

LEIPSIC LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
2010-2011 STAFF HANDBOOK

August 19, 2010

Dear Staff Members:

Welcome Back to School for the 2010-2011 year! We are excited about the changes that have taken place over the summer and look forward to a very positive, rewarding year of school.

The Leipsic Local School Staff Handbook is designed to clarify and communicate to each of you the expectations of the Leipsic Local School Board of Education and its Superintendent. It is not intended to be critical in any way, but rather provide a blueprint for each of us to follow.

You are a valuable link to the success of this District and its students. We appreciate your hard work and dedication.

It is great to be in Viking Country, and let this be the year when Viking Pride dominates everything we do and say.

Best Wishes for an Outstanding School Year!

Sincerely,

Abby

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The District Superintendent, as executive officer of the Leipsic Board of Education, is responsible to the Board of Education for all operations of the school. Reporting to the Superintendent are two principals who will be specifically responsible to the superintendent for the day-to-day operation of the school. Specific groups of employees, teachers, etc., will report to and be responsible to the principals for the performance of their duties.

Overall general supervision of all employees and all operations of the school will be the duty of the Superintendent. The Board of Education is empowered by state statutes to act as representatives of the people of a school district and to develop policies governing a program of education for the District.

To enhance the smooth operation of the school, staff organization is to be carefully observed by all employees. No employee of the school is to bypass the proper channels by making recommendations on matters of school policy directly to the school board or its individual members except at a regularly scheduled school board meeting to which they have been invited and placed on the agenda.

If at any time, any employee has a suggestion he or she feels will improve the operation of the school system, please feel free to come to the Superintendent's office and make suggestions. Every effort will be made to operate the District in as democratic manner as possible; however, recognize that total freedom and lack of rules and policies and lack of enforcement of these policies is not acceptable within the educational framework.

Please refer to the school website to find the latest Leipsic Board of Education Policies, Administrative Guidelines, and Sample Forms.

ASSIGNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Teachers are expected to maintain the highest integrity when executing their instructional assignment. All teachers are assigned students, a classroom, equipment, books, and materials. The course of study is contained in assigned textbooks, teacher's manuals, and school district curriculum guides. All teachers are expected to use these materials as guides during instruction - since the Leipsic School Board approves all the aforementioned materials. However, creativity and resourcefulness is always encouraged and considered an important aspect of all educational endeavors.

Below are responsibilities of successful Leipsic teachers:

- Good teachers will recognize each pupil as a person of inestimable value but not necessarily equal in achievement or ability to any other pupil.
- The teacher will advance the child's achievement to the best of the teacher and the child's abilities.
- The teacher will judge and record the pupil's progress.
- Teachers will make prudent use of equipment and materials at their disposal.
- Teachers are expected to keep their classrooms tastefully decorated.

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The professional relationship between teachers and students demands the same guarding of confidential and official information as is observed by members of other long-established professions. A teacher should avoid casual comments to students that may be misinterpreted and lead to unfavorable or criticism or even serious results.

When a student's rights and privileges are involved, a student deserves the same respect and consideration that we show an adult under the same circumstances. Do not resort to ridicule or sarcasm in what you say or the type of punishment you administer.

Each school employee is critical to positive public relations with the community. We should all endeavor to establish friendly and intelligent cooperation between the home and the school. The teacher should so conduct himself or herself socially that criticism shall not be brought upon the individual, the school, or the teaching profession.

School matter, students, school activities, and other staff members should not be discussed in public by school employees or their spouses, except in a constructive manner. A teacher should avoid unfavorable criticism of predecessors and colleagues especially in the presence of students or people of the community.

Parents and patrons will be extended every reasonable courtesy and made welcome at all times within the district. Teachers shall initiate parent conferences when it is in the best interest of the child concerned. Such conferences shall be conducted on school premises.

WORKING HOURS

All teachers are to report to work no later than 8:00 a.m. and to remain at work until 3:15 p.m. No teacher should leave the building without notifying the appropriate building principal and explaining the reason except during the 30 minute duty free lunch hour. All staff members are encouraged to schedule medical appointments at times other than scheduled school days if possible.

Teachers should be in their classrooms or the adjoining hallway at least five minutes before students arrive in the morning.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

Professional people have an obligation to be appropriately dressed and groomed. Teachers who do not set a proper example may negatively influence students. Therefore, you are expected to be neatly groomed and appropriately dressed for your particular assignment.

SECURITY – CLASSROOM AND OFFICE

Building security is an area that needs constant attention by every staff member. Employees are issued building keys on an “as need” basis. A record is made of each key issued. Immediately report any lost keys to the treasurer’s office. In order to provide a safe, healthy, and secure environment for students and staff at Leipsic Local School District the following guidelines **will be followed by all staff**:

- Only three building entrances are to be unlocked during the school. Those entrances are the elementary and high school offices main entrances (south side of the building) and the entrance for the Superintendent’s office (west side of the building). No other doors are to be propped open at any time.
- The sponsor of an organization must be with the group at all times. Students should not be left unattended in any part of the building.
- The athletic department is responsible for maintaining schedules for all practices and contests.

TELEPHONE USE

Unless an emergency occurs no staff member or student will be excused from instruction to receive a phone call. In the unfortunate event that a staff or student is expecting an emergency phone call, please inform the building principal and an exception will be made.

Staff members must turn off cell phones during class time, and personal phones must be stored out of sight of students. Personal cell phones are to be used only during 30-minute duty-free lunchtime and conference periods.

STAFF PARKING

There are no reserved or designated parking spaces and each teacher parks on a first come-first serve basis. Teachers are asked to park on school grounds rather than on any of the streets surrounding the school. Any student vehicles parked in faculty parking will be moved and/ or towed.

TECHNOLOGY

All employees who use District computers must sign a letter of commitment to use that equipment in a manner that meets the requirements of the Technology Administrator. Please remember that you have no privacy rights to District-owned computers and/or e-mail. Both are subject to monitoring.

While technology can be frustrating for all of us, please be professional in making requests to the Tech Administrator and make allowance for the time that it often takes to trouble-shoot problems.

Ink jet cartridges will no longer be provided by the school district; the reason for this decision is the extreme cost of the cartridges as well as the very brief lifespan of each cartridge. In order to stretch our technology budget as far as possible, you will all be connected to a network laser printer. If you wish to provide ink for a non-network printer, that cost is your responsibility.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

To maintain the functional quality of our building, it is requested that all comply with the following rules:

- A request form must accompany all requests for repair.
- The use of thumb tacks, nails, screws or other puncturing devices on permanent wood, masonry or metal walls or trim without consulting with the maintenance supervisor is prohibited.
- The use of chemicals on any surfaces should first be cleared with the maintenance supervisor.
- Requests for use of facilities, rooms, etc., for functions or meetings shall be made on the form furnished by the main office and returned to the principal's office.
- At the conclusion of the last period of room use each day, the windows should be closed, the lights turned off and the rooms locked.
- Spillage of staining liquids or materials on floors, furniture or other surfaces should be immediately reported to the custodial department.
- Reports of any vandalism or writing on walls in rest rooms or outside of building, on walks, or brickwork, any broken or cracked windows should be reported
- Only water-based paint may be used to paint signs or posters. Any cans containing spray paint will be disposed of by the maintenance department
- When exiting the building in the evening all doors should be kept locked.
- Tape or adhesives are not to be used on the walls. Only poster putty may be used to attach poster or signs to walls.

STUDENT PUBLICATIONS AND POSTERS

School sponsored publications and posters are the property of Leipsic Local Schools. As a result, it is the responsibility of the staff and administration to ensure that all of the aforementioned publications are tastefully and responsibly written and displayed. Consequently, all publications are to be pre-approved by the building principal **PRIOR** to display or publication.

MEDIA COMMUNICATION

In order to provide consistency, all media communication from Leipsic Local School must be processed through the appropriate principal's office.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

All staff is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Job and Family Services). As a practice, discuss students who you believe may have been abused with the building principal. Law also mandates teachers mandated to report to DJFS cases of student abuse by other staff members. A form is to be filed with the principal immediately after a referral is made. The referral is necessary in the event that DJFS desires to initiate a delayed parental notification.

EMERGENCY SNOW DAYS

School Messenger alert system will be used to notify staff members of days that school may not be in session or delayed due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions. Every effort will be made to determine weather delays and/or cancellations as early as possible; however, weather conditions can improve or worsen within a short period of time.

On such days when school is canceled, individual decisions will be made concerning co-curricular activities or practices - including athletics. Coaches and advisors are to call the athletic director for a decision as to whether or not practices or games will be conducted.

FIELD TRIPS

Because of current fuel costs and the number of bus drivers available, field trips may be limited. Aforementioned field trips are a privilege and not a right. The trip should be well planned, organized, and of educational value. Teachers need to have building principal approval PRIOR TO talking with students about a pending field trip. Equally important, in order to attend any field trip; all students are required to submit signed parental permission forms. **Any out-of-state or overnight trips require school board approval.** No field trips will be scheduled two weeks before final exams.

Field trips unrelated to the subject will not be approved. One trip chaperone must accompany every 35 students. More than one field trip on any given school day may not be approved. All non-academic field trips will be scheduled outside of the normal instructional day.

BOARD AGENDA ITEMS

Any staff member who has an item that requires Board approval must have that item to the Superintendent's secretary no later than Monday prior to the next week's Board meeting. Board meetings are planned for the second week of each month; however, dates are subject to change.

SCHEDULING OF ACTIVITIES

All school events must be scheduled in cooperation with the administration and entered on the master schedule in the Superintendent's office. **No school activities may be scheduled after 6 p.m. on Wednesday nights.**

All activities must be planned under the supervision of an advisor. The advisor must approve meetings of student groups and the advisor must be present at all meetings.

Parties are not to be held in classes without prior approval from the building principal. Food and drink are not allowed during class time with the exception of consumer and family science food classes.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide adequate supervision for any type of student activity.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The school district shall provide employees an employment environment free of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct or communications constituting sexual harassment as defined and otherwise prohibited by state and federal law.

District employees shall not make sexual advances or request sexual favors or engage in any conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Aggrieved person, who feels comfortable doing so, should directly inform the person engaging in sexually harassing conduct or communication that such conduct or communication is offensive and must stop.

A violation of this policy will result in discipline or discharge.

FACULTY MEETINGS AND COMMITTEE WORK

All teachers are required to attend monthly faculty meetings. Meetings will be no more than 60 minutes and shall begin no later than 15 minutes after student dismissal. All before school meetings will begin no earlier than 15 minutes before the starting time for staff.

Coaches/sponsors are expected to cancel or reschedule athletic practices so that they may attend all faculty meetings. The building principal must approve absences from faculty meetings.

Staff meetings may be district wide, by building, grade, department, subject area, or specific personnel. Notification of such meeting will be made as early as possible. Staff meetings are scheduled only by the building principal or superintendent. Finally, in order to improve school curriculum all teachers are encouraged to participate in committee work.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teacher professional development is held on days designated on the school calendar. All teachers are required to attend early release meetings. Teachers must take sick leave or personal leave if they are unable to attend. There are also two professional development days that are not mandatory, but teachers are given the chance to be paid at a per diem rate for each.

STUDENT SUPERVISION

Students are the responsibility of the teacher during the entire time they are assigned. For the protection of the teacher, the following guidelines should be closely observed:

- Classes and students must never be left unattended by teachers at any time
- Arrive to your classroom BEFORE students.
- Do not allow students to leave the class without permission and then only for necessary reasons.
- Do not dismiss class early since the students are your responsibility until the class ends.
- Do not allow your students to visit the office during the class period except for specific purposes. Student should not loiter in the office area.
- Teachers must take accurate daily attendance in each class and must keep daily attendance records on all students assigned to them.
- Teachers must be appropriate role models for students:
 - Avoid the use of profanity in the presence of students.
 - Do not smoke on school district property. Leipsic School District is smoke free at all times.
 - Do not eat in any classroom during class time.
- Teachers must be considerate of all faculty members by not detaining students between periods. If it is absolutely necessary to detain a student, the student should be issued a signed pass to his/her next class.
- Teachers are to be seated with and supervise their class/group during assemblies when directed.

Remember that the students assigned to you are your responsibility. In the event of any liability suit, the most important factor may be whether or not you were negligent in the performance of duty.

Teachers must have prior administrative approval if there is a desire to conduct a lesson outside of the school building. Teachers must post a note on their door listing exact location their class will be meeting. Teachers must also have a purpose for conducting class outdoors, and consider security issues when planning outdoor activities.

Each teacher will be assigned supervisory duties on a rotating basis or as specified by the collective bargaining agreement.

TEACHER AVAILABILITY – STUDENT ASSISTANCE

The term “preparation and conference time” shall mean only time during the student day, exclusive of the staff member’s daily duty-free lunch period. (Only staff assigned to four periods or more will be provided a planning period.) This time may be used by a staff member for any teacher-related or other assigned duties. You should also make yourself available for student assistance, meetings, or parent conferences after school until the designated leaving time.

DISCIPLINE

Society itself lives according to accepted rules, and since one of our main objectives in education is to prepare young people to live in our society, they must be trained to live according to established rules. Obviously, the manner in which “rules” are instituted and enforced is of paramount importance in the success or the failure of our efforts. We expect students to participate attentively in classroom activities with no attempts to disrupt or disturb procedures.

Good discipline calls for a cooperative working agreement between the classroom teacher, student, parents, counselor, and the principal. A realistic understanding of problems by pupils and their parents is also essential. It is learned through persistent and conscientious teaching.

Teachers must put **TIME** and **EFFORT** into developing a philosophy of wanting to help students with personal problems and understanding and recognizing that their responsibility extends beyond the walls of their classroom.

For desirable school behavior, it is important that faculty and students follow the Student Handbook.

- Respect the cultural diversity of others.
- Keep the school clean.
- Be courteous and cooperative.
- Encourage everyone to do his/her best.
- Promote Viking Pride.
- Be a Role Model for your students.

Students and faculty in the classroom or hallways will not tolerate any form of abuse, verbal or physical, to others. Abuse includes the following:

- Use of obscene or profane language or gestures.
- Shouts, blocking or running in the hallways
- Use of violence.
- Ridicule of the ideas or beliefs held by others.

Morale and discipline in our school is dependent on **CONSISTENT ENFORCEMENT** of the rules by **ALL TEACHERS**. Below are listed some of the areas where students need to be constantly checked and reminded:

- Tardiness to class
- Running in the corridors
- Creating disturbances in the corridors
- Loitering in the corridors
- Smoking on school property
- Destruction of school property
- Disturbances in assemblies
- Food or drink in classroom
- Wearing coats or jackets during the school day

In order to maintain the integrity of Leipsic Local School District we must all assume responsibility for a well-disciplined student body.

Cooperation is a two-way street – all people, young and old, like praise: there is nothing more effective than appealing to a person’s ego. Helping to train the students for good citizenship is everyone’s job. Some practices that have been found effective in preventive discipline are:

- Teacher-pupil relationship based on a sincere interest in student success.
- Lesson planning that presents material in as interesting a way as possible.
- Starting the class on time and making effective use of the entire period.
- Engaging all students in active classroom participation.

Dismissing a pupil from a room may sometimes be necessary to preserve a good learning situation but such action does not solve the behavior problem of the student.

IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

Notification of parents by phone call, email, or mail should be part of the disciplinary process. When calling parents, describe the situation that is creating the problem and please ask for parent support. When the teacher feels that auxiliary support personnel need help, he or she should consult the guidance counselor or initiate a disciplinary referral. Unfortunately, a teacher may encounter a parent that is hostile or uncooperative. When confronted with a hostile situation a teacher should never argue or raise his/her voice. This is an argument that you will not win. Please refer the aforementioned parent to the building principal.

BEHAVIORS THAT SHOULD BE REFERRED TO GUIDANCE

The following is a list of behaviors that should be referred to Guidance.

- Habitually unprepared for class
- Negative attitude toward class or school
- Poor peer relations
- Poor Hygiene
- Low or failing grades
- Psychological problems
- Chronic fatigue

FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

The building principal and District Superintendent must approve all fund raising activities. Students will not be used to promote fund raising activities by non-school sponsored groups except those which are of a school-wide nature in which participation can be a positive experience for students and when the proceeds contribute to a recognized humanitarian purpose.

Competitive activities between students or groups of students shall be avoided.

Stringent accounting procedures have been instituted which require strict care in the handling of moneys generated by student activities. Those procedures are as follows:

- Students and sponsors will verify receipts together.
- All monies will be counted and turned into the principal's office per Board policy.
- All monies will be stored in the school safe until a daily bank deposit is initiated.
- All monies will be handed directly to the assistant treasurer; no money will ever be left on that individual's desk unless she is there to receive it.
- No funds shall be deposited in a personal account outside of district.
- All district procedures for payment and purchasing shall be followed.
- No items shall be ordered in a sponsors or student's name.
- No items shall be shipped to a sponsor or student's home.

TORT LIABILITY

Teachers are very vulnerable for tort liability, which is injury or wrong caused to one party by another party. The courts generally view the teacher in such situations more critically than ordinary persons. In almost all cases, the deciding factor for or against the teacher is centered on whether or not there was negligence. The problem of Tort Liability is even more pronounced with teachers of occupational programs because of equipment in various shops.

The following are specific guidelines to help a teacher avoid a charge of negligence as follows:

- Never leave a class unattended – constant supervision is essential.
- Any students who remain an extra period of time in your class must be supervised. Students are not to work unattended.
- Make sure your shop equipment is in safe operating condition.
- Make sure all classroom doors are locked when unoccupied.

STUDENT INJURIES

Teachers are supplied with student accident report forms. Completion of this report form is the responsibility of the teacher under whose supervision the injury occurs and must be filed in the office by the end of the day. These reports are for the protection of both the teachers and the school.

When an accident occurs involving a student, the following procedures should be closely followed:

The adult employee contacted by an injured student should be held responsible to report the same to the building office. All accidents involving injuries to the eyes, head or spine will be reported regardless of seriousness, and all other injuries for which there exists a reasonable possibility of need for first aid or professional medical attention should be reported in the same manner. There is hardly any way one can be too cautious in the reporting of accidents involving a student.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Leipsic Local School District will comply with all federal and state non-discrimination and equal opportunity laws, orders and regulations, and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin in any of its educational programs and activities. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and regulations issued there under require Leipsic Local School District not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs and activities, including the area of employment.

LPDC

It is the responsibility of each individual to follow the guidelines established by the LPDC along with making sure that each license is renewed in a timely and professional manner.