



# **CERTIFIED STAFF HANDBOOK**

Processes and procedures regarding certified staff about various topics:

Over the years various items have come forward from discussions and negotiations with the teachers' association that are no longer allowable in the agreement. This document attempts to clarify some procedures and processes from those discussions. Nothing in this document is taken to be a negotiated agreement but rather an understanding of current practices that may change at any time either by administrative or School Board direction. The School Board and Administration are committed to continuing the discussion and negotiation process within the limits of the law and hope this document assists certified staff in finding the information they need.

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## **WAGES AND SALARIES**

### **Mileage and Per Diem Meals for Conference and Travel**

A teacher shall be paid mileage at the regular rate for mileage set by the School Board for other purposes, for each mile the teacher is required to travel in the course of daily employment, with "daily employment" being defined as beginning with the first building in which such teacher supervises students and ending with the last building in which such teacher supervises students. Such teacher shall file a regular mileage reimbursement claim(s) with the School Board for approval, due to the Deputy Treasurer no later than the first of the month. The School Board, in addition to the mileage reimbursement, has approved the following:

### **TRAVEL PROTOCOL**

1. Prior to any travel for professional development, staff members are required to complete a professional development request at least two weeks in advance. This professional development request must be signed by the Superintendent or designee prior to any costs being incurred. Staff members will be responsible for all unapproved costs. Staff who do not attend a pre-registered conference are responsible for the cost of the conference and all other related costs, including non-refundable hotel fees.
2. TRAVEL – Staff will check out a school car (rental car) to travel to and from professional development when available. Staff members are expected to coordinate with each other and carpool to and from events. If staff members live outside of the district they will need to coordinate a pick-up location within the district or along the route to the destination. If the school car (rental) is not available, this should be noted on the professional development form, prior to its submission. Only in this event, will staff members be permitted to travel using their own vehicle and be reimbursed mileage at the School Board-approved rate. Reimbursements will only be granted from the approved and least costly starting and ending point. For example, if the staff member lives outside of the district and this is fewer miles than departing from within the district, the staff member will be reimbursed from this starting point. Only one car per every 4 to 6 staff members will be reimbursed for mileage and only if prior approval was sought on the professional development form. If a staff member chooses to drive without district approval for mileage, he/she will not be reimbursed.
3. AIRFARE – Travel by plane will only be approved for destinations that exceed a 7 hour drive. Prior approval is always necessary. Flight choices will be made on the cheapest flights, which often include layovers. Flight costs should be closely examined for differences departing from Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, and Detroit. To determine the cheapest flight, mileage and airport parking should be a factor. Staff members who miss flights due to their own negligence will be responsible for the cost of the airfare and all other related, missed conference costs.
4. HOTEL – Hotel rooms should be booked at the lowest possible rate. Rooms should be booked using the government rate if that is lower than the regular advertised rate. If a lower cost hotel is within reasonable walking distance of the event, that hotel should be utilized instead of staying on site. Whenever possible, hotel rooms should range between \$125 to \$150 within the state of Indiana and under \$200 for major cities outside the state. The hotel name and cost should appear on the professional development form and should be approved prior to leaving. The night before an event hotel rooms will

only be approved if the travel time to the events exceeds 2.5 hours based on traffic patterns during the time of day needed to travel.

5. FOOD – Reimbursement at a rate consistent with federal/IRS rules and guidelines will be provided per day. However, if a meal is provided free of charge at the hotel or conference, a reimbursement for that meal will not be paid. You must get itemized receipts for all meals, not just a credit card receipt. No alcohol can appear on these receipts. Tips may not exceed 15%. All receipts must be submitted within two weeks of return. The name or names of the individuals who ate under the receipt must be listed on the back of the receipt. Snacks (anything eaten outside of a regular meal, including dessert) and mid-day coffee will not be reimbursed. Only charges related to direct meals will be reimbursed. Call the deputy treasurer for specific reimbursement rates.
6. CAB/UBER/LYFT/TRAINS/SUBWAYS – Should ground transportation be necessary, staff members should utilize the least expensive and safest option. For example, Uber is generally cheaper but if a staff member is traveling alone, a taxi cab may be used for safety. A receipt must be submitted for reimbursement. In some major cities, public transportation is the least expensive and best option. For example, the Metro from the Atlanta airport to downtown is the cheapest and best option over a cab or Uber/Lyft.
7. PARKING – Staff members should investigate the least expensive parking options at any event. If there is an option to self-park, this should be utilized instead of valet parking. Airport parking should utilize outer lots which cost less than short-term parking.
8. REIMBURSEMENT – It is the responsibility of staff members to turn in the receipts and corresponding reimbursement forms within two weeks of their return. If a staff member has lost a receipt, they are responsible for requesting a copy from the facility. No reimbursement will occur without an itemized receipt. A copy of the approved professional development form should accompany all receipts.
9. TOLLS – Reimbursement for interstate tolls will only occur if a receipt is submitted.

### **COMPENSATION PLAN**

It is agreed by and between these parties that the Compensation Plan and extra duty compensation for the teachers of the Whitko Community School Corporation shall be determined as set forth in Appendices “A” & “B” of the agreement with Whitko Classroom Teachers Association.

### **EXTRA CURRICULAR POSITION / MODIFICATION**

The School Board shall be entitled to add a position(s) to the extra duty compensation schedule, as long as the School Board members and Whitko Classroom Teachers’ Association negotiate the compensation for such position(s) prior to their addition. During a time when negotiations are not in process, this compensation will be discussed with the WCTA. Other adjustments to the Extra-Duty Compensation schedule will be made using the process set forth in the Request for Extra-Curricular Position/Modification.

### **PAY SCHEDULES:**

Teachers shall be paid their contractual compensation in 26 equal payments which payments shall be every other week. Pay schedules are distributed at the start of each school year.

**DRIVER’S EDUCATION COMPENSATION:**

Driver's Education, if offered by the corporation, will be run under Community Education. The hourly pay rate will be as approved by the School Board. The bookwork portion of Driver's Education will be one and one half (1.5) times the Summer School Compensation amount.

**NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION:**

Teachers working toward National Board Certification will receive a stipend equal to 50% of the registration fee, not to exceed \$1,000, and will qualify for additional compensation related to hours of credit obtained upon documented confirmation of the National Board Certification.

**TAG – TEACHER APPRECIATION GRANT**

TAG funds will be distributed as identified by Whitko policy 3220.01.

**PERFORMANCE AWARD GRANTS AND SIMILAR COMPENSATION:**

Any compensation from Performance Award Grants or similar state directed additional compensation for teachers will be distributed proportionately based on the compensation model as a one-time payment not added to the base. Whenever possible funds received from like items will be equally divided among eligible recipients.

**WAGE AND COMPENSATION RELATED FRINGE BENEFITS**

**Leaves in addition to the paid leaves in the Agreement are:**

**MATERNITY LEAVE:**

Teachers are entitled to a maternity leave pursuant to the provisions of I.C. 20-28-10-5 to wit:

A teacher who is pregnant may continue in active employment as late into pregnancy as she wishes, if she can fulfill the requirements of her position. Temporary disability caused by pregnancy shall be governed by the following:

Any teacher who is pregnant shall be granted a leave of absence any time between the commencement of her pregnancy and one (1) year following the birth of the child, if she notifies the Superintendent at least thirty (30) days before the date on which she wishes to start her leave. She shall notify the Superintendent of the expected length of this leave, including with this notice either a physician's statement certifying her pregnancy or a copy of the birth certificate of the newborn, whichever is applicable. However, in the case of a medical emergency caused by pregnancy, the teacher shall be granted a leave, as otherwise provided in this section, immediately on her request and the certification of the emergency from an attending physician.

All or part of a leave taken by a teacher because of a temporary disability caused by pregnancy may be charged, at her discretion, to her available sick days. However, the teacher is not entitled to take accumulated sick leave days when the teacher's physician certifies that the teacher is capable of performing the teacher's regular teaching duties. The teacher is entitled to complete the remaining leave without pay. However, the teacher may receive compensation for the pregnancy leave pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement or, if the teacher is not represented by an exclusive representative, by School Board policy.

**MILITARY LEAVE:**

It is agreed by the parties that the members of the bargaining unit shall be afforded all of the rights and privileges of Uniformed Service Employment and Re-employment Right Act (USERRA) and I.C. 10-16-7-5 with regard to job preservation and benefits.

**PUBLIC OFFICE LEAVE:**

Leaves to serve in Public Office shall be granted teachers as provided by Indiana State Law.

**TRAVELING TEACHERS:**

Teachers who transfer from one school to another within the school district, at the end of the first semester, may have one day to pack and/or unpack their materials. Custodial and maintenance staff members will move marked and packed items. Teachers should schedule the day with the building administrators to cause minimal instructional interruption. At the end of the second semester, teachers should use the final work day to pack materials. Custodial and maintenance staff members will move marked and packed items.

**CARE OF FAMILY MEMBER LEAVE:**

A leave of absence without pay or increment of up to one (1) year shall be granted for the purpose of caring for a sick member of the teacher's immediate family. (immediate family being defined within the teacher contract as those members of a family for which a teacher is entitled) to up to five (5) school days Bereavement Leave. This language is in agreement with the FMLA Guidelines.

**RETURNING FROM LEAVE:**

Upon return from any leave authorized by the teachers' agreement or this handbook, a teacher shall be assigned to the same or comparable position if available.

**ADDITIONAL LEAVE GRANTS**

The School Board or Superintendent, at their discretion, may, upon the request of any teacher, extend any leave, or grant additional leave days with or without pay.

**Other Teacher Benefits:****DEDUCTIONS:**

Upon appropriate written authorization from the teacher, the School Corporation shall deduct from the compensation of any teacher and make appropriate remittance for annuities, credit union, savings bonds, insurance, additional teacher retirement deductions pre- or post-tax or any other plans or programs approved by the School Board and the Whitko Classroom Teachers' Association.

**ASSOCIATION - SCHOOL BOARD DISCUSSIONS:**

Either party may initiate the discussion of a subject enumerated in Indiana Code 20-29-6-7, as amended.

**SIGN IN - OUT:**

With the approval of the respective building principal, a teacher may be excused, without the use of any leaves available to the teacher hereinabove and without loss of pay, for a justifiable reason during the time or portion thereof when the teacher does not have assigned duties.

In the event a teacher works part of a half day, the principal may approve no deduction for partial periods worked, such as a teacher becoming ill near the end of the day, and a colleague covering for them or for a teacher trying to make it through a day, but is unable to complete the day.

### **WCTA'S USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES:**

The Whitko Classroom Teachers' Association shall be entitled to the use of school buildings for Association meetings, except that such buildings shall not be used by any member of said Association during any teacher's strike, walk-out, or work stoppage. The WCTA may use the individual teacher mailboxes and Corporation email to distribute Association materials within a school building, and a copy of such materials, if requested, shall be provided to the building principal and the Superintendent by the Association. The Association may provide a bulletin board for use of Association business in each building. Bulletin Board size, style, installation, and location shall receive approval of the building principal. Association meeting announcements may be submitted to the building principal for inclusion with regular announcements: such requests are subject to the established procedures for announcement by each building principal.

### **VOLUNTARY STUDENT TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS:**

The School Board agrees that all student teaching assignments should be on a voluntary basis. A student teacher may be used as a substitute teacher, and a student teacher may be placed in sole charge of a classroom, at the discretion of the building principal, but only after the building principal has consulted with the supervising teacher to determine that this experience is appropriate. All student teachers are required to have a current background check on file with the school and adhere to school policies.

### **RECALL:**

If teachers are terminated as the result of a reduction in the number of teaching positions, such teachers shall be guaranteed an interview for any positions for which they are certified. Teachers shall be kept on the recall list for twenty-seven (27) months, and they shall be notified of openings by email notice at the last address on file with the school corporation, as well as any other address which the teacher has provided in writing to the school corporation. A teacher shall be responsible for keeping the school corporation aware of such teacher's their current address.

### **VACANCY AND PROMOTION NOTIFICATIONS:**

Written notification of staff vacancies shall be emailed to all staff when a vacancy occurs. Teachers currently employed by the corporation shall be given first consideration in filling any vacancy. First consideration means that the teacher will be notified of the vacancy, is guaranteed the opportunity of an interview, and will be granted a post interview conference if not hired.

### **TEACHER TRANSFER AND REASSIGNMENT:**

Reassignments within a building or transfers between buildings will be made by the building principal(s) following discussions with affected teachers and based on (1) the best interest of students; (2) needs of the building, grade levels, teams, and departments; (3) teacher qualifications and certification; (4) instructional programs of the school; and (5) discussions with WCTA representatives; this language applies to assignment of team teaching situations as well.

Team teaching placements should consider the following factors prior to assignment:

- How evaluation will be handled
- Reason for assignment
- Team planning
- Record keeping responsibilities



For involuntary transfers, every effort will be made to notify the teacher by May 1 or as soon as possible, in the case of unforeseen circumstances such as, but not limited to, changes in class sizes or resignations.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

All teachers will have the opportunity to participate in professional development activities for new strategies and programs that are necessary to successfully teach at Whitko Schools. Teachers will not be evaluated on any new strategies or programs if they have not had this opportunity.

Professional development will be aligned with the goals and/or identified needs of the school and/or district. The topics for professional development activities will be given to teachers as soon as possible.

New teachers will have opportunities to participate in professional development activities that are necessary to successfully teach. These professional development activities will be scheduled over the first two years of employment.

All professional development days must be approved by the Administrator prior to the development day by completing the professional leave Google form.

### **JUST CAUSE:**

A teacher shall not be disciplined, reprimanded, suspended, demoted, or discharged without just cause as provided by Indiana statutes.

## **TEACHING CONDITIONS**

### **TEACHING DAY:**

The regular teaching day for all teachers will be seven (7) hours and forty-five (45) minutes.

A reasonable number of before, during, and after school meetings may be scheduled. Each elementary teacher has a minimum of thirty (30) minutes without students (prep time), in addition to lunch, during the regular day. Whenever possible this 30 minutes of prep time should be consecutive and during the student day. Junior and senior high school teachers will have one class period without students. Every effort will be made to provide prep time on days when student schedules change due to weather or school activities.

### **MAKE UP DAYS:**

Instructional time lost due to delay or cancellation shall not be made up except as mandated by State Law. When school is canceled due to weather conditions or after school conditions are dangerous, homebound instructors will typically not provide instruction and will reschedule hours to meet the requirements of the assignment.

### **LUNCH PERIOD:**

State law presently requires thirty (30) minutes duty free time between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR AND IN-SERVICE PROGRAM:**

The school calendar shall consist of 184 teacher days for the school year which includes a combination of teacher in-service and workdays. The in-service/work days shall be two (2) work

days: one on the first day and one on the last day of the contract year. The full teacher work days shall include reasonable time allotted for building and corporation business.

**KEYS AND FOBS:**

Teachers are assigned a fob to enter the building and room keys, upon request and with the approval of the building principal, which will give them access to the rooms or other usual working areas, except Administration offices, during hours when the school building is closed. Fobs and keys are issued by Central Office personnel.

**OBSERVATION OF CLASS:**

Observation of a teacher's class by people other than school administrative personnel may be allowed after the teacher has received notification of the observation.

**INTERRUPTIONS:**

All forms of interruptions, including public address systems and personnel interruptions shall be kept at a minimum.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:**

At the beginning of the school year, during teacher orientation, the respective building principals shall review and explain to the teachers any teacher handbooks and student handbooks which have been prepared for use during the forthcoming school year.

**eLEARNING:**

Guidelines from the State legislature and Indiana Department of Education will be followed.

Teachers should have students download any needed materials for eLearning before they leave school the day prior to the eLearning Day to ensure students can complete their work with or without internet access.

Unscheduled eLearning Days: In the event that school needs to be canceled, an unscheduled eLearning Day will occur.

On unscheduled eLearning Days, teachers must have all lessons uploaded to Google Classroom by 10 a.m. Teachers will be available for students who need assistance throughout the day via email, messaging, or phone calls.

Certified staff members are expected to work from home on unscheduled eLearning days around their set office hours as they would for scheduled eLearning days, unless otherwise directed by building or corporation administrators.

eLearning Day Procedures: Teachers will upload an attendance Google Form to Google Classroom each eLearning Day. In order to be marked as in attendance for that day, the student must complete the attendance form. Following each eLearning Day, teachers will mark attendance in PowerSchool, reflecting the information collected on the attendance Google form.

The instructional design of eLearning content should follow the NIET Instructional Design for Virtual Learning.

**STAFF DRESS AND GROOMING:**

The School Board believes that professional staff members set an example in dress and grooming for their students to follow. These factors act in a positive manner towards the maintenance of discipline. All professional staff members, when assigned to School Corporation duty, shall:

- a. Be physically clean, neat, and well groomed;
- b. Dress in a manner consistent with your professional responsibilities;
- c. Dress in a manner that communicates to students a pride in personal appearance;
- d. Dress in a manner that does not cause damage to Corporation property;
- e. Be groomed in such a way that their hair style or dress does not disrupt the educational process, nor cause a health or safety hazard.

**CELL PHONE USE:**

Limit use of phones, devices and computers to professional use during the school day.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:**

The Corporation recognizes that employees may use social media for personal as well as professional reasons. The School Board and the School Corporation neither encourages nor discourages employees' use of social media for personal purposes. The school administration regulates employees' use of social media for purposes related to their corporation assignment to the same extent as it regulates any other form of employee communication in that regard. Staff members should not connect with students on their personal social media accounts.

**DOCULIVERY**

All new employees receive a paper paycheck for their first pay. After the second pay Doculivery is available to the employee.

Paystubs are available and the option to receive your W-2 (but you must opt-in for your W-2) are available online at Doculivery, which is located on our website under a hidden staff tab link:

<https://www.whitko.org/staff>, There is a User Guide located on the login page for instructions on how to log in and view your documents.

**REPORTING ABSENCES:**

In July 2021, Whitko partnered with Red Rover for attendance reporting, and with EduStaff for filling substitute positions. Report all absences as soon as possible, unless otherwise instructed by your direct supervisor or Central Office personnel.

To log into Red Rover, the system Whitko Schools uses for absences, go to <https://redrover12.com>

