Use of nicknames that may be offensive
 - Repeated negative comments about others orally or in writing
 - Profanity
- Commit to reporting gross mismanagement, significant waste of funds, abuse of authority, threats to safety, violations of policies and regulations, or other conduct that damages integrity or reputation to the employee's immediate supervisor.
- Abstain from threatening, harassing, punishing or retaliating behavior against students and/or other employees.
- Engage in conduct that follows generally recognized professional principles.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Inappropriate social networking between staff, students, parents, or community members;
- Any conduct that seriously impairs the employee's ability to function professionally in his/her employment position;
- Conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline or morals of students;
- Conduct which is offensive to the ordinary dignity, decency and morality of others;
- Failure to cooperate with the District in inquiries and/or investigations or hearings; and
- Deliberately falsifying information.

Any violation of the Code of Conduct shall be considered just cause for discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Communications

Inter-school mail is distributed daily. E-mail accounts are also assigned. This service is for school business purposes only. Any information of this system is the property of the District. See Policies GBEF and GBEF-R.

Voice mail is presently available at all locations. All communications should be checked daily, and messages should be returned in a timely manner.

Additionally, unless necessary for work purposes, employees should not be reading or sending emails, text messages, instant messages, or accessing the internet from their cell phones or other wireless devices during work times. Employees are entrusted with making appropriate choices regarding the use of personal cell phones during work hours.

Staff Conflict of Interest **(See policy GBEA, AH and AH-E)**

Employees of the District will not engage in nor have a financial interest directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts (or raises a reasonable question of conflict) with their duties and responsibilities in the school system.

Anti-Violence **(See policy GAEC)**

The Aberdeen School District is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. This includes, but is not limited to, a prohibition against intimidating, threatening, or hostile behaviors; physical or verbal abuse; vandalism, arson, sabotage; use or possession of weapons on Aberdeen School District property or at an event sponsored by the District off the premises. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment, including harassment that is based on an individual's sex, race, age, or any characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. Threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence will not be tolerated. Any employee determined to have committed such acts will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Tobacco Free Workplace **(See policies GBED and GBED-R)**

Smoking and use of tobacco products by School District employees or other adults shall be prohibited on School District property. This shall include school buildings, grounds, parking areas, sidewalks surrounding buildings, and school-owned vehicles.

Any violation of this policy by staff shall be referred to the appropriate supervisor and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Drug-Free Workplace

(See policies GBEC and GBEC-R)

Since Aberdeen School District receives Federal Funding, we are required to follow guidelines against drug and alcohol use in the workplace.

If there is reasonable suspicion that an employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the policy will be followed for testing. Aberdeen School District provides an EAP through which employees may voluntarily seek assistance for alcohol and drug abuse.

Regular discipline measures will be used for violations of this policy. Discipline may include a reprimand, suspension, termination and referral for prosecution.

Employee Health

(See policies GBGA and GBGA-R)

The Aberdeen School District has regulations for communicable disease reporting, exclusion from work, and regulations to eliminate or minimize employee occupational exposure to blood and other disease transmitting sources.

Wellness/Nutrition Policy

(See policies ADF and ADF-R)

The Aberdeen School District has a responsibility to promote healthy schools for students and staff. The Board recognizes that research shows a healthy lifestyle results in higher test scores and fewer behavior problems for students, and better attendance and increased productivity for everyone. The Board supports and promotes a healthy school wellness/nutrition environment in four areas:

- a. Nutrition education goals
- b. Physical activity goals
- c. Nutrition standards
- d. Other school-based activities

Distribution/Posting of Promotional Materials

(See policy KHC)

The District will make available to students information regarding recreational and educational opportunities distributed by city and county governmental units and by non-profit organizations that have provided the District with a copy of their IRS tax-exempt notification.

Information to be distributed to students shall have prior approval from the Superintendent's office. All material approved for distribution or posting

must include the following disclaimer in a prominent place: *“The Aberdeen School District neither endorses nor sponsors the organization or activity represented in this document. The distribution of this material is provided as a community service.”* If the District co-sponsors a specific activity or event with an outside organization, the disclaimer may be waived.

Materials that are profit-oriented or tend to promote an ideology will not be distributed.

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 Aberdeen Public School 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.

Care of School Property **(See policy EC-R)**

Employees shall be responsible for the proper use of buildings, grounds and equipment.

Employees shall report promptly to the supervisor of the facility or department head any defects in building, furniture, playground apparatus, or other equipment that might prove injurious to the comfort, health, safety of employees, pupils or other persons.

Authorized Use of School District Equipment and Facilities **(See policy ECE)**

No employee shall be permitted to make use of any District equipment (e.g., shop tools, technology, vehicles, etc.) and facilities (e.g., buildings, shops, kitchens, etc.) for personal use.

Personal Property

The Aberdeen 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.

School Closings and Cancellations

(See policy EBCE-R)

In making the decision to close schools, the Superintendent or designee will consider many factors relating to the safety and health of children. Conditions which would prompt consideration to close schools could be:

1. Inclement weather conditions, both existing and predicted.
2. Actual occurrence or imminent possibility of any emergency condition which would make the operation of schools difficult or dangerous.
3. Inability of teaching personnel to report for duty, which might result in inadequate supervision of students.

Students, parents and staff will be informed early in each school year of the procedures which will be used to notify them in case of emergency closings.

When inclement weather hits the area or is forecast, the Superintendent or designee will begin the decision making process. Contacts will be made with the Weather Bureau, city and county road crews, and the District's Operational Services Department. The District's bus contractor will be consulted as to the company's capability to staff its buses and navigate the routes.

When an emergency confronts the schools, notification of the closing of schools, starting late, dismissing early or restricted bussing will be made over local radio stations, the major television networks, the District's Parent Notification system, the school district app, and the school district web page, www.aberdeen.k12.sd.us.

Parents' decisions as to the weather conditions will be honored at all times. If a parent decides that weather conditions are such that his child shall not go to school or is to be excused during the school day, a note to the Principal or a phone call will excuse the student for the time missed, although the student will still be marked absent.

Parents and teachers are requested not to call the schools for general information because calling the offices ties up the telephone lines that may be needed for emergency communications.

Staff Responsibilities if there is a School Closing:

All employees are responsible for listening to appropriate announcements on days of inclement weather.

Administrators

Administrators are to report to work as soon as they are safely able to do so, using reasonable discretion in making their decision to report to work. In the event that employees of the district are told not to attempt to report to work by the Superintendent because of inclement weather conditions, this direction shall also apply to Administrators. In the event that an Administrator does not report to work because of inclement weather conditions, the time lost may be recovered by taking vacation time or by making arrangements agreed upon by the immediate supervisor. If the start of school is delayed due to inclement weather or other unforeseeable circumstances, Administrators should report to work as soon as is safely possible. In cases of early dismissal, Administrators should be expected to work a normal day, unless otherwise directed by the Superintendent.

Teachers

If school is not held because of inclement weather, teachers will not be expected to report for duty. Any school day that is cancelled may be made up later in the school year. In case of a delayed school opening or early dismissal, employees are to report for duty or remain on duty for normal school hours unless otherwise notified by announcement from the Superintendent.

Hourly Employees

Employees working less than 12 months will not report to work if school has been dismissed, and shall return to work when the students return to school. Time lost may be made up on student/teacher makeup days. It shall be understood that twelve month full-time employees are to report to work as soon as they are safely able to do so, using reasonable discretion in making their decision to report to work. Only employees who work shall be paid. Twelve month employees who had sick, vacation, or short term leave approved in advanced or who began the day being on approved leave will be required to continue and be paid for that leave. In the event a twelve month employee is told not to attempt to report to work by the Superintendent via the media because of inclement weather conditions, he/she shall be paid at the regular rate of pay for the specified time. Time lost by twelve month employees during inclement weather may be recovered in one of the following ways: 1) Deducted from vacation time or 2) Short Term Leave.

School Activities

It is the general practice of the district that when school is dismissed early or cancelled due to inclement weather, activities are cancelled or postponed. This is usually done for student/staff safety because of transportation during the winter season.

Energy Conservation

(See policies ECF and ECF-R)

The School Board accepts responsibility to maintain an aggressive program to reduce consumption of energy by the schools and to provide education on conservation of energy.

All staff have a responsibility for effective energy practices.

Employee Pay and Records

Payday

Employees of the Aberdeen School District are paid monthly or bi-weekly, depending upon the employee group.

Direct deposit into an approved banking institution or credit union is mandatory. The Finance office will provide each employee with an electronic statement of wages and deductions each pay day.

Garnishments

There are both federal and state laws that apply to wage garnishments. These laws set maximum amounts that can be garnished from an employee's paycheck and the priority of certain types of garnishments over others when an employer is faced with deductions from an employee's paycheck for more than one garnishment.

The Aberdeen School District Finance Office takes specific steps upon receipt of a collection request from an outside agency, including answering the order and calculating applicable exemptions.

Overtime

Ideally, all jobs will be structured so that normal work assignments can be completed during a regular work week. There may be instances, however, when employees will need to work overtime to meet special demands.

- 1) All overtime must be authorized by your supervisor in advance, and
- 2) Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime.

If you have questions regarding your overtime eligibility, please contact the Human Resources Office or the Payroll Office.

Access to Personnel Files

Personnel files are the property of the Aberdeen School District, and access to the information they contain is restricted except as may be required by state or federal laws or the judicial process. Only authorized representatives of the District, the employee, or the employee's designated representative with a legitimate reason to review information in a file are allowed to do so. With reasonable advance notice, an employee may review material in the Human Resources Office and/or only in the presence of a representative of the Superintendent. With written authorization from the employee, the employee's representative may review and/or request copies of file contents. Files cannot be removed from the Human Resources Office. An access log shall be maintained to record all reviewers of the records.

All personnel files are kept in the Human Resources Office at the District Service Center. The Human Resources Office is locked after normal business hours with access to files limited as described above.

Contract Review Policy **(See policy GAK-R)**

The public has the right to review public employees' contracts but not personnel files. If an employee's contract is reviewed, he/she will be notified.

Personnel Information

To keep necessary District records current, it is extremely important that you notify the Human Resources Office of any changes in:

- Name and/or marital status
- Address and/or telephone number
- Eligible dependents for insurance coverage
- Person(s) to contact in case of emergency (Emergency Contact Form)

Employment Policies

School Board Policies and Administrative Procedures

It is the responsibility of each employee to read and become familiar with School Board Policies and Administrative Procedures of the district. These policies and procedures are found on the district Web site, www.aberdeen.k12.sd.us. Some policies and procedures are mentioned specifically in this handbook; however, all should be reviewed on a regular basis by employees.

Equal Opportunity/Nondiscrimination (See policies AC, AC-R, and AC-E)

The Aberdeen School District believes that a valuable element of education is the development of respect for all individuals and seeks to provide equal access/equal opportunity for students, employees, and the public to District programs and activities.

In an effort to provide a safe, respectful, educational environment, the District prohibits discrimination in its policies, employment practices, programs and activities on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, gender (including pregnancy), disability, national origin, or ancestry, genetic information, military/veteran status, or any other category protected by law. The District prohibits acts of discrimination toward any individual(s) while on District property or at District sponsored activities.

The District prohibits discrimination against students on the basis of parental status, marital status, or pregnancy. Students will not be excluded from any program or activity, including any class or extra-curricular activity based on the above.

Ethnic slurs, racial jokes, offensive or derogatory comments, or other verbal or physical conduct based on a person's race, or other category, as above specified, can constitute prohibited discrimination if they create an intimidating, hostile or offensive school or work environment, or interfere with the individual's school or work performance.

The District will make reasonable modifications to its programs, facilities, employment practices, and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified individuals with a disability, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program, or would alter the fundamental nature or purpose of the program or position, or cause an undue hardship on the District.

Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including expulsion for students, up to and including termination for employees, and suspension from attending school activities for citizens.

The District prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports a claim under this policy or participates in an investigation of any such claim.

Inquiries concerning Title VI, Title VII or Title IX may be referred to the Superintendent or his/her designee, 1224 S 3rd Street, Aberdeen, SD 57401.

Complaint procedures are outlined in regulation AC-R.

Americans with Disabilities

(See policy ACE)

The Aberdeen School District assures that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability by signing assurance forms. Section 504 defines a person with a disability as anyone who...

Has a mental or physical impairment, a record of such an impairment, or being recorded as having such an impairment, which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, sleeping, standing, lifting, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, helping, eating, bending, or operation of a bodily function.

The school district has the responsibility to provide accommodations and services to eligible individuals with disabilities. The district acknowledges its responsibility under Section 504 to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability shall knowingly be permitted in any program or practice in the school.

Family and Medical Leave Act

(See policies GCCAC and GCCAC-R)

The Aberdeen School District will comply with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. Under this policy, Aberdeen School District will grant up to twelve (12) weeks (or up to twenty-six (26) weeks of military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness) during twelve (12) month period to eligible employees. The leave may be paid, unpaid or a combination of paid and unpaid leave, depending on the circumstances of the leave and as specified in this policy.

To qualify as FMLA leave under this policy, the employee must be taking leave for one or more of the reasons listed below:

- 1) The birth of a child and in order to care for that child;
- 2) The placement and care of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child;
- 3) To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent, but not parent-in-law) with a serious health condition;
- 4) When the employee is unable to perform any one of the essential functions and duties of his/her job functions because of a serious health condition;
- 5) Qualifying exigency leave for families of members of the National Guard & Reserves when the covered military member is on active duty or called to active duty in support of a contingency operation; or
- 6) Military caregiver leave (also known as covered service member leave) to care for an ill or injured service member.

The “twelve (12) month period” in which the leave may be taken shall be: A “rolling” 12 month period measured backward from the date an employee requests leave.

For eligibility, type and amount of leave covered, see policies GCCAC and GCCAC-R.

Employee/Student Teacher Criminal Background Check

(See policies GBB and GBB-R)

All employees, age 18 and older, and student teachers are required to complete a criminal background check, administered in the Human Resources Office.

Harassment

(See policies GBAA and GBAA-R)

Each student and employee has the right to learn and work in an environment free of unlawful harassment based on an individual's race, color, religion, creed, ancestry, gender, national origin, disability, age, or other basis prohibited by law.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student or any school personnel of the School District to harass a student, any school personnel, or any visitor through conduct or communication of a sexual nature, or communication disparaging a person's religion, race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, gender, disability, or age as defined in regulation GBAA-R. For the purpose of this policy, “school personnel” includes School Board members, all school employees and agents, volunteers, contractors, or persons subject to the supervision and control of the School District. This policy applies on all School District property and to all School District sponsored, approved, or related activities at any location.

The School District will investigate all complaints of harassment and will discipline or take appropriate action against any student or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy.

The School District will provide annual in-service education and training about harassment for employees. A copy of this policy is printed in the Employee Handbook and is available online at www.aberdeen.k12.sd.us. Acknowledgement of completion of annual training will be documented in the District's on-line training system.

For definition, reporting incidents, investigation procedures, and school district actions, see policies GBAA-R.

Retaliation is strictly prohibited.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Policy

(See policies JLF and JLF-R)

In compliance with SDCL 26-8A-3, 26-8A-5, and 26-A-7, it is the policy of the Aberdeen School District, that any teacher or other school employee having reasonable cause to suspect that a child's physical health or mental health or welfare may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report that suspicion to his/her Principal, supervisor, or school counselor.

The law further provides that any person required to report, but who willfully fails to do so, is guilty of a Class 1 Misdemeanor.

It is the policy that all employees of the Aberdeen School District shall cooperate in the fulfillment of the purposes of this law.

1. The teacher or school employee who has knowledge of or reason to suspect child abuse or neglect shall report this to his/her Principal, immediate supervisor, or school's counselor.
2. The School Principal or designee will promptly report the suspected abuse or neglect orally to the Department of Social Services and the Aberdeen Police Department.
3. The Suspected Child Abuse Referral Form shall be completed by the individual making the report and forwarded to the Superintendent's office within 24 hours.
4. The Superintendent or his/her designee will forward a copy of the Suspected Child Abuse Referral Form to the Captain of the Police Department, to the States Attorney's Office, and to the Department of Social Services.
5. The School Health Coordinator is available to make an assessment of the child with suspected physical abuse or neglect.
6. In order to protect the child, any contact with the parents or guardian of the child shall originate with the Department of Social Services.

The Suspected Child Abuse Referral Form is available on-line.

Student/Employee Access

(See policies ECAB and ECAB-R)

It is the policy of the Aberdeen School Board that access to students and employees during the school day by non-school organizations shall be restricted. Limited access by outside persons shall be permitted under guidelines prepared by the Superintendent.

Regulations can be found in Policy ECAB-R.

Professional Leave and Travel Reimbursement

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

The Aberdeen School District encourages excellence in its staff by providing professional leave for subject matter meetings, school visitations, workshops, and conferences. Professional development funding may be available at the building level, district level, or through various grants. If you have any questions about applying for professional leave, please contact the accounts payable clerk in the Finance Office.

APPLYING FOR PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

1. Complete a professional leave request form and obtain approval from the building principal and/or district administrator.
 - A. Applications for professional leave should be made as early as possible so timely payments can be made by the District.
 - B. The signature of the principal or district administrator indicates the leave is recommended and funding is approved. The principal or district administrator must include a budget code in the column provided.
 - C. Out of state leave must be approved by the superintendent.
2. Complete a voucher to receive reimbursement for costs upon return from leave activity.
 - A. The completed voucher should include name, address, budget account number, amount, and supervisor signature. Meals will be reimbursed only when travel includes overnight lodging.
 - B. Meal costs included in the leave activity (for example: luncheons or banquets covered by registration fees) will not be reimbursed to the individual. Meal and mileage rates are based on District guidelines. Attach all receipts for travel costs (required for all claims except meals and mileage) to the voucher and send to the accounts payable clerk at the Finance Office.
 - C. Payments of less than \$1,000 will be made each Friday. Payment greater than \$1,000 must be approved by the School Board and will be made following any regular Board meeting of the month.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Individuals are responsible for making their own arrangement for travel.

1. **Conference Registration**
 - A. Please ensure all the necessary information on the registration form has been completed.
 - B. Attach the original form, along with an approved, completed voucher, to the professional leave form and submit to the accounts payable clerk in the Finance Office. It will be mailed to the vendor with payment.
2. **Airfare – Obtain estimates.**

- A. After the leave has been approved, contact the travel agency to confirm reservations and request that the agency direct bill the District.
- B. Complete a requisition listing the travel agency as the vendor. Including the name(s) of those traveling, confirmation numbers, and cost per ticket. Send the requisition to the accounts payable clerk in the Finance Office.

3. Lodging Options – Options are listed in order of District preference. When making your reservations always ask for state rates. Hotels are not required to honor the state rate but most in South Dakota will if asked.

A. Purchase Order

- 1. Once the leave has been approved, complete a requisition listing the hotel as the vendor. On the requisition, include the name(s) of those who will be staying at the hotel, confirmation numbers, dates of the stay, and the cost of the lodging per night.
- 2. A purchase order will be sent directly to the hotel and a copy of the purchase order will be returned to the building secretary of the first person listed on the requisition.
- 3. The copy of the purchase order and the hotel invoice should be submitted to the accounts payable clerk in the Finance Office following the leave.

B. Reimbursement

- 1. Pay the lodging cost and request reimbursement from the District.
- 2. South Dakota state tax will not be reimbursed.
- 3. Keep the hotel receipt and attach it to a voucher for submission to accounts payable following the leave.

C. Advanced Payment

- 1. If none of the above options are viable, the District may issue a check for advance payment of lodging.
- 2. Submit an approved voucher to the accounts payable clerk in the Finance Office listing the hotel as the vendor. On the voucher, include the name(s) of those who will be staying at the hotel, confirmation numbers, dates of the stay, and the cost of the lodging per night.
- 3. A check, payable to the hotel, will be sent to the first person listed of those who will be staying at the hotel. The person will be responsible for delivering the check to the hotel.

The District Service Center Staff is here to help – however you must take responsibility! Professional Leave is a courtesy and should be used accordingly.

Travel Expense Reimbursements
(See policy DKC)

The Aberdeen School District encourages excellence in its staff by providing professional leave for subject matter meetings, school visitations, workshops and conferences.

All professional leave requests must include the completion of a professional leave form and the approval of the professional leave form by a principal/supervisor and district administrator.

The least expensive mode of transportation (airplane, vehicle, etc.) should be used on all District travel. In determining mode of transportation, travel time and other travel costs should be considered (meals, motels, taxi, etc.).

Mileage: Mileage determined by standard map mileage guides for direct travel and by speedometer readings for indirect travel. Any deviations from distance shown in the standard highway maps shall be explained.

A contract for airplane service from private flying stations must be approved by the Finance Office in advance. The rates allowed for such contract service shall be consistent with charges made to private individuals and companies for like services.

Airplane accommodations – one coach fare will be allowed for air travel.

Vouchers must show date, hour of departure and hour of return.

Reimbursement for mileage and meal expenses while carrying out the business of the district will be consistent with the State of South Dakota Board of Finance allowance for mileage and per diem. Actual lodging costs shall be paid. Reimbursement for meals will be based on the following (not applicable to same day travel):

Meals Allowable	When Leaving Before	When Returning After
Breakfast	5:31 a.m.	7:59 a.m.
Lunch	11:31 a.m.	12:59 p.m.
Dinner	5:31 p.m.	7:59 p.m.

Registration Fee: Every attempt should be made to make arrangements with the Finance Office to pre-pay registration. If meals and/or lodging are included, those meals and/or lodging must be deducted from the per diem allowed based on the regular schedule.

Mileage

Mileage is reimbursed from city limits at the approved state rate which is **51 cents per mile**. Approved mileage figures (round trip from Aberdeen) are listed below:

South Dakota					
Belle Fourche	624	Lead	662	Redfield	84
Brandon	420	Madison	334	Sioux Falls	400
Brookings	296	Milbank	196	Sisseton	198
Chamberlain	340	Millet	182	Spearfish	712
Custer	756	Mission	520	Sturgis	670
Deadwood	654	Mitchell	290	Tea	422
Faulkton	120	Mobridge	200	Vermillion	526
Gettysburg	206	Philip	494	Watertown	208
Harrisburg	428	Pierre	320	Webster	104
Hot Springs	772	Pine Ridge	730	Yankton	460
Huron	180	Plankinton	252		
Ipswich	54	Rapid City	670		
North Dakota					
Bismarck	400	Fargo	380	Jamestown	204
Ellendale	78	Grand Forks	530	Minot	540
Iowa					
Cedar Rapids	1224	Sioux City	564		
Des Moines	964				
Minnesota					
Bemidji	700	Moorhead	390	St. Cloud	470
Duluth	754	Ortonville	220	St. Paul	600
Minneapolis	580	Rochester	732		
Nebraska					
Lincoln	890	Omaha	772		

Meals

Meals will not be reimbursed for same day travel or for meals that are included with registration fees. Reimbursement for meals will be at the approved state rate and the following guidelines:

Meals Allowed	In State	Out of State	Leaving Before	Returning After
Breakfast	\$ 6.00	\$ 10.00	5:31 a.m.	7:59 a.m.
Lunch	\$ 14.00	\$ 18.00	11:31 a.m.	12:59 p.m.
Dinner	\$ 20.00	\$ 28.00	5:31 p.m.	7:59 p.m.
Total Per Diem	\$ 40.00	\$ 56.00		

As the rate for out of state meals may be low, the District will honor an additional 15% of the allowable out of state rates for tips.

Lodging

SD state tax will not be reimbursed. Lodging will be reimbursed at the actual cost; however, every effort should be made to follow these guidelines:

In State Rate	\$75.00 + tax from	If state rate not available, ask hotel to indicate unavailability on the receipt
Out of State Rate	\$175.00 + tax	Prior approval is required if hotel rate will exceed the state rate

Mileage between Buildings

Employees using a personal vehicle on authorized District business are entitled to a mileage allowance. Mileage logs are available at the District Service Center. Reimbursement for mileage requires the submission of a voucher accompanied by an accurate log based on distances outlined below:

	CHS	HMS	SMS	CCL	LE	MM	MO	OMT	SE	DSC
CHS	0.0	4.0	2.7	4.0	3.8	1.9	1.5	3.0	2.5	2.7
HMS	4.0	0.0	3.7	0.7	3.7	3.0	3.3	1.3	3.9	3.7
SMS	2.7	3.7	0.0	3.5	1.3	3.2	1.1	2.4	0.2	0.0
CCL	4.0	0.7	3.5	0.0	3.2	3.4	2.8	0.9	3.5	3.5
LE	3.8	3.7	1.3	3.2	0.0	3.2	2.0	2.2	1.5	1.3
MM	1.9	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.2	0.0	2.7	2.0	3.4	3.1
MO	1.5	3.3	1.1	2.8	2.0	2.7	0.0	1.9	0.9	1.1
OMT	3.0	1.3	2.4	0.9	2.2	2.0	1.9	0.0	2.6	2.4
SE	2.5	3.9	0.2	3.5	1.5	3.4	0.9	2.6	0.0	0.2
DSC	2.7	3.7	0.0	3.5	1.3	3.1	1.1	2.4	0.2	0.0

Reduced Tuition

Certified educators who are residents of South Dakota may apply for reduced tuition (SDCL 13-55-24) at any Regental institution in South Dakota. Forms are available at the District Service Center or on the District's website and must be certified by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Tuition/Fee Reimbursement (See policies GCI and GCI-R)

Reimbursement for tuition/fee for all eligible employees is available for up to \$300.00 per year. See GCI-R for guidelines.

Technology Policies

Employee Use of School District Cellular Telephones **(See policy GBEE)**

District cell phones shall be used in a responsible, informed and safe manner; conform to network etiquette, customs, and courtesies; and, observe all applicable laws or regulations.

Internet Safety Policy **(See policy EHAA)**

It is the policy of the Aberdeen School District to: (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications; (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity; (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

Guidelines for Staff Internet/E-Mail **(See policies GBEF and GBEF-R)**

All employees are expected to use electronic mail and telecommunication tools appropriately.

Employee Use of Networking Sites **(See policy GBCBB)**

Technology will be used to complement and foster public education. Utilization by employees must not distract from or disrupt the educational process.

Prohibited conduct is listed in Policy GBCBB.

Disciplinary action may be taken against staff or students whose communications (on or off-site) constitute a threat and cause a substantial disruption to the education environment or substantially interferes with another's rights. Criminal action may be taken if the communication constitutes a threat.

Other Information

The Directory (See policy GBJ)

Annually a directory of all School District employees is compiled and distributed to the entire staff free of charge.

Employees will be given the option of including or not including their home addresses and phone numbers in this section.

Benefits App

All employees have access to the District's benefits mobile app, which contains information. Search for MyBenefits2GO and download the app. Enter code B97488 to access.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers support, guidance and resources that can help you resolve personal issues and meet life's challenges. This service is provided at no additional cost by the Aberdeen School District in connection with your coverage from The Standard Life Insurance to employees who work twenty or more hours per week.

The program is available 24 hours a day, every day, to you and members of your household. You'll receive up to six face-to-face counseling sessions per year. You may call 1-877-851-1631 or healthadvocate.com. Your calls and all counseling services are completely confidential.

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