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403.21 - Employee Relations, Appearance, and Conduct

Rules and standards are necessary to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and the community. Through rules, standards, and expectations the district provides students, staff, and the community an awareness of the dignity and worth of the individual, civic responsibility, and respect for authority; as well as a safe and secure environment for optimal working and learning.

Employees are role models for the students who come in contact with them before, during, and after school hours. If an employee's conduct could reasonably be expected to have an adverse effect on the employee's continuing ability to perform any of their professional functions in an effective manner, discipline up to and including termination may be exercised even if the conduct occurred outside school hours.

Employee Relations: It is the district's expectation that employees maintain a professional working environment that encourages mutual respect and promotes civil and congenial professional relationships among staff, students, and the public.

The district prohibits employees from intentionally harming or threatening to harm other employees, students, the public, or property belonging to any of these parties. This prohibition includes but is not limited to intentional acts such as verbally abusing others; using intimidation tactics and making threats; sabotaging another's work; making malicious, false, and harmful statements about others; publicly disclosing another's private information; or using electronic devices for harassment, bullying, or any other behavior that is discourteous, disrespectful or demeaning.

District employees are expected to exercise good judgment and discretion when using social networking and blogging venues such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Content that is published on such blogs is public (for students, parents, community, and administration to view) and the employee is ultimately responsible for their posts.

Appearance: The board expects employees to conduct themselves in a professional manner appropriate to the educational environment and, as such, employees will be

well groomed and dress in attire appropriate for their position. Clothing should be neat, clean, and free from inappropriate graphics. Discretion and common sense call for an avoidance of extremes which would interfere with or have a detrimental effect on the educational process. In addition, employees are expected to follow appropriate cleanliness practices as needed for the specific job assignment.

Employee Expectations/Conduct: It will be the general procedure of the Linn-Mar Community School District to administer progressive discipline to employees who violate federal or state laws and/or regulations, board policies, administrative regulations and/or rules, or exhibit unsatisfactory behavior or misconduct. Employees should refer to specific job descriptions for a full list of required standards, knowledge, skills, abilities, and expectations.

Discipline Process: Violations of this policy are subject to progressive disciplinary action up to and including termination. The following list includes but is not limited to the items which are deemed as infractions which given sufficient reason and evidence may result in discipline ranging from minor to major actions:

- Endangerment of children, staff, or community members
- Extreme or consistent poor judgment
- Harassment or bullying of students, employees, or community members
- Treating co-workers, supervisors, students, public, or volunteers in a discourteous, inattentive, or unprofessional manner
- Creating conflict with students, staff, or community members
- Engaging in any unethical or lascivious conduct
- Being dishonest including but not limited to deception, fraud, lying, cheating, or theft
- Spreading malicious rumors
- Demonstrating insubordination
- Engaging in vulgar, offensive, or abusive language or conduct toward others
- Fighting
- Smoking or using nicotine or tobacco products on district property or at district events
- Demonstrating gross misconduct or other serious violations of district policies/procedures
- Refusing to work with, communicate with, or speak to students or staff
- Failing to report injuries and/or damage to or an accident involving district equipment
- Working under the influence of a controlled substance, including possession of or use of imitation or counterfeit controlled substances or improper use of legally prescribed medications

- Possessing, being under the influence of, or drinking intoxicants on the job
- Possessing and/or carrying a weapon on district property, including the parking lot
- Willful and/or consistent violation of safety rules/regulations
- Contributing to unsanitary or unsafe conditions
- Horseplay which shows disregard for safety, comfort, or work performance of co-workers, district, students, and community members
- Disclosing confidential records/information (district, personnel, or student information)
- Using the district/facility computer systems, including accessing confidential computer files and data, without authorization
- Sabotaging, damaging, abusing, or destruction of district-owned and/or district or co-worker owned equipment or property and/or unauthorized use of such equipment
- Willful violation of federal or state laws/regulations, board policy, administrative regulations and/or rules
- Failing to comply with licensure and certification requirements
- Falsifying district records such as employment applications and timecards in any way
- Using district computers, telephones, or equipment for unauthorized purposes (district issued technology is subject to inspection at any time)
- Initiating, developing, and/or maintaining inappropriate relationships with either adults or students
- Removing, posting, or altering required notices on any bulletin board on district property without permission of an immediate supervisor or the Human Resources department
- Copying district documents, software, etc., for personal use without authorization
- Using district communication systems inappropriately
- Presenting false claims for benefits
- Timecard violations (including falsification and/or clocking in while not working)
- Working unauthorized time, abusing or violation of working hours, break periods, or lunch periods
- Leaving the workplace during the scheduled workday without notification and permission
- Leaving the assigned work area or facility without notification and permission
- Loitering, excessive non-work related visiting, or deliberate inattention to duties during work hours including but not limited to utilizing social media, Pinterest, etc.

- Failure to perform required/assigned work duties and/or incompetence
- Working on personal jobs during the scheduled workday
- Being absent for two or more days without notification or permission (also referred to as voluntary quitting or job abandonment)
- Being absent without notification or permission
- Sleeping while on duty
- Negligence
- Not following district attendance procedures
- Violation of other rules or policies not specifically listed
- Being dishonest or uncooperative during district investigations

While the following progressive discipline process is used as a general guideline when administering discipline for minor infractions, the seriousness of each individual infraction will determine which level of discipline is administered up to and including termination. The district reserves the right to skip any level, as deemed appropriate.

- First Offense: Verbal counseling, documented
- Second Offense: Written warning
- Third Offense: Final written warning, may be accompanied by unpaid suspension up to five days and/or termination
- Fourth Offense: Termination
- Performance Improvement Plan (Optional)

Whenever an employee has been involved in a disciplinary situation that has not been readily resolved or when the employee has demonstrated an inability to perform assigned work responsibilities efficiently, the direct supervisor in consultation with the Human Resources office may place the employee on a performance improvement plan. This status will last for a pre-determined amount of time, not to exceed 90 calendar days. Within this time period the employee must demonstrate a willingness and ability to meet and maintain the conduct and/or work requirements as specified by the supervisor and the district. At the end of the performance improvement period the employee will either be returned to regular employee status or, if established goals are not met, termination may occur. Because of FLSA requirements, exempt employees will not be suspended without pay for less than a week.

Absenteeism and Tardiness: Unscheduled, unexcused absences due to injury or illness, even when following appropriate guidelines, may still be deemed excessive. Discipline for otherwise unexcused tardiness and absenteeism is generally applied per district procedures.

Certified Staff: Licensed employees of the school district, including administrators, will follow the code of ethics for their profession as established by the Iowa Board of

Educational Examiners.

Adopted: 6/70

Reviewed: 12/11; 9/14; 8/17; 6/20

Revised: 3/11; 4/13; 4/23

Related Policy: 403.35

Legal Reference (Code of Iowa): §§ 279.8; 282 IAC 13.25-26

IASB Reference: 404

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