

EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS AND EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE

The Western Dubuque Community School District (WDCSD) Board of Education recognizes that the capabilities and conduct of all school employees greatly affect the quality of education provided to our students. WDCSD is committed to having professional employees who have a positive impact on the mission of our District. The purpose and intent of the WDCSD Employee Expectations is to ensure that each employee is aware of his or her responsibility in meeting the District's expectations in accordance with the District strategic plan and guiding philosophy of "Better Every Day".

Employee Expectations:

1. Be truthful and honest regarding all matters of interest to WDCSD.
2. Plan, prepare and provide for optimal execution of job responsibilities and comply with established policies, routines and procedures relating to their attendance and punctuality.
3. Maintain a safe and healthy environment at all times, free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, substance abuse, and/or violence, and free from bias and discrimination.
4. Exhibit professional behavior by showing positive examples of communication, fairness, language, and appearance and demonstrate responsible citizenship by maintaining a high standard of conduct, self-control, and moral/ethical behavior.
5. Support the District plan for fostering educational excellence and contribute, cooperate, and participate in creating an environment in which all employees and students are accepted and are provided the opportunity to achieve at the highest levels in all areas of development.
6. Conduct themselves in a manner, on or off WDCSD property or outside the established contract day, that does not affect their ability to perform their job duties.
7. Maintain confidentiality in all matters concerning students, families, and employees, and all matters pertinent to WDCSD, including but not limited to, district, local, state, and federal policies.
8. Demonstrate a commitment to learning and professional growth.
9. Address problems and concerns in an appropriate, consistent, and timely manner, and follow chain of command.
10. Acquire, use, maintain and dispose of WDCSD assets in an ethical and responsible manner.
11. Comply with all WDCSD, local, state, and federal policies.

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Employee Discipline Process

It is essential that prompt, corrective action is taken whenever Employee Expectations are not being met by an employee. In situations where employee actions or behaviors are found to represent one or more violations, disciplinary action must be considered. Disciplinary action will be in compliance with federal law, state statute and District policy to protect both the interests of Western Dubuque Community School District and, where applicable, the due process rights of the employee(s) involved. Disciplinary action will be taken equitably and without regard to race, color, national origin, citizenship status, religion, sex, economic status, age, military status, ancestry or disability, and the private and confidential nature of each such action will be respected at all times.

An overview of the Employee Discipline Process is as follows:

A. Establishing Grounds

The grounds for employee discipline must be determined. Where required, “Just Cause” must be established.

B. Verifying Grounds

The grounds for employee discipline must be verified by an informal inquiry or a formal investigation conducted under presumption of innocence. If these grounds are substantiated, the breach of the Employee Expectations will be described in as much detail as possible supported by all relevant evidence. Where applicable, a connection may be made for the employee between the violation and the mission, vision and beliefs of the district.

C. Determining A Course Of Action

Only after the grounds for employee discipline have been substantiated will one of the following two general courses of disciplinary action be taken based on the specific Employee Expectations violation involved and the presence or absence of the same or substantially similar disciplinary events in the past, where applicable: 1) informal action (verbal warning and written warning) and 2) formal action (official reprimand, suspension and discharge).

D. Assessing The Case Facts

Prior to initiating or recommending a specific type of discipline to accomplish either course of action, both the aggravating and mitigating factors in the case must be considered.

E. Selecting Or Recommending A Specific Action

Each Employee Expectations violation is classified into one of five disciplinary options and incidents within the same classification are processed along the same track from a progressive employee discipline standpoint. For each violation-interval pairing within the Employee Expectations, a range of permitted disciplinary options is provided based on the relative severity of the misconduct involved (i.e. minor, moderate, major, non-disqualifying, and disqualifying). The specific action taken or recommended should reflect whether case facts involved were predominantly aggravating, predominantly mitigating, or roughly equal for the case in question.

F. Considering The Need For Progressive Discipline

A single occurrence of some actions and behaviors may be as grave as to warrant immediate formal action up to and including discharge; however, repetitive misconduct of a lesser nature may require progressively more serious sanctions. In such cases of chronic employee misconduct, progressive action should be taken when it is evident that either: 1) non-disciplinary strategies, where used, did not result in a modification or suppression of the employee’s action(s); or 2) previous disciplinary actions failed to correct a chronic Employee Expectations violation.

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G. Documenting the Action

It is important that accurate documentation is maintained before, during and after each disciplinary action to protect both the interests of the District and the rights of the employee involved.

Delegation of Authority and Disciplinary Options

Authority to issue verbal warnings and written warnings is delegated to those administrators and supervisors directly responsible for planning, directing and supervising the work of others. Authority to issue official reprimands, suspensions and discharges will remain with the superintendent/superintendent designee and/or the Board of Directors. The disciplinary options are defined as follows:

1. Verbal Warning

A verbal warning is defined as an informal disciplinary conference between an administrator or supervisor and an employee. A verbal warning is the least severe type of informal employee discipline and is meant to alert the employee to the fact that a deficiency has been noted.

2. Written Warning

A written warning is defined as an informal notice given to an employee when the grounds for employee discipline involved warrant an action that is more severe than a verbal warning but less severe than an official reprimand. A written warning is the most severe type of informal employee discipline and is meant to put the employee on notice for the action(s) or behavior(s) involved.

3. Official Reprimand

An official reprimand is defined as a formal disciplinary notice that is given to an employee when the grounds for employee discipline involved warrant an action that is more severe than a written warning but less severe than a suspension. An official reprimand is the least severe type of formal employee discipline and is meant to serve as a statement of censure for misconduct of such concern that a permanent record of the incident(s) needs to be established.

4. Suspension

A suspension is defined as a formal disciplinary action whereby an employee is involuntarily separated from service on a temporary basis with or without pay for a finite time period when the grounds for employee discipline involved warrant action that is more severe than an official reprimand but less severe than a discharge. It is the most severe type of formal employee discipline that is still compatible with continued employment and is meant to serve as a significant consequence for either a serious lapse of judgment or for misconduct of such concern that the District must ensure that the employee understands that a repeat incident is likely to result in discharge.

5. Discharge

A discharge is defined as a formal disciplinary action whereby an employee is involuntarily separated from service on a permanent basis when the grounds for employee discipline warrant action that is more severe than a suspension. It is the most severe type of formal employee discipline and is typically taken when: 1) the issue of employee remediation is either no longer valid or is otherwise irrelevant; and 2) the misconduct involved is incompatible with initial or continued employment by the District.

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