

**CLASSIFIED**  
**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**



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## Welcome

Welcome to **Decatur County Community Schools**! We are delighted that you have chosen to join our organization and hope that you will enjoy a long and successful career with us. As you become familiar with our culture and mission, we hope you will take advantage of opportunities to enhance your career and further **Decatur County Community Schools'** goals.

You are joining an organization that has a reputation for outstanding leadership, innovation, and expertise. Our employees use their creativity and talent to invent new solutions, meet new demands, and offer the most effective services/products in the industry. With your active involvement, creativity, and support, **Decatur County Community Schools** will continue to achieve its goals. We sincerely hope you will take pride in being an important part of **Decatur County Community Schools'** success.

Please take time to review the policies contained in this handbook. If you have questions, feel free to ask your supervisor or to contact the Human Resources (HR) department.

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## Employment at Will

Employment at **Decatur County Community Schools** is on an at-will basis unless otherwise stated in a written individual employment agreement signed by the superintendent.

This means that either the employee or the District may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

Nothing in this employee handbook creates or is intended to create an employment agreement, expressed or implied. Nothing contained in this or any other document provided to the employee is intended to be, nor should it be, construed as a contract that employment or any benefit will be continued for any period of time. In addition, no District representative is authorized to modify this policy for any employee or to enter into any agreement, oral or written, that changes the at-will relationship.

Any salary figures provided to an employee in annual or monthly terms are stated for the sake of convenience or to facilitate comparisons and are not intended to and do not create an employment contract for any specific period of time. Any employee hired on a probationary period of up to ninety (90) days may be removed from probationary status at any time within that 90 day period at the discretion of the supervisor.

Nothing in this statement is intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent concerted activity as protected by the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Such activity includes employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment. **Decatur County Community Schools** employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

## Equal Opportunity and Commitment to Diversity

**Decatur County Community Schools** provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, genetic information, service in the military, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances. Equal employment opportunity applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, and training.

**Decatur County Community Schools** expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment or discrimination based on any of the characteristics mentioned above. Improper interference with the ability of other employees to perform their expected job duties is absolutely not tolerated.

**Decatur County Community Schools** will endeavor to make a reasonable accommodation of an otherwise qualified applicant or employee related to an individual's physical or mental disability, sincerely held religious beliefs and practices, and/or any other reason required by applicable law, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship upon **Decatur County Community Schools'** business operations.

Any employees with questions or concerns about equal employment opportunities in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their direct supervisor. The District will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who raise issues of equal employment opportunity. Employees who feel they have been subjected to any such retaliation should bring it to the attention of their direct supervisor.

Retaliation means adverse conduct taken because an individual reported an actual or a perceived violation of this policy, opposed practices prohibited by this policy, or participated in the reporting and investigation process described below. "Adverse conduct" includes but is not limited to:

- (1) Shunning and avoiding an individual who reports harassment, discrimination, or retaliation;
- (2) Express or implied threats or intimidation intended to prevent an individual from reporting harassment, discrimination, or retaliation; *or*
- (3) Denying employment benefits because an applicant or employee reported harassment, discrimination, or retaliation or participated in the reporting and investigation process.

Other examples of retaliation include firing, demotion, denial of promotion, unjustified negative evaluations, increased surveillance, harassment, and assault.

Complaints of discrimination should be filed according to the procedures described in the Harassment and Complaint Procedure.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodation**

**Decatur County Community Schools** is committed to the fair and equal employment of individuals with disabilities under the ADA. It is **Decatur County Community Schools'** policy to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the District. **Decatur County Community Schools** prohibits any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of, employees based on a disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation.

In accordance with the ADA, reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities to enable them to perform the essential functions of their jobs or to enjoy the equal benefits and privileges of employment. An employee with a disability may request an accommodation from their immediate supervisor and engage in an informal process to clarify what the employee needs and to identify possible accommodations. If requested, the employee is responsible for providing medical documentation regarding the disability and possible

accommodations. All information obtained concerning the medical condition or history of an applicant or employee will be treated as confidential information, maintained in separate medical files, and disclosed only as permitted by law.

It is the policy of **Decatur County Community Schools** to prohibit harassment or discrimination based on disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. **Decatur County Community Schools** prohibits retaliation against employees for exercising their rights under the ADA or other applicable civil rights laws. Employees should use the procedures described in the Harassment and Complaint Procedure to report any harassment, discrimination, or retaliation they have experienced or witnessed.

## **Commitment to Diversity**

Decatur County Community Schools is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, Decatur County Community Schools expects that all relationships among persons in the office will be business-like and free of explicit bias, prejudice and harassment.

Decatur County Community Schools has developed this policy to ensure that all its employees can work in an environment free from unlawful harassment, discrimination and retaliation. Decatur County Community Schools will make every reasonable effort to ensure that all concerned are familiar with these policies and are aware that any complaint in violation of such policies will be investigated and resolved appropriately.

Any employee who has questions or concerns about these policies should talk with their immediate supervisor.

These policies should not, and may not, be used as a basis for excluding or separating individuals of a particular gender, or any other protected characteristic, from participating in business or work-related social activities or discussions. In other words, no one should make the mistake of engaging in discrimination or exclusion to avoid allegations of harassment. The law and the policies of Decatur County Community Schools prohibit disparate treatment on the basis of sex or any other protected characteristic, with regard to terms, conditions, privileges and perquisites of employment. The prohibitions against harassment, discrimination and retaliation are intended to complement and further those policies, not to form the basis of an exception to them.

## **Equal employment opportunity**

It is the policy of Decatur County Community Schools to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, national origin, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law. Decatur County Community Schools prohibits any such discrimination or harassment.

## **Retaliation**

Decatur County Community Schools encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of Decatur County Community Schools to promptly and thoroughly investigate such reports. Decatur County Community Schools prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports.

## **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, "sexual harassment" is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 recognizes two types of sexual harassment: a) quid pro quo and b) hostile work environment. Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not-so-subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

## **Harassment**

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law, or that of his or her relatives, friends or associates, and that: a) has the purpose or effect of creating an

intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, or c) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the employer's premises or circulated in the workplace, on District time or using District equipment by email, phone (including voice messages), text messages, social networking sites or other means.

### **Individuals and Conduct Covered**

These policies apply to all applicants and employees, whether related to conduct engaged in by fellow employees or by someone not directly connected to Decatur County Community Schools (e.g., an outside vendor, consultant or customer).

Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings and business-related social events.

### **Reporting an Incident of Harassment, Discrimination or Retaliation**

Decatur County Community Schools encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position. Individuals who believe that they have been the victim of such conduct should discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor. See the complaint procedure described below.

In addition, Decatur County Community Schools encourages individuals who believe they are being subjected to such conduct to promptly advise the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome and to request that it be discontinued. Often this action alone will resolve the problem. Decatur County Community Schools recognizes, however, that an individual may prefer to pursue the matter through complaint procedures.

### **Complaint Procedure**

Individuals who believe they have been the victims of conduct prohibited by this policy or believe they have witnessed such conduct should discuss their concerns with their immediate supervisor.

Decatur County Community Schools encourages the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that rapid and constructive action can be taken before relationships become irreparably strained. Therefore, while no fixed reporting period has been established, early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment.

Any reported allegations of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be investigated promptly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and, where necessary, with individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or may have other relevant knowledge.

Decatur County Community Schools will maintain confidentiality throughout the investigatory process to the extent consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and will be promptly investigated and addressed.

Misconduct constituting harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be dealt with appropriately. Responsive action may include, for example, training, referral to counseling or disciplinary action such as a warning, reprimand, withholding of a promotion or pay increase, reassignment, temporary suspension without pay, or termination, as Decatur County Community Schools believes appropriate under the circumstances.

If a party to a complaint does not agree with its resolution, that party may appeal to Decatur County Community Schools' superintendent.

False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation (as opposed to complaints that, even if erroneous, are made in good faith) may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

## **Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

### **Conflicts of Interest**

**Decatur County Community Schools** expects all employees to conduct themselves and District business in a manner that reflects the highest standards of ethical conduct and in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. This includes avoiding real and potential conflicts of interests.

Exactly what constitutes a conflict of interest or an unethical business practice is both a moral and a legal question. **Decatur County Community Schools** recognizes and respects the individual employee's right to engage in activities outside of employment that are private in nature and do not in any way conflict with or reflect poorly on the District.

It is not possible to define all the circumstances and relationships that might create a conflict of interest. If a situation arises in which there is a potential conflict of interest, the employee should discuss this with a manager for advice and guidance on how to proceed. The list below suggests

some of the types of activities that indicate improper behavior, unacceptable personal integrity, or unacceptable ethics:

1. Simultaneous employment by another firm that is a competitor of or supplier to **Decatur County Community Schools**;
2. Carrying on District business with a firm in which the employee, or a close relative of the employee, has a substantial ownership or interest;
3. Holding a substantial interest in, or participating in the management of, a firm to which the District makes sales or from which it makes purchases;
4. Borrowing money from customers or firms, other than recognized loan institutions, from which our District buys services, materials, equipment, or supplies;
5. Accepting substantial gifts or excessive entertainment from an outside organization or agency;
6. Speculating or dealing in materials, equipment, supplies, services, or property purchased by the District;
7. Participating in civic or professional organization activities in a manner that divulges confidential District information;
8. Misusing privileged information or revealing confidential data to outsiders;
9. Using one's position in the District or knowledge of its affairs for personal gains; *and*
10. Engaging in practices or procedures that violate antitrust laws, commercial bribery laws, copyright laws, discrimination laws, campaign contribution laws, or other laws regulating the conduct of District business.

## **Confidential Information**

The protection of confidential business information and trade secrets is vital to the interests and success of **Decatur County Community Schools**. Confidential information is any and all information disclosed to or known by you because of employment with the District that is not generally known to people outside the District about its business.

An employee who improperly uses or discloses trade secrets or confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and legal action, even if the employee does not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

As educators, we are responsible for a great deal of personal information about our students and parents. It is paramount that we maintain strict confidentiality in regards to student behavior, academic performance, and any other information deemed personal in nature. Discussion of confidential information in areas where others could hear these conversations or with individuals who have no need to know information is strictly prohibited.

All inquiries from the media must be referred to the **SUPERINTENDENT**. This provision is not intended to, and should not be interpreted to, prohibit employees from discussing wages and other terms and conditions of employment if they so choose.

# Employment Relationship

## Employment Authorization

Decatur County Community Schools requires that all employees be legally authorized to work in the United States, and it abides by all laws that prohibit the employment of undocumented foreign nationals. Any person employed by the District must complete the federal Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9) within three days of hire and will be entered into the federal E-Verify system.

## Employment Verifications

Prospective employers, financial institutions and residential property managers routinely contact employers, including Decatur County Community Schools, for information on a former or current employee's work history and salary.

All such requests of this type should be referred to and handled by the central office. Responses to written requests for verification of employment will be made on the form provided only when the request is accompanied by a former or current employee's signed authorization to release such information.

A written verification of employment form that has been completed by the central office, will be returned directly to the requesting party. Telephone requests for verification of employment by prospective employers, financial institutions and residential property managers will be limited to confirming information stated by the external party.

## Employee Privacy

It is **Decatur County Community Schools'** goal to respect the individual privacy of its employees and at the same time maintain a safe and secure workplace. When issues of safety and security arise, you may be requested to cooperate with an investigation. The investigation may include the following procedures to safeguard the District and its employees: searches of personal belongings, searches of work areas, searches of private vehicles on District premises, medical examinations, and the like. Failure to cooperate with an investigation is grounds for termination. Providing false information during any investigation may lead to discipline, including termination.

Employees are expected to make use of District facilities only for the business purposes of the District. Accordingly, materials that appear on District hardware or networks are presumed to be for business purposes, and all such materials are subject to review by the District at any time without notice to the employees. Employees do not have to have any expectation of privacy with respect to any material on District property. **Decatur County Community Schools** regularly monitors its communications systems and networks as allowed by law. Monitored activity may

include voice, e-mail, and text communications, as well as Internet search and browsing history. Employees who make excessive use of the communications system for personal matters are subject to discipline. Employees are expected to keep personal communication to a minimum and to emergency situations.

**Video surveillance.** As part of its security measures and to help ensure a safe workplace, **Decatur County Community Schools** has positioned video cameras to monitor various areas of its facilities. Video cameras will not be used in private areas, such as break rooms, restrooms, locker/dressing rooms, etc. Videotapes will not include an audio component.

## **Meal and Rest Breaks**

Employees are entitled to a 30-minute unpaid meal break each day. Any nonexempt employee who is required to work through a meal break will be paid for the 30-minute period. Employees are also entitled to two 15-minute rest periods each day. Meal and rest breaks will be scheduled by the department supervisor or manager.

## **Time Records**

All nonexempt employees are required to complete accurate weekly time reports using the time clock fingerprint showing all time actually worked. These records are required by governmental regulations and are used to calculate regular and overtime pay. At the end of each week, you and your supervisor must approve the time attesting to its correctness.

## **Overtime**

When required due to the needs of the business, you may be asked to work overtime. Overtime is actual hours worked in excess of 40 in a single workweek. Nonexempt employees will be paid overtime compensation at the rate of one and one-half their regular rate of pay for all hours over 40 actually worked in a single workweek. Paid leave, such as holiday, paid time off (PTO), bereavement time, and jury duty, does not apply toward work time. All overtime work must be approved in advance by a supervisor or manager.

## **Deductions from Pay/Safe Harbor Exempt Employees**

**Decatur County Community Schools** does not make improper deductions from the salaries of exempt employees and complies with the salary basis requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Employees classified as exempt from the overtime pay requirements of the FLSA will be notified of this classification at the time of hire or change in position.

**Permitted deductions.** The FLSA limits the types of deductions that may be made from the pay of an exempt employee. Deductions that are permitted include:

- Deductions that are required by law, e.g., income taxes;
- Deductions for employee benefits when authorized by the employee;
- Absence from work for 1 or more full days for personal reasons other than sickness or disability;
- Absence from work for 1 or more full days due to sickness or disability if the deduction is made in accordance with a bona fide plan, policy, or practice of providing compensation for salary lost due to illness;
- Offset for amounts received as witness or jury fees or for military pay;
- Unpaid disciplinary suspensions of 1 or more full days imposed in good faith for workplace conduct rule infractions; *and*
- Any full workweek in which the employee does not perform any work.

During the week an exempt employee begins work for the District or during the last week of employment, the employee will only be paid for actual hours worked. In addition, an employee may be paid only for hours worked during a period when the employee is using unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

**Improper deductions.** If an employee classified as exempt believes that an improper deduction has been taken from the employee's pay, the employee should immediately report the deduction to their immediate supervisor. The report will be promptly investigated, and if it is found that an improper deduction has been made, the District will reimburse the employee for the improper deduction.

## Paychecks

**Decatur County Community Schools'** pay period for all employees is biweekly on Friday. If payday falls on a federal holiday, employees will receive their paycheck on the preceding workday. Paychecks are directly deposited into your checking and/or savings accounts.

### Payroll Error Corrections

It is the employee's responsibility to review their pay stub each payday for accuracy. If discrepancies are found, the employee must contact the Payroll Department immediately. The Payroll Department corrects paycheck errors in the pay period following the pay check with the error on it. This ensures that the employee's wages are accurate for W2 purposes.

### Overpayment of Wages

All overpayments should be brought to the attention of the Payroll Department as soon as possible. Overpayments made to a current employee will be taken from the employee's wages on the following paycheck, unless the employee agrees to reimburse the District prior to the next payday. Overpayments made to a former employee should be reported to the central office, who will coordinate the collection efforts.

## **Access to Personnel Files**

Employee files are maintained by the central office and are considered confidential. Managers and supervisors may only have access to personnel file information on a need-to-know basis. Employees may inspect their own personnel files and may copy them but may not remove documents from their file. Inspections by employees must be requested in writing to the HR department and will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time or as required under state law. Personnel files are to be reviewed in the HR department. Representatives of government or law enforcement agencies, in the course of their duties, may be allowed access to file information.

## **Employment of Relatives and Domestic Partners**

Relatives and domestic partners may be hired by the District if (1) the persons concerned will not work in a direct supervisory relationship, and (2) the employment will not pose difficulties for supervision, security, safety, or morale. For the purposes of this policy, “relatives” are defined as spouses, children, siblings, parents, or grandparents. A “domestic partnership” is generally defined as a committed relationship between two individuals who are sharing a home or living arrangements.

Current employees who marry each other or become involved in a domestic partnership will be permitted to continue employment with the District provided they don't work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other or otherwise pose difficulties as mentioned above. If employees who marry or live together do work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other, the District will attempt to reassign one of the employees to another position for which the employee is qualified if such a position is available. If no such position is available, the employees will be permitted to determine which one of them will resign from the District.

## **Separation from Employment**

In all cases of voluntary resignation (one initiated by the employee), employees are asked to provide a written notice to their supervisors at least 10 working days in advance of the last day of work. The 10 days must be actual working days. Holidays and PTO will not be counted toward the 10-day notice. Employees who provide the requested amount of notice will be considered to have resigned in good standing and generally will be eligible for rehire. Any PTO days that an employee is given to start the new year will be prorated based on the last day worked.

## Workplace Safety

### Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace

It is the policy of **Decatur County Community Schools** to maintain a drug- and alcohol-free work environment that is safe and productive for employees and others having business with the District.

The unlawful use, possession, purchase, sale, or distribution of or being under the influence of any illegal drug or controlled substance (including medical marijuana) while on District or client premises or while performing services for the District is strictly prohibited. **Decatur County Community Schools** also prohibits reporting to work or performing services under the influence of alcohol or consuming alcohol while on duty or during work hours. In addition, **Decatur County Community Schools** prohibits off-premises abuse of alcohol and controlled substances (including medical marijuana), as well as the possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs, when these activities adversely affect job performance, job safety, or the District's reputation in the community.

To ensure compliance with this policy, substance abuse screening may be conducted in the following situations:

**For cause:** upon reasonable suspicion that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs that could affect or have adversely affected the employee's job performance

Compliance with this policy is a condition of employment. Employees who test positive or who refuse to submit to substance abuse screening will be subject to termination. Notwithstanding any provision herein, this policy will be enforced at all times in accordance with applicable state and local law.

Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for the first offense.

### Smoke-Free Workplace

Smoking is not allowed in District buildings, on District grounds or work areas at any time. "Smoking" includes the use of any tobacco products (including chewing tobacco), electronic smoking devices, and e-cigarettes.

DCCS is a smoke-free campus.

### Workplace Violence Prevention

**Decatur County Community Schools** is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for our employees. Due to this commitment, we discourage employees from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual or from behaving in a threatening or violent manner. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any employee will not be tolerated. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse; attempts to intimidate others; menacing gestures; stalking; or

any other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions taken for the purposes of intimidation. This policy covers any violent or potentially violent behavior that occurs in the workplace or at District-sponsored functions.

All **Decatur County Community Schools** employees bear the responsibility of keeping our work environment free from violence or potential violence. Any employee who witnesses or is the recipient of violent behavior should promptly inform their supervisor, manager, or HR department. All threats will be promptly investigated. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline.

Any individual engaging in violence against the District, its employees, or its property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All acts will be investigated, and the appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threatening behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Decatur County Community Schools** prohibits the possession of weapons on its property at all times, including our parking lots or District vehicles. Additionally, while on duty, employees may not carry a weapon of any type. Weapons include, but are not limited to, handguns, rifles, automatic weapons, knives that can be used as weapons (excluding pocket knives, utility knives, and other instruments that are used to open packages or cut string and for other miscellaneous tasks), martial arts paraphernalia, stun guns, and tear gas. Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for the first offense.

The District reserves the right to inspect all belongings of employees on its premises, including packages, briefcases, purses and handbags, gym bags, and personal vehicles on District property. In addition, **Decatur County Community Schools** may inspect the contents of lockers, storage areas, file cabinets, desks, and workstations at any time and may remove all District property and other items that are in violation of District rules and policies.

## **Commitment to Safety**

Protecting the safety of our students, employees, and visitors is the most important aspect of running our School Corporation.

All employees have the opportunity and responsibility to contribute to a safe work environment by using common sense rules and safe practices and by notifying management when any health or safety issues are present. All employees are encouraged to partner with management to ensure maximum safety for all.

In the event of an emergency, notify the appropriate emergency personnel by dialing 9 for an outside line, then dialing 911 to activate the medical emergency services.

Any workplace injury, accident, or illness must be reported to the employee's supervisor as soon as possible, regardless of the severity of the injury or accident.

## **Emergency Closings**

**Decatur County Community Schools** will always make every attempt to be open for business. In situations in which some employees are concerned about their safety, management may advise supervisors to notify their departments that the school/office is not officially closed, but employees may choose to leave the office if they feel uncomfortable.

If the school is officially closed you will be paid only for actual hours worked, or you can take PTO time. Exempt employees will be paid for a normal full day but are expected to complete their work at another time.

## **Visitors**

In order to maintain security and safety for our employees, **Decatur County Community Schools** has the following policy with respect to visitors:

All visitors must check in with the receptionist, must wear a visitor's badge, and must be escorted by an employee.

This policy applies to anyone who is not an active employee, including employees on leave, former employees, vendors, and suppliers.

Generally, friends and family members are not permitted to visit employees at the workplace.

When employees have any doubt whether a person can visit, they should contact the HR department.

## **Workplace Guidelines**

### **Attendance**

All employees are expected to arrive on time, ready to work, every day they are scheduled to work.

If unable to arrive at work on time, or if an employee will be absent for an entire day, the employee must contact the supervisor as soon as possible. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness will result in discipline up to and including termination. Failure to show up or call in for a scheduled shift without prior approval also may result in discipline up to and including termination. If an employee fails to report to work or call in to inform the supervisor of the absence for 3 consecutive days or more, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned employment.

### **Job Performance**

Communication between employees and supervisors or managers is very important. Discussions regarding job performance are ongoing and often informal. Employees should initiate conversations with their supervisors if they feel additional ongoing feedback is needed.

Generally, formal performance reviews are conducted annually. These reviews include a written performance appraisal and discussion between the employee and the supervisor about job performance and expectations for the coming year.

## **Outside Employment**

Employees generally are permitted to work a second job as long as it does not interfere with their job performance or create a conflict of interest with **Decatur County Community Schools**.

Employees with a second job are expected to work their assigned schedules. A second job will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours. In addition, employees who have accepted outside employment may not use paid sick time to work on the outside job. However, an employee on a leave of absence may continue to work in the outside job if this employment has been approved by the District under this policy and the employee's reason for leave does not preclude the outside employment.

If outside work activity causes or contributes to job-related problems, it must be discontinued, or the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **Dress and Grooming**

**Decatur County Community Schools** provides a casual yet professional work environment for its employees. Even though the dress code is casual, it is important to project a professional image to our visitors and coworkers. All employees are expected to dress in a manner consistent with good hygiene, safety, and good taste. Please use common sense.

Certain employees may be required to wear special dress and grooming, such as wearing uniforms or safety equipment/clothing, depending on the nature of their job. Any questions or complaints regarding the appropriateness of attire should be directed to their direct supervisor.

## **Social Media Acceptable Use**

**Decatur County Community Schools** encourages employees to share information with coworkers and with those outside the District for the purposes of gathering information, generating new ideas, and learning from the work of others. Social media provides inexpensive, informal, and timely ways to participate in an exchange of ideas and information. However, information posted on a website is available to the public, and therefore, the District has established the following guidelines for employee participation in social media.

**Note:** As used in this policy, "social media" refers to blogs, forums, and social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat, among others.

**Off-duty use of social media.** Employees may maintain personal websites or blogs on their own time using their own facilities. Employees must ensure that social media activity does not interfere with their work. In general, the District considers social media activities to be personal endeavors, and employees may use them to express their thoughts or promote their ideas. In addition, employees may not post on a personal blog or webpage or participate on a social networking platform for personal purposes during work time or at any time with **Decatur County Community Schools** equipment or property.

**On-duty use of social media.** Employees may engage in social media activity during work time provided it is directly related to their work and approved by their manager and does not identify or reference students without express permission. The District monitors employee use of District computers and the Internet, including employee blogging and social networking activity.

**Respect.** Demonstrate respect for the dignity of the District, its owners, its vendors, and its employees. A social media site is a public place, and employees should avoid inappropriate comments. For example, employees should not divulge **Decatur County Community Schools** confidential information such as student information restricted from disclosure by law on social media sites. Similarly, employees should not engage in harassing or discriminatory behavior that targets other employees or individuals because of their protected class status or make defamatory comments or engage in other behavior that violates the District's policies.

**Post disclaimers.** Employees who identify themselves as District employees or discuss matters related to the District on a social media site must include a disclaimer on the front page stating that it does not express the views of the District and that the employees are expressing only personal views—for example: "The views expressed on this website/Weblog are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer." Place the disclaimer in a prominent position, and repeat it for each posting expressing an opinion related to the District or the District's business. Employees must keep in mind that if they post information on a social media site that is in violation of District policy and/or federal, state, or local law, the disclaimer will not shield them from disciplinary action.

**Competition.** Employees should not use social media to criticize the District's competition and should not use it to compete with the District.

**Confidentiality.** Do not identify or reference students without express permission. Employees may write about their jobs in general but may not disclose any confidential or proprietary information. For examples of confidential information, please refer to the confidentiality policy. When in doubt, ask before publishing.

**New ideas.** Please remember that new ideas related to work or the District's business belong to the District. Do not post them on a social media site without the District's permission.

**District restrictions.** The school district may require that employees temporarily confine social media commentary to topics unrelated to the District or that employees temporarily suspend such activity to ensure compliance with the SEC's regulations or other laws. The District may also

require employees to delete references to it on a website or Web log and to stop identifying themselves as employees of the District.

**Discipline.** Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the NLRA to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve or discuss terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, working conditions, and benefits. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

## **Bulletin Boards**

All required governmental postings are posted on the boards located in the break or teacher work room. These boards may also contain general announcements.

Employees may submit to HR notices of general interest, such as for-sale notices; recreational-type announcements and/or club functions (e-mail should not be used for the aforementioned); postcards; expressions of gratitude or sympathy; and notices looking for/offering carpools, tickets, roommates, or pets. HR approves, posts, and takes down all notices. All notices posted by employees will be removed after 2 weeks unless otherwise stipulated. The District reserves the right to refuse permission to post or to take down any announcement.

Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the NLRA to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve or discuss terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, working conditions, and benefits. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

## **Computers, Internet, E-Mail, and Other Resources**

The District provides a wide variety of communication tools and resources to employees for use in running day-to-day business activities. Whether it is the telephone, voicemail, scanner, Internet, intranet, email, text messaging, portable electronic devices, or any other District-provided technology, use should be reserved for business-related matters during working hours. All communication using these tools should be handled in a professional and respectful manner.

Employees should not have any expectation of privacy in their use of District computer, phone, portable electronic devices, or other communication tools. All communications made using District-provided equipment or services, including e-mail and Internet activity, are subject to inspection by the District. Employees should keep in mind that even if they delete an email, a voicemail, or another communication, a copy may be archived on the District's systems.

Employee use of District-provided communication systems, including personal email and Internet use, that is not job-related has the potential to drain, rather than enhance, productivity and system performance. You should also be aware that information transmitted through email and the Internet is not completely secure or may contain viruses or malware, and information you transmit and receive could damage the District's systems, as well as the reputation and/or competitiveness of the District. To protect against possible problems, delete any email messages before opening that are received from unknown senders and advertisers. It also is against District policy to turn off antivirus protection software or make unauthorized changes to system configurations installed on District computers. Violations of this policy may result in termination for a first offense.

The District encourages employees to use email only to communicate with fellow employees, suppliers, customers, or potential customers regarding District business. Internal and external emails are considered business records and may be subject to federal and state recordkeeping requirements, as well as to discovery in the event of litigation. Be aware of this possibility when sending emails within and outside the District.

All use of District-provided communications systems, including email and Internet use, should conform to our District guidelines/policies, including but not limited to the Equal Opportunity, Harassment, Confidential Information, and Conflicts of Interest. So, for example, employees should not engage in harassing or discriminatory behavior that targets other employees or individuals because of their protected class status or make defamatory comments. Similarly, employees should not divulge confidential information such as trade secrets, client lists, or information restricted from disclosure by law on social media sites.

Because email, telephone and voicemail, and Internet communication equipment are provided for District business purposes and are critical to the District's success, your communications may be accessed without further notice by IT department administrators and District management to ensure compliance with this guideline.

The electronic communication systems are not secure and may allow inadvertent disclosure, accidental transmission to third parties, etc. Sensitive information should not be sent via unsecured electronic means.

Employees should pay particular care to the use and security of portable electronic devices when used for business-related purposes, such as laptops, tablets, smartphones, and other data storage media, whether provided by the employer or the employee. Lost or stolen portable electronic devices containing District information may cause breaches of security that result in the loss of District confidential commercial data, the loss of vital research data, the unauthorized disclosure of sensitive employee data, lawsuits against the individual, and lawsuits against the District. Employees should use appropriate password protections for such devices and physically secure them as recommended by IT department administrators.

Office telephones are for business purposes. While the District recognizes that some personal calls are necessary, these should be kept as brief as possible and to a minimum. Abuse of these privileges is subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

The District reserves the right to monitor customer calls to ensure employees abide by District quality guidelines and provide appropriate levels of customer service. Should the subject matter of any telephone conversation become personal while monitoring is taking place, monitoring of the call will immediately be discontinued.

Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the NLRA to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve or discuss terms and conditions of employment, such as wages, working conditions, and benefits. Employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

## **Disciplinary Procedure**

The District expects employees to comply with the District's standards of behavior and performance and to correct any noncompliance with these standards.

Under normal circumstances, the District endorses a policy of progressive discipline in which it attempts to provide employees with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve. It does, however, retain the right to administer discipline in any manner it sees fit. This policy does not modify the status of employees as employees at will or in any way restrict the District's right to bypass the disciplinary procedures suggested.

The following steps are suggested in the discipline procedure. All steps should be documented in the employee's personnel file.

**Step 1: Informal Discussion.** When a performance problem is first identified, the nature of the problem and the action necessary to correct it should be thoroughly discussed with the employee.

**Step 2: Counseling.** If a private informal discussion with the employee has not resulted in corrective action, following a thorough investigation, the supervisor should meet with the employee and (a) review the problem, (b) permit the employee to present information regarding the problem, (c) advise the employee that the problem must be corrected, (d) inform the employee that failure to correct the problem will result in further disciplinary action that may include discharge, and (e) issue a counseling notice to the employee.

**Step 3: Reprimand.** If satisfactory performance and corrective action are not achieved under Steps 1 and 2, the supervisor and a representative from the HR department should meet with

the employee in private and proceed via (a) through (d) above and issue a reprimand notice to the employee.

Step 4: Suspension. The Superintendent has the authority to temporarily remove employees from the workplace, with or without pay, if approved in advance by the department director and the director of HR. An exempt employee generally may not be suspended without pay for less than a full day, and the suspension must be related to written workplace conduct rules applicable to all employees, such as a written policy prohibiting sexual harassment or workplace violence.

Step 5: Failure to improve. Failure to improve performance or behavior after the written warning or suspension can result in termination.

The progressive disciplinary procedures described above also may be applied to an employee who is experiencing a series of unrelated problems involving job performance or behavior.

In cases involving serious misconduct, or any time the supervisor determines it is necessary, such as a major breach of policy or violation of law, the procedures contained above may be disregarded. Typically, the supervisor should suspend the employee immediately (with or without pay), and an investigation of the incidents leading up to the suspension should be conducted to determine if any further action, such as termination, should be taken.

## **Time Off and Leaves of Absence**

### **Holidays**

The District observes and allows time off with pay for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve Day

If one of these holidays falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, the District will select either the following Monday or the preceding Friday as a substitute holiday. The District reserves the right to pay eligible employees in lieu of time off if the holiday falls on Saturday.

**Holiday pay.** Full-time 12 month employees are eligible for holiday pay. Exempt salaried employees may receive holiday pay immediately upon joining the District. Part-time and temporary employees, including summer employees, are not eligible for holiday pay.

Holiday pay shall be at the employee's regular straight-time rate, inclusive of shift premiums, times the employee's regularly scheduled hours (not to exceed 8 hours).

To receive holiday pay, an eligible nonexempt employee must be at work or taking an approved absence on the workdays immediately preceding and immediately following the day on which the holiday is observed. An approved absence is a day of paid vacation or paid sick leave. If an employee is absent on 1 or both of these days because of an illness or injury, the District may require verification of the reason for the absence before approving holiday pay.

**Religious observances.** Employees who need time off to observe religious practices or holidays not already scheduled by the District should speak with their supervisor. Depending upon business needs, the employee may be able to work on a day that is normally observed as a holiday and then take time off for another religious day. Employees may also be able to switch a scheduled day with another employee, take vacation time, or take off unpaid days. The District will seek to reasonably accommodate individuals' religious observances.

## Vacation

**Decatur County Community Schools** recognizes the importance of time off from work to relax, spend time with family, and enjoy leisure activities. The District provides paid vacation time to full-time 12 month employees for this purpose, and employees are encouraged to take vacation during the year.

Full-time employees will accrue paid vacation according to the following schedule (annual totals should be rounded to the nearest whole day).

1 Year Experience	5 Vacation Days
2+ Years Experience	10 Vacation Days
10 Years Experience	15 Vacation Days

Employees may not take paid vacation until they have completed one year of employment.

Generally, employees should submit vacation plans to their supervisor at least 2 weeks in advance of the requested vacation date. Managers have the right to designate when some or all of vacations must be taken.

Vacation should be used in the year it is earned. Employees will be permitted to carry over accrued vacation to the following calendar year. Employees may accumulate a maximum of 40 vacation days.

Employees whose employment terminates will be paid for unused vacation time that has accrued. Upon voluntary resignation or retirement, any unused vacation days will be paid at the employee's current rate of pay. The employee may choose to have this paid directly to them in their last check, or elect to have the sum paid into a VEBA account in the employee's name.

## Sick Leave

**Decatur County Community Schools** provides regular, full-time, and part-time employees with paid sick days. Employees become eligible for sick days upon employment. Effective November 9, 2023, any newly hired or rehired hourly employee will earn sick days at a rate of one (1) day per pay period until that amount equals the number of days specified below.

Full-time employees accrue sick days as follows:

12 month Employees	6 sick days per year and may accumulate to a total of 40 days.
10 Month Employees	5 sick days per year and may accumulate to a total of 40 days per year.
Part-time 10 month employees	4 sick days per year and may accumulate to a total of 40 days per year.

Sick days are not intended to be used as a substitute for vacation days, but sick days may be used if an employee needs to provide care for a family member who is ill. Sick days may also be used if an employee needs time off for scheduled medical procedures.

Employees may carry accrued sick days over from 1 year to the next. The maximum accrual allowed for full-time employees is 40 days and for part-time employees is 40 days.

If the need for sick leave is foreseeable, employees are required to give at least 30 days' advance notice (e.g., a planned medical treatment) whenever possible. If the need for sick leave is not foreseeable, employees are asked to notify their supervisor as soon as is practical.

If an employee misses 3 or more consecutive days because of illness, **Decatur County Community Schools** may require the employee to provide a physician's written permission to return to work.

Except as required by state law, unused sick days are forfeited when an employee's employment ends for any reason.

## Personal Leave

Effective November 9, 2023, any newly hired or rehired hourly employee will earn personal days at a rate of one (1) day per pay period, *after all sick days have been given*, until that amount equals the number of days specified below.

Full-time 12 month and 10 month employees are allotted 2 personal leave days each year to conduct personal business. Unused days will roll into sick leave balance.

Part-time 10 month employees are allotted 1 personal leave day each year to conduct personal business. Unused days will roll into sick leave balance.

## Family and Medical Leave

**Decatur County Community Schools** complies with the federal FMLA, which requires employers to grant unpaid leaves of absence to qualified workers for certain medical and family-related reasons. The District also abides by any state and local leave laws. The more generous of the laws will apply to the employee if the employee is eligible under both federal and state laws.

Please note there are many requirements, qualifications, and exceptions under these laws, and each employee's situation is different. Contact the HR department to discuss options for leave.

The FMLA requires private employers with 50 or more employees and all public agencies, including state, local, and federal employers, and local education agencies (schools) to provide eligible employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in any 12-month period for certain family and medical reasons. The 12-month period starts August 1st each year. For leaves to care for a covered servicemember with a serious illness or injury the leave entitlement is 26 weeks in a single 12-month period starting August 1st each year.

**Basic leave entitlement.** The FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons: (1) for incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth; (2) to care for the employee's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care; (3) to care for the employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition; or (4) for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to work.

**Military family leave entitlements.** Eligible employees with a spouse, child, or parent on active duty or called to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include addressing issues that arise from (1) short notice of deployment (limited to up to 7 days of leave); (2) attending certain military events and related activity; (3) arranging child care and school activities; (4) addressing certain financial and legal arrangements; (5) attending certain counseling sessions; (6) spending time with covered military family members on short-term temporary rest and recuperation leave (limited to up to 5 days of leave); (7) attending post-deployment reintegration briefings; (8) arranging care for or providing care to a parent who is incapable of self-care; and (9) any additional activities agreed upon by the employer and employee that arise out of the military member's active duty or call to active duty.

The FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember during a single 12-month period. A covered servicemember is a current member of the armed forces, including a member of the National Guard or reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of the servicemember's office, grade, rank, or rating and for which the servicemember is undergoing

medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

**Benefits and protections during FMLA leave.** During FMLA leave, the District will maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees will be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. However, an employee on FMLA leave does not have any greater right to reinstatement or to other benefits and conditions of employment than if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period.

Certain highly compensated key employees also may be denied reinstatement when necessary to prevent "substantial and grievous economic injury" to the District's operations. A "key" employee is an eligible salaried employee who is among the highest-paid 10 percent of the District's employees within 75 miles of the worksite. Employees will be notified of their status as key employees, when applicable, after they request FMLA leave.

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

**Employee eligibility.** The FMLA defines eligible employees as employees who (1) have worked for the District for at least 12 months; (2) have worked for the District for at least 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months.

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

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least 2 visits to a healthcare provider or 1 visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of "continuing treatment."

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

**Substitution of paid leave for unpaid leave.** Employers may require the use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. Accordingly, the District requires employees to use any accrued paid vacation, personal, and sick days during an unpaid FMLA leave taken because of the employees'

own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member or to care for a seriously ill or injured family member in the military. In addition, employees must use any accrued paid vacation, personal days, or sick days during FMLA leave taken to care for a newborn or newly placed child or for a qualifying exigency arising out of a family member's active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the District's normal paid leave procedures found in its Vacation and Sick Leave policies.

**Employee responsibilities.** Employees must provide 30 days' advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, employees must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with the District's normal call-in procedures. The District may delay leave to employees who do not provide proper advance notice of the foreseeable need for leave, absent unusual circumstances preventing the notice.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the District to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the District if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also are required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. The District also may require a second and, if necessary, a third opinion (at the District's expense) and, when the leave is a result of the employee's own serious health condition, a fitness-for-duty report to return to work. The District also may delay or deny approval of leave for lack of proper medical certification.

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

The District will inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employees' FMLA leave entitlement. If the District determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the District will notify the employees.

**Other provisions.** Under an exception to the FLSA in the FMLA regulations, hourly amounts may be deducted for unpaid leave from the salary of executive, administrative, and professional employees; outside sales representatives; certain highly skilled computer professionals; and certain highly compensated employees who are exempt from the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the FLSA, without affecting the employees' exempt status. This special exception to the "salary basis" requirements for the FLSA's exemptions extends only to eligible employees' use of FMLA leave.

Employees may not perform work for self-employment or for any other employer during an approved leave of absence, except when the leave is for military or public service or when the District has approved the employment under its Outside Employment policy and the employees' reason for FMLA leave does not preclude the outside employment.

**Unlawful acts by employers.** The FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer (1) to interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under the FMLA or (2) to discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to the FMLA.

**Enforcement.** An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

## **Military Leave**

**Decatur County Community Schools** supports the military obligations of all employees and grants leaves for uniformed service in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Any employee who needs time off for uniformed service should immediately notify the HR department and the employee's supervisor, who will provide details regarding the leave. If an employee is unable to provide notice before leaving for uniformed service, a family member should notify the supervisor as soon as possible.

Upon return from military leave, employees will be granted the same seniority, pay, and benefits as if they had worked continuously. Failure to report for work within the prescribed time after completion of military service will be considered a voluntary termination.

All employees who enter military service may accumulate a total absence of 5 years and still retain employment rights.

## **Bereavement Leave**

In the case of death in the immediate family of an employee, the employee is entitled to be absent without loss of compensation for a period extending not more than five (5) consecutive days (excluding Saturday, Sunday, and paid holiday) beyond such death for the purpose of attending the last burial rites and attending to the other personal matters of the immediate family members.

"Immediate family", for this section, shall be defined as father, mother, husband, wife, child, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, and daughter-in-law. Any other relative

who at the time of death was living as a member of the household will be considered as a member of the immediate family.

In the case of the death of a grandchild, grandparent, spouse's grandparent, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law not living in the household of the employee, the employee is entitled to be absent three (3) consecutive days without loss of compensation.

In the case of the death of a first cousin, the employee is entitled to be absent one (1) day without loss of compensation. In the event the place of burial is 500 miles or more from Greensburg, Indiana, then the employee is entitled to be absent two (2) consecutive days without loss of compensation for travel and funeral attendance purposes.

In the case of the death of an uncle, aunt, niece or nephew, not living in the household of the employee, the employee is entitled to be absent two (2) consecutive days without loss of compensation for travel and funeral attendance purposes.

## **Jury Duty/Court Appearance**

The District supports employees in their civic duty to serve on a jury. Employees must present any summons to jury duty to their supervisor as soon as possible after receiving the notice to allow advance planning for an employee's absence.

Nonexempt employees will be paid for up to 2 weeks of jury duty service at their regular rate of pay minus any compensation received from the court for the period of service. Exempt employees are subject to the same 2-week limitation except that they will also receive pay for any days they serve as a juror or witness in a workweek in which they actually perform work. All employees may use any accrued time off if required to serve more than 2 weeks on a jury.

If an employee is released from jury duty after 4 hours or less of service, the employee must report to work for the remainder of that workday.

Time for appearance in court for personal business will be the individual employee's responsibility. Normally, personal days or vacation days will be used for this purpose.

## **Time Off for Voting**

**Decatur County Community Schools** recognizes that voting is a right and privilege of being a citizen of the United States and encourages employees to exercise their right to vote. In almost all cases, you will have sufficient time outside working hours to vote. If for any reason you think this won't be the case, contact your supervisor to discuss scheduling accommodations.

## Employee Benefits

### Public Employees' Retirement Fund (PERF)

Eligible employees, in a PERF covered position, are enrolled in the Indiana Public Employees' Retirement Fund (PERF). The employee will contribute 3% of earnings and the employer will contribute a portion as determined by the legislature.

### Medical Insurance

Full-time employees working 30 hours or more per week are eligible for insurance on the first day of employment. To keep coverage in force, every insured employee must work a minimum of 30 hours per week. The corporation will pay \$4171.80 annually toward the total cost of a single plan. The corporation will pay \$10,025.40 annually toward a family plan.

### Group Life Insurance

**Decatur County Community Schools** provides life insurance for full-time employees who work a minimum of 30 hours per week. Employees are eligible for this benefit on the first day of employment. A \$22,500 term life insurance policy is available for \$1 per year provided the employee enrolls during the first 30 days of employment.

### Dental Reimbursement

Employees will be reimbursed up to 40% of their dental care costs not to exceed \$1,100 per year. Full details are available on request. Reimbursement is controlled by rules of the plan.

### Vision Reimbursement

Employees will be reimbursed up to 40% of their eye care costs not to exceed \$300 per year. Full details are available on request. Reimbursement is controlled by rules of the master plan.

### Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation is a "no-fault" system that provides compensation for medical expenses and wage losses to employees who are injured or who become ill because of employment.

**Decatur County Community Schools** pays the entire cost of workers' compensation insurance. The insurance provides coverage for related medical and rehabilitation expenses and a portion of lost wages to employees who sustain an injury on the job.

The District abides by all applicable state workers' compensation laws and regulations.

If an employee sustains a job-related injury or illness, it is important to notify the supervisor and HR immediately. The supervisor will complete an accident report with input from the employee and return the form to the HR department. HR will file the claim with the insurance District. In cases of true medical emergencies, report to the nearest emergency room.

## **Employee Assistance Program**

The employee assistance program (EAP) is a resource designed to provide highly confidential and experienced help for employees in dealing with issues that affect their lives and the quality of their job performance. **Decatur County Community Schools** wants employees to be able to maintain a healthy balance of work and family that allows them to enjoy life. The EAP is a confidential counseling and referral service that can help employees successfully deal with life's challenges. Please contact the Insurance Benefits Department for details of this service.

The District encourages employees to use this valuable service whenever they have such a need. Employees who choose to use these counseling services are assured the information disclosed in their sessions is confidential and not available to the District, and the District is not given any information on who chooses to use the services. For questions or additional information about this program, employees may contact the HR department.

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT**

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the employee handbook of **Decatur County Community Schools**. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies in the handbook.

I understand that the handbook and all other written and oral materials provided to me are intended for informational purposes only. The handbook, District practices, and other communications do not create an employment contract or term. I understand that the policies and benefits, both in the handbook and those communicated to me in any other fashion, are subject to interpretation, review, removal, and change by management at any time without notice.

I further understand that I am an at-will employee and that neither this document nor any other communication shall bind the District to employ me now or hereafter and that my employment may be terminated by me or the District without reason at any time. I understand that no representative of the District has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to assure any other personnel action or to assure any benefits or terms or conditions of employment or make any agreement contrary to the foregoing.

I also understand and agree that this agreement may not be modified orally and that only the Superintendent may make a commitment for employment. I also understand that if such an agreement is made, it must be in writing and signed by the Superintendent.

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Employee's Name in Print

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Signature of Employee

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Date Signed by Employee

**TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE**

## **EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT OF HARASSMENT POLICY**

I have read and understand the District's Harassment Policy. My signature below confirms my knowledge, acceptance, and agreement to comply with the policy.

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Employee's Name in Print

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Signature of Employee

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Date Signed by Employee

**TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE**