

Certified Staff Employee Handbook 2026-2027



Employee Handbook Disclaimer

I hereby acknowledge receipt of this Employee Handbook. This Handbook contains important information about my employment, and I understand that it is my continuing responsibility to read, understand, and abide by its contents. I understand that the information, policies, procedures, and benefits described herein are subject to change at any time. I also understand that this Handbook is not an employment contract for any period of employment or for a continuing employment, and that my employment may be terminated in accordance with applicable laws. I have read and understand all of the foregoing statements.

Application of Handbook

Except where a specific provision has been collectively bargained governing the employment relationship, all employees of the District shall be governed by this handbook, Board policies, and administrative procedures, rules, and directives. It is the practice of the District to comply with all applicable laws with respect to payment of wages and benefits to employees, and employment, evaluation, discipline, and discharge of employees.

District Collaboration Committee

The parties agree to establish a committee made up of district officials and employees. Employee representatives shall be appointed equally by the District and the West Central Valley Education Association. The duties of the District Collaboration Committee are to review and discuss the employment conditions and benefits for the district employees to be contained in a staff handbook/board policy. Such conditions and benefits shall include, but not be limited to, insurance, evaluation procedures, supplemental pay, transfer procedures, staff reduction, and other matters mutually agreed upon.

Employee Wage Payment

Certified employees shall be compensated in the amounts and at the times specified in their contracts of employment. Those covered by WCVEA negotiated contracts holding a Master's Degree in Education as of September 1st will receive a one-time net payment of \$500 on December payroll.

Professional Development

The District encourages employees to engage in professional learning that enhances their effectiveness and supports District goals. Certified staff are eligible for reimbursement of up to **\$500 per fiscal year** for approved professional development activities, including workshops, license renewals, conferences, training programs, coursework, or other learning opportunities directly related to their current assignment or professional responsibilities within the District.

Employee Benefits

Employees may be provided such benefits as determined by the District. The Board will make IPERS contributions for all employees as required by law. The Board will provide Workers Compensation Insurance for all employees as required by law.

All employees shall be covered by a Board-financed liability insurance program covering job related performance of duties as determined by the insurance carrier. The insurance company and program shall be selected by the Board.

Upon appropriate written authorization from the employee, the District shall deduct from the salary of any eligible certified employee and make appropriate remittance for annuity programs approved by the Board. Any employee participating in the 403b plan shall select a provider from the District's state plan and it shall be the employee's sole responsibility to enter complete required authorizations and to assure that the contribution does not exceed any maximum amounts set by federal or state law.

The Board will provide at a minimum of \$20,000.00 Group Life Insurance policy for each eligible employee. The Board will provide Long Term Disability for each eligible employee. Long Term Disability and an Embedded Employee Assistance Plan will be paid by the Board for each eligible certified employee.

Eligible certified employees may participate in a group health insurance plan sponsored by the District. The insurance company and program shall be selected by the Board. The insurance program shall be for twelve (12) consecutive months beginning July 1 and ending June 30. Employees will select insurance benefits for the upcoming school year during the open enrollment period. Any changes in coverage will be effective July 1st. If requested in writing, new employees who are under contract for services prior to the start of the effective date of the insurance program may be covered by this insurance if the full premium is paid by the said employee, and if this practice is acceptable to the insurance carrier. Employees on non-paid qualified leave shall have the option to participate in the insurance program by paying the full premium themselves if this practice is acceptable to the insurance carrier.

For each certified employee contracted to work 30 hours/week, meeting carrier eligibility requirements, the Board shall pay \$647 per month toward the purchase of a group health insurance plan. Married couples both employed by the District may apply their portion of insurance coverage toward the purchase of a family plan (for a total of \$1,294). The District's contribution toward the insurance premium will change on the effective date of the new premium rates, which is July 1st. Eligible employees who choose not to participate in the group health insurance plan will be required to show proof of other credible health insurance coverage. Employees who opted out of the health insurance plan will receive a monthly cash stipend of \$300 with proof of credible health insurance coverage.

For those electing the group health insurance plan the district will also contribute \$500 annually in a Medical Flexible Spending Account for employee use

Additional benefits that will be available for employees, spouse, and children to voluntarily participate in include; Voluntary Term Life Insurance, Supplemental Insurance (AFLAC); Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account; Medical Flexible Spending Account. If the employee voluntarily contributes to either Flexible Spending Account, exhausts the funds in the account and terminates employment prior to the end of the contract year, all voluntary funds claimed by the employee will be withheld from the final employee payroll to bring the account whole.

Employee Assignment

Employees shall perform duties as assigned by the District. Certain assignments beyond the regular employment duties of all employees are essential to the successful operation of a total school program within a comprehensive school system and may be required.

Each certified employee shall be given written tentative notification of his/her grade level assignment and/or subject assignments for the forthcoming year not later than June 1.

Each certified employee shall be assigned up to three (3) assignments per year as listed in the Activities Work Schedule, receiving an activity pass for said employee and spouse. An attempt will be made to assign all employees an equal number of assignments. Elementary classroom teachers will be assigned to supervise elementary concerts to fulfill two of the three activities duties. In the event that an employee is required to work more than three (3) assignments per year, the employee upon request, shall be paid thirty (\$30) dollars per additional assignment. All assignments shall be made by the administration.

Sick Leave

All employees shall be granted leave of absence for personal illness or injury and/or immediate family illness ("immediate family" will include spouse, children, parents, siblings, and, in an emergency and

with administration approval, grandparents and grandchildren) with full pay, as determined by the District board policy (404.3).

Employees shall be notified of accumulated sick leave prior to the initial paycheck. Failure to contest the accounting of sick leave accumulation within ten (10) school days of receipt of the initial paycheck waives further protest.

Doctor or dentist appointments due to illness, injury or required employee doctor appointments which cannot be scheduled outside the normal workday shall be taken from sick leave by an amount in multiples of not less than one-fourth (1/4) day units. Employees shall make every effort to schedule such appointments during non-school hours. An employee may be excused for the foregoing reasons and in compliance with the foregoing standards after student contact hours without diminishment of sick leave at the discretion of the employee's immediate supervisor.

Sick leave for any length of time may require a medical report from a doctor confirming the necessity for such a leave of absence. Any employee making a claim for paid sick leave or for any other ongoing chronic condition in excess of two (2) consecutive working days for self or an immediate family member, shall provide a medical report from a doctor.

Employees are entitled to unpaid family and medical leaves to the same extent and subject to the same terms and conditions as set forth in the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.

Full-time certified employees shall be granted paid sick leave at a rate of up to fifteen (15) days per year cumulative to one hundred (100) days. After the one hundred (100) day limit is obtained, the employee will be granted those one hundred (100) days plus the fifteen (15) days granted for the current school year. Full-time certified employees with one hundred (100) or more sick days accumulated may request to have days paid out at twenty-five dollars (25) per day. The max number of sick days to be paid out with this incentive is 15 while maintaining a minimum number of sick days banked of 100 days. Full-time certified employees who permanently leave the District and have worked in his/her current position for at least ten (10) years in the District will be paid for unused accrued personal illness leave not to exceed one hundred fifteen (115) days at ten dollars (10) per day.

Other certified employees shall be granted paid sick leave as follows:

- Part-time employees not working every school day and working less than a school week shall be granted prorated yearly and total accumulations.
- Part-time employees working a fraction of the full school day each day shall be granted fifteen (15) of such fractional days per year cumulative to one hundred fifteen (115) days of such fractional days.
- Employees who permanently leave the District and have worked in his/her current position for at least ten (10) years in the District will be paid for unused accrued personal illness leave not to exceed one hundred fifteen (115) days at ten dollars (10) per day.

Other Paid Leaves

Employees shall be entitled to temporary, non-accumulative leaves of absence with full pay each school year as determined by the Board.

Any employee called for jury duty during school hours shall be provided such time. Any fees or remuneration the employee receives during such leave, with the exception of mileage or other expense reimbursements, shall be turned over to the District. Employees released from jury duty at midday shall report back to their assigned building.

At the beginning of each school year, each certified employee shall be credited with two (2) days of personal leave, Board Policy 404.3. An employee planning to use the personal leave day shall make his/her request to the building principal in writing at least one (1) week in advance, except in cases of extreme emergency. Personal leave shall be approved by the administration. These restrictions shall not apply when used in conjunction with bereavement leave. Personal leave will generally not be approved

for the workday immediately preceding or following a scheduled school holiday, vacation period, or other non-workday designated on the district calendar, except in extenuating circumstances approved by the building principal. Certified staff not using a portion of their personal leave will be reimbursed at the end of the school year for the portion not used at the rate of the substitute's pay. Certified staff also have the option of carrying over two (2) unused personal days to the next school year.

Full-time certified employees with at least forty-five (45) sick days accumulated may complete the required documentation through the Human Resources Department to convert three (3) sick days into one (1) personal day each year for a maximum of two (2) extra personal days. This request needs to be made at least thirty (30) days prior to their planned usage and are not eligible for reimbursement at the end of the school year. The additional personal days must be used **prior to April 15**, unless approved by the Superintendent.

Certified staff may only use a maximum of six (6) personal leave days consecutively.

Professional leave may be allowed for a certified employee if applied for one (1) week prior to the date of leave and approved by the building principal and the superintendent of schools.

Bereavement leave of not more than five (5) days annually with full pay will be granted in case of death in the immediate family of the certified employee; said immediate family being limited to the following relations: spouse, child, step-child, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, parent, step-parent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sibling, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent, grandparent-in-law, and grandchild, aunt or uncle. This leave shall be granted by the superintendent and shall be for the attendance at the funeral and for any other purpose. In the case of the death of any other relative, absence shall be allowed without loss of pay for attendance at the funeral. The superintendent shall have the authority to extend the above provisions in any specific instance to apply to the case of death of a person whose personal relations to the employee were, in fact, equivalent to the ties of blood recognized in the above provisions.

Building principals will monitor staff absences to help ensure adequate coverage and maintain effective school operations. Personal leave requests may be denied when the number of staff absences on a given day would negatively impact the building's ability to operate effectively or provide appropriate supervision and instruction for students.

Absences without Pay

Absences without pay may be authorized for an employee at the superintendent's discretion. The employee shall make a written application at least three (3) school days in advance of the date of absence. In emergency situations, shorter notice may be acceptable.

Employee Work Year and Hours

The normal working day for regular full-time employees not having extra assignments shall be eight (8) consecutive hours. This shall include a twenty-five (25) minute duty-free lunch unless an emergency or the unavailability of the regular supervisor requires duty assignment. The arrival and departure time for each employee shall be determined by the Employer. Certified staff are expected to fulfill their contractual responsibilities during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Any adjustments to these hours will be communicated by the building principal. The duty-free lunchtime may include the time designated as passing times between classes.

An employee may leave the building after notifying the principal's office during his/her lunch period.

On Fridays and on days preceding holidays, employees may leave the school building after buses depart. Workshop days, last day of school, and any release that would violate the five and one-half hour minimum day as required by the State of Iowa is exempt from this provision.

In addition to their classroom teaching, employees shall be responsible for other educational and school duties as may be assigned by the Employer. In case of parent-teacher conferences at night, classes on that day will be dismissed early. In case of an Open House, employees shall participate.

Employees shall attend staff meetings called by the Employer. These meetings may start before or extend beyond the working day, but may not start before 7:45 A.M. or last beyond 4:30 P.M. No staff meeting shall be called after 4:30 P.M.

The length of the school-work year shall be 191 days for teachers that are new to the district and 189 days for returning teachers. Additional professional development days required by an act of legislation will be added to the existing work year calendar. In-service days, workdays, teaching days and holidays are considered days of working service and are compensated for in the annual salary. The employer has the right to determine work assignments and/or convert in-service days, and workdays into teaching days at any time during the length of the school-work year due to unforeseen loss of scheduled school time because of weather conditions or unspecified natural or national disasters. The District shall not be liable for employees' salaries during the time schools are closed by order of the Board of Health or civil authorities.

With the exception of school dismissal due to snow, sleet, ice or other weather conditions, which make bus travel too hazardous or school dismissal due to heat making classroom temperatures intolerable, employees' attendance may be required at the discretion of the Employer at a time when student attendance is not required. Teachers will be allowed to leave after student dismissal and all students have departed on buses for home on days of early dismissal due to conditions listed above. Such days of required employee attendance shall count as contract days.

Paid holidays during the service year will be:

Labor Day - Christmas Day - Thanksgiving Day - New Year's Day - Memorial Day

No employees shall be required to perform services on any of the above days.

Electronic Device Usage

Employees shall not use their personal (non-school-issued) electronic devices during instructional time unless an emergency exists.

Health and Safety

Employees may be required to submit to a post-offer, pre-employment medical examination and such other examinations required or authorized by law, at the cost of the District. The District may discharge an employee determined to be unfit to perform the duties assigned in accordance with law.

The District shall make reasonable provisions for the health and safety of employees while performing services related to employment. Employees are encouraged to be alert for unsafe conditions/practices and to report them immediately to the appropriate supervisor or principal. Employees shall abide by and help enforce District health and safety rules. Employees will be held responsible for the reasonable use and care of materials, equipment and devices provided to them.

An employee who, within the scope of his/her employment, is injured or has property destroyed during the contract work day shall immediately report the incident to the supervisor or principal. The District shall reimburse employees for the reasonable cost of personal items (i.e. watch, glasses, or articles of clothing) damaged or destroyed during the incident.

Fire Safety and Classroom Appliance Guidelines

With administrative approval, classrooms may contain mini-refrigerators and microwaves. Approved appliances must be UL-listed, maintained in good working condition, plugged directly into a wall outlet, and positioned away from combustible materials.

The following items are not permitted in classrooms: candles, toasters and toaster ovens, hot plates and candle warmers, space heaters, coffee makers, electric kettles, air fryers, ovens, string lights or decorative lighting, plug-in air fresheners and similar devices

Toasters, toaster ovens, coffee makers, refrigerators, and microwaves are permitted only in designated staff lounge areas.

Extension cords may not be used as a permanent power source. Power strips must be UL-listed, equipped with surge protection, and plugged directly into a wall outlet. Power strips may not be connected to other power strips or extension cords.

Staff shall not tamper with thermostats or district HVAC equipment. Windows and doors should remain closed while heating or cooling systems are operating. Concerns regarding classroom temperatures should be directed to the Maintenance Director or building principal.

All approved appliances and electrical equipment must:

- Maintain adequate clearance from combustible materials.
- Not obstruct exits, walkways, or safety equipment.
- Be used in accordance with manufacturer guidelines and district expectations.

Building administrators may establish more restrictive requirements based on facility needs. All appliances and electrical devices are subject to review during safety inspections, and noncompliant items may be removed immediately.

Dress Code

West Central Valley School employees serve as district representatives in our communities and as role models for our students. All employees are expected to dress in a “smart casual” style Monday - Thursday. “Smart casual” dress may include professional looking jeans and a dressed-up t-shirt. Hooded and athletic sweatshirts and athletic / WCV t-shirts should not be worn as a part of the “smart casual” dress code. In general, staff may dress in more casual clothing on Fridays. Casual dress on Fridays may include jeans, athletic / WCV t-shirts, and hooded/athletic sweatshirts. Sweatpants are not part of our dress code. Staff may be allowed to dress in casual clothing on other identified occasions or as part of a job role as determined by administration. Additionally, staff may be asked to wear more professional attire when determined appropriate by the building principal. All clothing worn to work must be neat, clean, in good repair (i.e. no holes), and appropriate for on-the-job appearances at all times. If leggings are worn, they must be full-length, opaque, and worn with a shirt, blouse, or tunic that is at least mid-thigh in length. If at any time the building principal believes an employee’s attire to be inappropriate, the employee will be sent home to change.

Employee Grievances

A grievance is a claim that there has been a violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of a specific provision of this Agreement. An “aggrieved person” is the person making the complaint. The term “day” is defined as “working day” or days unless stated specifically to the contrary.

The purpose of the grievance procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible level, equitable solutions to the problems affecting employees. Both parties agree that these proceedings will be kept as informal and confidential as may be appropriate at any level of the procedure.

Procedure:

Step One - Building Principal (Informal)

An employee with a grievance shall first discuss it personally with the building principal with the object of resolving the matter informally. At that time the employee should inform the building principal that they are entering into the first step of the grievance procedure. This shall be within ten (10) working days of the time of the alleged violation or from the time the employee should have had reasonable knowledge of the event. The building principal will make a decision within 4 school days of the meeting unless both parties agree that additional time may be needed for a decision.

Step Two - Principal (Formal)

If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, the aggrieved employee shall file the grievance in writing with the building principal, using the official grievance form, which shall state the nature of the grievance, note the specific clause or clauses of the Agreement allegedly violated and the remedy requested. The filing of the written grievance shall be within four (4) working days from the Step One decision. Within four (4) working days of filing the written grievance, the aggrieved person shall discuss the grievance with the building principal. At this Step, the employee may be represented by him/herself or him/herself and a representative of the Association. The principal may be represented by him/herself and a representative. The principal shall make a decision on the grievance and communicate it in writing to the employee within four (4) working days after the step two discussion. In the event that the building principal is also the superintendent, the employee may omit step two and go directly to step three.

Step Three - Superintendent

In the event that the grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily at Step Two, the aggrieved person shall file, within four (4) working days from the building principal's response in Step Two, the written grievance with the Superintendent or his designee. Within six (6) working days after such grievance is filed, the Superintendent and/or his designee shall meet with the employee to resolve the grievance. The employee may be accompanied by an Association representative if he/she desires. The Superintendent or his designee shall, within six (6) working days, file an answer to the grievance and communicate it in writing to the employee and the principal.

Step Four - School Board

If the grievance is not resolved satisfactorily at Step Three, there shall be available a fourth step - School Board. With the approval of the Association, the employee may submit a written request to the Superintendent to enter into such a process. This must be done within ten (10) working days of the Step Three answer. The decision of the school board shall be issued within thirty (30) calendar days from the close of hearing, unless an extension is mutually agreed upon by both parties to this Agreement. The decision of the school board will be final.

Rights and Limits

1. The official Grievance Form will be prepared jointly by the Employer and the Association. Expenses for printing the form will be borne equally by the Employer and the Association. The form will be available from both the Association and the Employer's offices.

2. An employee covered by this Agreement shall present grievances in accordance with these procedures. An employee has the right to adjust grievances by him/herself or by him/herself and Association representation. The Association will receive a copy of written grievances and disposition at each Step after Step One.

3. Failure of the employee to act on any grievance within the prescribed time limits will act as a bar to further appeal.

4. If a grievance is made in any manner other than under the grievance procedure, the Employer shall not be required to process the said claim or set of facts through the grievance procedure.

5. Any investigation or processing of any grievance by the aggrieved person shall be conducted so as to result in no interference with or interruption of the instructional program and related work activities of the grieving employee or any employee.

6. The Employer shall not discriminate against an employee for filing a grievance. Records dealing with the processing of a grievance shall be filed only in a separate grievance file.

7. Whenever a grievance has been filed at such a time that it cannot be processed through all the steps of the procedure herein, so as to be resolved by the end of the school year, or if such grievance occurs during the summer, all grievance procedure timelines referred to as working days will revert to calendar days. The first calendar day will be the first day following the last day of school until the grievance is fully processed or school resumes. Should school resume and the grievance has not been fully processed, any remaining timelines, fractional or otherwise, will again be read as written in this article with the first working day being the first day of school.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Students, parents, employees, and others doing business with or performing services for the West Central Valley Community School District are hereby notified that this district does not illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity, and socio-economic status (for programs) in its educational programs and employment practices.

Rusty Shockley, Superintendent, has been designated to serve as the district's Equity Coordinator to ensure compliance with district policies. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination that is available in the district office and website. If you have a question or complaint related to compliance with this policy, contact Mr. Shockley by email (rshockley@wcv.k12.ia.us), phone (515-523-2187), or mail (West Central Valley CSD, 3299 White Pole Road, Stuart, IA 50250), or contact the Director of the Office for Civil Rights by mail (U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475 Chicago, IL 60662-7204), phone (312-730-1560), fax (312-730-1576), or email (OCR.Chicago@ed.gov).