EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

WELCOME

This handbook has been developed for you, our employees, and will provide you with valuable information about the district’s general policies and procedures. Please use this document as a reference throughout your employ with the Deer Park School District. The handbook is a summary of the policies and procedures adopted by the school district. For a complete listing of board of education district policies, please refer to the district website at www.deerparkschools.org.

You are an integral part of a team of individuals who are dedicated to ensure our students will receive the social, emotional and educational skills necessary for the 21st century. We believe our staff is committed to preparing our students to be successful during their time in the Deer Park School District, as productive members of the community and for their future.

PREFACE

This handbook outlines the personnel policies and practices currently in effect at the Deer Park Union Free School District. This handbook is not intended to create a contract of employment, nor a guarantee of employment for any set period, or to create a warranty of benefits.

The Deer Park Union Free School District has made every effort to ensure the policies and practices outlined in this handbook are in compliance with all federal, state and local employment laws and regulations. In the event that a provision in this handbook is in conflict with the federal, state, or local law or regulation, the appropriate law or regulation will prevail, and the provision in this handbook shall be deemed amended to the extent necessary to comply with such law or regulation.

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this handbook, please contact the Personnel Office at (631) 274-4030.
MISSION & VISION

The mission of the Deer Park School District is to provide each and every student exemplary programs of study within a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment. It is our vision that our students will achieve academic excellence, mastering those concepts, skills, and processes that will enable them to become thoughtful, productive citizens in our society. Our students will be career/college ready.

Deer Park Schools

D Distinction P Pride S Scholarship

ROLE OF EMPLOYEES IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

You are an essential partner in the educational operation of the Deer Park School District and, as such, you serve as a role model for students within the system. This is an important responsibility. Your dress and grooming should be appropriate for your position. As a district employee, you often provide the public the first, and sometimes only, impression of the school district. You may greet the public by telephone, electronically or in person. Information must be accurate and should always be exchanged in a courteous manner. Complaints or criticism should be handled with tact. If you are uncertain how to handle a situation please talk with your immediate supervisor. It is also expected that you show the same courteousness and respect to your fellow colleagues and all employees of the district.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The Board of Education, its officers and employees, shall not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, marital status, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability or predisposing genetic characteristic.

This policy of nondiscrimination includes access by students to educational programs, counseling services for students, course offerings, and student activities, as well as recruitment and appointment of employees and employment pay, benefits, advancement and/or terminations.
EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

AESOP

All Instructional employees (Teaching Staff, Teaching Assistants, Permanent Substitutes, and Per Diem Substitutes) must report all absences from work in the Automated Educational Substitute Operational Program (AESOP) system. User guidelines and access to the system are granted to the employee during the hiring process.

APPOINTMENTS FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

All employees must be appointed by the Board of Education, at the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools. As a new employee with the district, you will be required to serve a probationary term. The length and conditions of your probation will depend on your position in the district, previous educational employment history and your contract.

Certified instructional personnel, who serve in a permanent tenure track position, are required to serve a four year probationary period. This can be shortened to three years if you have received tenure in New York State in the same tenure area that you have been appointed to; with the exception of an administrative position. Prior credit cannot be granted to an administrator who is newly appointed in district; their probationary period remains four years in duration.

ASSIGNMENT OF WAGES/GARNISHMENTS

Periodically, the Business Office receives court orders for garnishees and/or assignment of wages. The District must comply with any such order properly prepared and served. The District legally cannot ignore or modify any of the provisions of a garnishee and/or assignment of wages. The District will not act as a representative for any staff member involved in this type of legal action. Additionally, the District will not act on behalf of any creditor to put pressure on any staff member.

ATTENDANCE

All employees are expected to arrive at work before they are scheduled to start and be at their work location productively engaged in district business by the scheduled start time. The Deer Park Union Free School District views employee attendance as one of the most important parts of the employees annual performance review.
BEREAVEMENT DAYS

District employees are entitled to bereavement time based on the information contained in their specific Collective Bargaining Agreements (contracts). Employees are encouraged to review the contents of these agreements upon appointment.

BOARD POLICIES

The Deer Park School District Board of Education’s educational philosophy is based on the principle that well-informed, productive citizens make a strong community and nation. Thus, the schools have the responsibility for educating their children through a wide variety of programs and experiences. In providing community leadership in educational matters, the Board recognizes its obligation to give full consideration to the wishes of the people and their willingness and ability to sustain the objectives of this educational system. All district Board of Education policies can be found on the district website at www.deerparkschools.org.

CALENDAR & WORKING DAYS

The Board of Education approves the school calendar annually. By law, there are a minimum number of student days that the district must have as scheduled days of instruction. In addition, there are additional Superintendent conference days that the district is contractually obligated to have. Annually the calendar is developed by the superintendent of schools and adopted by the board in the early spring. The calendar is distributed to staff members well in advance of the upcoming school year and is available on line on the district website. It is important that all employees plan their family obligations and vacations accordingly and are present when school is in session. District employees follow the annual work calendar as per their Collective Bargaining Agreements.

CANCER SCREENING

As per New York State Civil Service Law the Deer Park Union Free School District allows one (1) excused leave up to 4 hours annually for the purpose of cancer screening. The time off will be considered paid time and will not be deducted from sick, personal or other accrued time off. Employees must provide documentation by use of the District Cancer Screening form and must include the facility name, doctor’s office information and date of appointment to be submitted upon return to work.
CERTIFICATION

New York State Education law specifically states that all instructional and administrative staff must have and maintain a valid certificate. It is the employee’s responsibility to maintain their certification and update the district when there is a change in their certification status or a new certification has been acquired. Please note that a lapse in certification can be cause for termination under New York State Education Law.

CODE OF CONDUCT/ETHICS

The Deer Park School District is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where all students may receive and district personnel may deliver quality instructional services without disruption or interference. Essential to the achievement of this goal is the responsible behavior of students, staff, district personnel, parents and other visitors to the school environment.

The Board of Education adopts the Code of Conduct (“code”) in an effort to clearly define the expectations for acceptable conduct of all essential partners in the educational process while on school property and/or attending a school function. It is the expectation that all employees adhere to all of the standards established in the code. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, charter, tolerance, honesty and integrity. Employees can view the code in its entirety on the district website at www.deerparkschools.org.

COMPLIANCE TRAINING

The New York State Education Department regulations dictate compliance training that must be done annually by each employee. Various laws and regulations require all school district employees to receive training in what are called “work life issues”. The topics for training include but are not limited to; Blood borne Pathogens, Cyberbullying, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Code of Conduct and Dignity for All Students. Training will be delivered online and can be completed by the employee during the work day when scheduled by a supervisor; or on the employees own time while at work or at home, whichever is most convenient. Timelines for completion of the various modules of on-going Compliance Training will be communicated to all employees and dictated as determined by NYSED mandates.
CONFERENCES/ WORKSHOPS

Administrators and Deer Park Teachers Association members requesting permission to attend a conference/workshop must use the “My Learning Plan” (MLP) website for professional development requests. All conferences/workshops require approval prior to attending. Upon completion of the conference/workshop a certificate of attendance must be obtained and forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools to close out the employees MLP paperwork for the particular conference/workshop attended and for their professional development hours.

CONTINUING TEACHER & LEADER EDUCATION (CTLE) HOURS

All Professionally certified classroom teachers/educational leaders and Teaching Assistant Level III certificate holders are required to complete 100 hours of CTLE every five years upon their registration cycle with the New York State Education Department.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Payroll check direct deposit is required for all employees. Direct deposit is a convenient and secure way to quickly access your pay. All employees are required to sign a receipt for their paycheck upon distribution during each payroll cycle.

DRESS CODE

All Deer Park School District employees should use professional discretion in wearing attire that is appropriate for the workplace and student interaction. District employees are expected to dress neatly and practice good grooming and hygiene. Furthermore, all members of the Deer Park School District staff are encouraged to exemplify and reinforce appropriate student dress.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE/SUBSTANCE ABUSE/SMOKING POLICY

The District prohibits the use/abuse of illegal drugs, prescription drugs over the counter medications, alcohol and controlled substances. No employee may use, possess, sell or distribute drugs/alcohol or other illegal substances, nor may use or possess drug paraphernalia on school grounds, or at school sponsored events.

In accordance with federal and state law, and due to the health hazards associated with smoking the district prohibits smoking and all other tobacco use in all school district buildings, on school grounds, and in any vehicle used to transport children or personnel. The district also prohibits the use of e-cigarettes in these locations. Smoking, tobacco use or the use of e-cigarettes is also prohibited within 100 feet of all school entrances, exits and outdoor areas, except where that is a residence or residential property.
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

The Deer Park School District has the employee assistance program (EAP) services of Tri-State/National REACH, Inc. This program provides free, anonymous, confidential telephone counseling and referral services. If further aid or treatment is recommended beyond telephone counseling, the employee or family member may have to assume these costs; however, many of the costs may be covered by the employee’s individual or family medical benefits. All employees and members of their immediate families are eligible to use this confidential service 24 hrs. a day, 7 days a week. Informational flyers and contact information can be provided by the Personnel Office, or the employees union.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

When an employee is hired they will be contacted by the secretary who handles employee benefits in the Business office. The benefits secretary will outline the employee’s specific benefits and entitlements as per their appointed position and contract.

EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS

The evaluation of all staff is an essential component of supervision and decision-making regarding staff promotions and retention.

Each support staff member will be formally evaluated as per contract by his/her immediate supervisor or other designated person. Evaluations will be recorded and sent to the Personnel Office to be placed in the employee’s personnel file.

The purposes of evaluations are:

1. to provide an objective basis for employee improvement;

2. to ensure that employees meet performance standards.

Employees are entitled to write rebuttal responses to any evaluation.

EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT

The district provides retirement benefits to full-time and part-time employees through the New York State Retirement System. Paperwork to join the retirement system is completed and reviewed when the employee is hired. It is the employee’s responsibility to contact the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) or Employee Retirement System (ERS) when they decide to retire and review the various benefit options available to them.
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (Notice of Vacancies)

All job opportunities to work for the Deer Park Union Free School District are posted internally in all work locations, online (OLAS when appropriate), locally advertised when appropriate and on the Deer Park School District website job opportunities page at www.deerparkschools.org.

EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION

The Personnel Office handles employment verification and salary information requests for all employees. However, for the employee’s protection and privacy, all employment verifications must be in writing and include the employee’s signed consent. Verbal requests are not honored.

FINGERPRINTING

Following the enactment of The Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (Project SAVE- November, 2000) New York State law requires all applicants for certification and prospective employees of school districts, charter schools and BOCES to undergo a fingerprint supported criminal history background check conducted by the New York State Education Department’s Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability (OSPRA). All prospective candidates seeking employment in the Deer Park School District must have NYS fingerprint clearance prior to commencing their employment with the district. A nominal fee for processing fingerprints is the prospective employee’s responsibility.

GIFTS FOR STAFF MEMBERS

As per Board of Education policy employees shall not directly or indirectly solicit, accept, or receive any gift having a value of $75 or more, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or any other form, under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him or her in the performance of his or her official duties or was intended as a reward for any official action on his or her part.

However, the District welcomes and encourages the writing of letters or notes expressing gratitude or appreciation to staff members.

Gifts from children that are principally sentimental in nature and of insignificant financial value may be accepted in the spirit in which they are given.
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Work related problems can arise in any department throughout the Deer Park School District. We hope employees will try to reconcile differences on an individual basis. Should this not be possible, to resolve a problem quickly and fairly, the Deer Park School District has developed a grievance procedure for all employees as outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreements.

INTERNET USE

All users of the district’s computer network, including access to the Internet and World Wide Web, must understand that use is a privilege, not a right, and that any such use entails responsibility. They must comply with the requirements of this policy and accompanying regulation, in addition to generally accepted rules of network etiquette, and the district's policy on the acceptable use (AUP) of computers and the internet. Instructional employees who require network rights will complete the AUP document during the hiring process. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, the revocation of computer access privileges.

JURY DUTY

Jury duty is a responsibility of all American citizens and the district supports employee participation when summoned. If selected for jury duty you will be given time off to serve as a juror and you will continue to earn your regular rate of pay with payroll for your jury duty service day(s). Employees are required to submit a certificate of proof of attendance from the clerk of the court to the Personnel Office upon their return to work the following day.

LATERAL MOVES

Deer Park Teacher Association (DPTA) unit members may apply annually (during the month of February) to finalize the process for a lateral move on the salary scale. This request is contingent upon completion of approved course work which is logged into the My Learning Plan (MLP) program accompanied by the required paperwork request form available in the Main Office in each of the school buildings. The final approval for a lateral payroll move is determined by the Superintendent of Schools.
LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Extended Medical Absences

Employees anticipating an extended absence due to a medical situation must contact the Personnel Office so further information can be explained to the employee and the necessary documentation furnished to process the request.

Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA)  Pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, eligible employees (employees who have worked in the district for at least one year prior to the request and who have worked a minimum of 1250 hours in one year) may be provided with up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave (without a disruption to their benefits) during a 12-month period to care for a newborn, adopted or foster child or because of a serious health condition of the employee or certain family members of the employee.

Military Family Leave

Pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2008, Public Law 110-181, eligible employees have leave rights related to military service as follows:

1. Eligible employees are entitled up to 12 weeks of leave because of “any qualifying exigency” arising out of the fact that the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on active duty, or has been notified of an impending call to active duty status, in support of a contingency operation. By the terms of the statute, this provision requires the Secretary of Labor to issue regulations defining “any qualifying exigency.” In the interim, employers are encouraged to provide this type of leave to qualifying employees.

2. An eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a covered service member who is recovering from a serious illness or injury sustained in the line of duty on active duty is entitled to up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member.

Maternity/ Child Rearing Leave

1. Maternity Leave: When a teacher delivers their child via natural child birth, she automatically gets 6 paid weeks for healing time; provided the teacher has sufficient sick days for payment. When a teacher delivers their child via cesarean section, she automatically gets 8 paid weeks for healing; provided the teacher has sufficient sick days for payment.

2. Remainder 6 weeks/4 weeks request for FMLA: If the teacher is unable to return to work after their 6 or 8 weeks post-delivery, a doctor’s letter must be provided in order for the teacher to remain out of work and the teacher may continue to use sick days for payment if they have them available. The teacher may request the remaining 6 weeks/4 weeks (depending upon type of delivery) unpaid before they are required to return to work at the end of the total 12 week period.
3. **Child Rearing leave of absence:** Such leave shall be applicable to adoption as well as maternal birth and is open to males as well as females. Accumulated sick leave may not be used for child-rearing leave. Child rearing leave may be granted on a semester or yearly basis. All child rearing leaves shall be limited to no more than two (2) years with a maximum of one (1) additional two (2) year leave extension due to a second pregnancy.

**MENTORING**

Instructional staff who are holders of initial certificates must receive mentoring in their first year of teaching or school building leadership service in a public school district. The purpose of this requirement is to provide beginning educators in teaching or school building leadership service with support in order to gain skillfulness and more easily make the transition to one’s first professional experience under an initial certificate. This is one of the requirements individuals must meet in order to apply and qualify for their professional certificate.

**NAME AND ADDRESS CHANGE**

It is critical that all employee demographic information be up to date. Employees who have a change of name, address, telephone number or other pertinent demographic information need to notify in writing the secretary in the main office of the building they are assigned to. The main office secretary will make note of the change and circulate the employee’s information request for the change to the Personnel, Instructional Technology and the Business Offices. In addition, all education certificate holders are also required to update any change of name or address in the NYSED TEACH system.

**PAYROLL SCHEDULE**

Salary payments will be made to employees in accordance with the payroll schedule which is determined annually and distributed to all district employees upon approval by the Assistant Superintendent of Business & Operations.

**PERSONAL DAYS**

District employees may be entitled to personal days based on the information contained in each Collective Bargaining Agreement (contract). Personal days may only be used for reasons defined in each collective bargaining agreement and are expected to be submitted for approval in advance on the appropriate Personal Day Request form.
PERSONNEL FILE

All employees have a personnel file located in the Personnel Office in District Office. Your employee folder contains hiring documentation, official correspondence, attendance paperwork, coursework transcripts & certificates and observations. All employees have the right to review their personnel file upon reasonable notice to arrange a mutually convenient appointment to review the contents for their file. If you wish to review your personnel file, please call the Personnel Office to schedule an appointment.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development opportunities are provided to teachers throughout the school year to meet the needs of the academic shifts in instruction, to be in compliance with mandates and new NYSED initiatives, to strengthen pedagogical practices and to enhance student achievement.

RETIREMENT PLAN (403B)

Employees will have the opportunity to participate in a retirement plan that allows employees to save a portion of their compensation for retirement. Employees are encouraged to review their collective bargaining agreement (contracts) for information about eligibility and program participation. For more information, contact the Business Office.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS/DELAYS

If school is closed or delayed due to inclement weather or an unforeseen incident; employees will be notified by an automated telephone call.

Announcements will also be made on local radio and television stations. A complete listing of those stations is detailed in the Deer Park School District calendar.

When a delayed opening is determined all employees are expected to report to work as close to their usual start time as scheduled with a safe and timely commute to their assigned work location.
SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

The Deer Park School District recognizes that harassment of students and staff on the basis of sex, gender and/or sexual orientation is abusive and illegal behavior that harms victims and negatively impacts the school culture by creating an environment of fear, distrust, intimidation and intolerance. The district further recognizes that preventing and remedying such harassment in schools is essential to ensure a healthy, nondiscriminatory environment in which students can learn and employees can work productively.

The district is committed to providing an educational and working environment that promotes respect, dignity and equality and that is free from all forms of sexual harassment. To this end, the district condemns and strictly prohibits all forms of sexual harassment on school grounds, school buses and at all school-sponsored activities, programs and events including those that take place at locations outside the district.

In order for the district to effectively enforce this policy and to take prompt corrective measures, it is essential that all victims of sexual harassment and persons with knowledge of sexual harassment report the harassment immediately. The district will promptly investigate all complaints of sexual harassment, formal or informal, verbal or written. To the extent possible, all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

If the complainant reports that they feel unsafe at school due to the nature of the complaint, the district will determine if accommodations need to be made until the issue is resolved.

If, after appropriate investigation, the district finds that a student, an employee or a third party has violated this policy, prompt corrective action will be taken in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement, district policy and state law. All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

The complete and comprehensive Sexual Harassment Policy and Regulations can be found in the school district’s Code of Conduct or School Board Policy Handbook which is available on the district website www.deerparkschools.org.
SICK DAYS

The District may provide paid sick time for employees based on the information provided in each unit’s Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Sick leave may be taken only when an employee is unable to be present at work due to illness or other medical related circumstances. The district may request that the employee furnish a doctor’s certificate or other reasonable proof when absent for three or more consecutive days or when circumstances warrant according to the CBA.

STUDENT TEACHERS, INTERNS & OBSERVERS

The District Administrators of Curriculum and Instruction must approve all student teachers, interns and/or, observers who are requesting placement to work in any of the buildings in the district. Documentation from the cooperating educational institutions office of student placement must be received and approved in district office prior to granting permission and a commitment to the individual requesting placement in the Deer Park School District.

TEACH (Online System of Teaching Initiatives)

All permanently or professionally certified teachers, educational leaders and Level III teaching assistant certificate holders will be required to maintain up to date demographic information and/or CTLE hours in the state education departments TEACH system. In addition, they will be required to update any personal information as it occurs and re-register with the New York State Education Department every five (5) years in the month of their birth.

VACATION DAYS

Full time 12 month employees with benefits are entitled to vacation days in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement of their unit. Each CBA specifies the annual vacation provided for the unit members. Employees are required to obtain the approval of the direct supervisor and/or Superintendent of School prior to taking vacation days that may interfere with the normal school district operations.
WORK RELATED INJURY

If an employee is injured while working they are required to fill out an Employee Accident Report, **within 24 hours**, and forward a copy to the Benefits clerk in the Business Office. The employee may be entitled to compensation from work should it be determined that they are medically required to remain home while they recover from their injuries. Ongoing medical documentation must be forwarded to the Personnel Office should the injury preclude the employee from being able to perform their assigned duties. Please refer any questions to the Benefits clerk in the Business Office regarding a work related injury.

WORK YEAR

The specific days and times that employees are required to work are outlined in the collective bargaining contracts or individual employment contracts and may change in future contracts. Please consult these documents for specific terms.