

**SIDNEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
PARA/TEACHER ASSOCIATE HANDBOOK  
2023-2024**



**VISION:**

"We hold tomorrow in our hands!"

**MISSION:**

The Sidney Community School District's mission is to prepare responsible citizens who are lifelong learners. Through a partnership with students, staff, parents, and community, we will create a nurturing, disciplined and challenging learning environment.

**WE BELIEVE:**

Learning and growing is a lifelong process.  
Everyone deserves a safe and caring environment.  
Everyone needs to take responsibility for his/her actions.  
Everyone needs constructive criticism, encouragement, and praise.  
Everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.  
Laughter is a part of learning.  
Everyone needs choices in learning and life.  
Success is achieved through the process of working hard, taking risks, making mistakes, and persevering.

**August 2022**  
**Sidney Community Schools**  
**“We Hold Tomorrow in Our Hands”**

**PREFACE**

This handbook is intended as a method of communicating to Teacher Associates/Paras regarding general District information, rules, and regulations. Because this handbook is a general source of information, it is not intended to be, and should not be interpreted as, a contract. It is not an all-encompassing document and may not cover every possible situation or unusual circumstance. If a conflict exists between information in this handbook and Board policy or administrative procedures, the policies or procedures govern. It is the employee's responsibility to refer to the actual policies and/or administrative procedures for further information. Complete copies of the personnel policies can be found in the Faculty Handbook or Student Teacher Handbook

Any employee is free to review official policies and procedures and is expected to be familiar with those related to his/her job responsibilities. Although every effort will be made to update the handbook on a timely basis, the District reserves the right, and has the sole discretion, to change any policies, procedures, benefits, and terms of employment without notice, consultation, or publication, except as may be required by law. The District reserves the right, and has the sole discretion, to modify or change any portion of this handbook at any time. The District reserves the right to not change Handbook and carry-over provisions from year to year as allowed by law and policy.

**WELCOME**

We welcome you as an employee of the Sidney Community Schools. As reflected in our mission statement, we take our commitment to serving the future of our society—our children—very seriously. The work you perform as an employee is ultimately for the purpose of serving the students of the District. You have a valuable role in making the District an effective and efficient organization that educates and serves our students. We wish you success and happiness in your position with the District.

**Phone Numbers**

**Tim Hood, Superintendent 712-374-2141**  
**Kimberly Payne, Jr./Sr. High School Principal 712-374-2141**  
**Shannon Wehling, Elementary Principal 712-374-2647**

**GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

- Always be prompt both in reporting for work and in completing assigned tasks. If an emergency makes it necessary for you to be late to work or leave early from work, notify or ask your supervisor for permission as soon as possible.
- Establish a good attendance record. Only be absent from work when it is absolutely necessary or when you are on a pre-approved leave.
- Courtesy and cooperation are two basic elements of success in your job and every job in the District. Be courteous and cooperative with the public, fellow workers, prospective employees, teachers, students, and parents who are all a part of the District you serve.
- Maintain open lines of communication. If any instructions given by your supervisor are not clear, ask for further explanation to make certain that you understand exactly what is expected of you.
- Try to be as clear and concise as possible when explaining matters to the public and to your fellow employees. Use language that can be understood by everyone and avoid using slang or jargon.
  - Always try to work carefully. Mistakes can be costly and at times, dangerous. If you make a mistake, be sure to find out exactly what happened and how to avoid making the same mistake again. Notify your supervisor of the mistake.
- Remember to keep all District business confidential. While many things that happen at the District are a matter of public record, releasing information about them is the responsibility of specific offices and individuals. Refer any unusual requests for information to the appropriate authority.
- Dress appropriately for your type of work. Maintain a well-groomed, modest, clean, neat, and businesslike appearance at all times. Remember, you are representing the District to students and the public.
- SCSO believes that employees' concerns are usually most effectively addressed at the lowest possible level within the organization. Therefore, employees are ordinarily expected to address issues and concerns with their immediate supervisor first. If the issue cannot be resolved at that level, the employee should move to the next level within that employee's chain-of-command.

## **COWBOY PRIDE**

The Sidney community is proud of its students and school system. We all work diligently to improve student learning, create positive situations for student activities, and graduate citizens ready for the 21st century. To that end, faculty take on many positions to promote Sidney students -- some paid, some volunteer. While we are all busy people and have personal lives, the administration encourages you to attend as many Sidney school events as possible. Supporting students outside the classroom can make vital connections in the classroom.

## **HOURS**

Hours will vary depending on your building and assignment. Be aware of the hours you are scheduled to work each day. You may not exceed the number of hours you were hired to work. You should be ready to begin work at your start time. Elementary paras report at 8:10-3:30 on Mondays and 7:45-3:30 the rest of the week, with exceptions being on early dismissals/holidays. Secondary paras report at 7:45-3:30 or 8:00-3:45 depending on your assignment. You are allowed to leave on Fridays after your dismissal duties are complete. Employees shall be excused from attendance on days when student attendance is not required due to inclement weather. Employees may, on an individual basis, be granted

permission by the appropriate school administrator to arrive late and /or depart earlier than the times herein specified for arrival/and or departure, but the denial thereof shall not constitute the basis for the filing of a grievance hereunder.

There is no accrument of comp time. Any hours worked over the contract time must be approved by the direct supervisor and building administration. Any approved time worked over contract time will be paid at the hourly rate.

### **PHONE USE**

Personal phone calls should be made on landlines or cell phones **only** during breaks and lunch. Texting and all other use of phones should also **only** be done when on break or at lunch. Cell phones should be in quiet/silent mode at all times.

### **SICK LEAVE**

Sick leave shall have reference to the medically indicated period during which an employee is either precluded by reason of illness, injury, disability or non-elective surgery, and/or medical treatment from performing his or her school duties, for maternity leave, for paternity leave or for doctor or dental appointments, or (b) the period during which a member of the employee's immediate family as hereinafter defined needs care or necessary attention due to illness, injury, disability, or non-elective surgery and for which period or periods the employee is entitled to be paid.

Maternity leave shall have reference to the medically indicated period of authorized absence from school duties of an employee.

Each non-childbearing married employee shall be entitled to five (5) days of paternity leave each school year without loss of compensation within 5 days of the birth of the child. Such days shall be deducted from the employee's sick leave. Any deviation from the contract shall be approved by the Superintendent.

Employees are granted a leave of absence for personal illness or injury for full pay in the following amounts:

First year of employment	10 days
Second year of employment	11 days
Third year of employment	12 days
Fourth year of employment	13 days
Fifth year of employment	14 days
Sixth and all subsequent years of employment	15 days

The above amounts shall apply to consecutive years of employment in the District. A maximum of 110 sick days may be carried forward into the subsequent school year providing a minimum of 125 sick days usable in the school year, at its discretion, the administration may require such reasonable evidence as it may desire confirming the necessity for such leave of absence.

Part-time employees will accrue sick leave on a prorated basis.

When employees have used more sick days that they have accumulated, they shall have those days deducted from their salary, at the rate of 1/180 of their salary.

Individual employees who sever employment with the district, after a minimum of 10 years, shall receive compensation for unused sick leave at a rate of \$16 per day up to the maximum amount of accumulated days (125). To access compensation, employees must submit their resignation to the district by April 1 of the contract year.

## **SUBSTITUTING**

At times, Paras/Teacher Associates may be asked to substitute within their building assignment or requested to complete additional duties as assigned. This request will be at the discretion of the building principal.

## **TEMPORARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

### **A. Paid Leave**

As of the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, employees shall be entitled to the following temporary, non-accumulative paid leaves of absence.

#### **1. Leaves for Funeral**

Each employee shall be entitled to ten (10) days of bereavement leave each school year, which shall be non-accumulative and is in addition to all other leaves. No more than five (5) days may be taken for any one occurrence in the death of a family member, except in the case of the death of a spouse, mother, father, grandparent, or a child, in which event all of the employee's remaining bereavement days for the school year may be taken. A family member is defined as one related by kinship, blood relationship, adoption, marriage, foster parent, or foster child. One day may be taken to attend the funeral of a non-family member, but such day is deducted from the total of ten days. Additional days taken for bereavement purposes may be given at the discretion of the Superintendent of designee.

Notifications of absence for funerals shall be given to the principal. Such days are non-cumulative.

#### **2. Adoption Leave**

Each employee shall be entitled to five (5) days of leave each school year without the loss of compensation which shall be used for the purpose of initiating, processing and/or completing adoption of a child or children into his or her family. Reasonable advance notification shall be given by the employee to the superintendent of his or her intention to take such leave and the day or days he or she expects to be absent from school. Such leave shall be in addition to all other leaves herein granted but non-accumulative.

#### **3. Personal**

At the beginning of every school year each employee shall be credited with three (3) days which may be for personal business. Requests for leaves shall be in writing, signed by the employee and submitted to the principal not less than three days in advance of commencement of leave, accepting case of emergencies or unusual circumstances, including deaths and funerals. Rendering such advance notice impossible or impracticable; in such cases of emergency or unusual need,

requests for leave shall be submitted at least one (1) day in advance of commencement of leave. The request shall specify the day(s) which the employee expects to be absent from school. Each employee must set forth any circumstance or emergencies rendering impossible or impracticable compliance with the 3-day advance notice requirement.

#### 4. Jury and Legal

Any certified employee who is called for jury duty during school hours shall, upon presenting such evidence to the principal, be granted a leave of absence. Evidence of remuneration received by the employee, over and above expenses, for jury duty shall be presented to the district secretary who will reduce the district's salary to the employee by the amount paid for such participation or involvement, or the remuneration may be turned over to the district.

#### **B. Unpaid Leave**

The Board in its sole, exclusive and financial discretion may grant leaves upon the filing of a written request for such leave by an employee. Each employee will have one pro-rated day's salary subtracted for each leave used, e.g. if an employee had a 180 day contract that employee would have 1/180 days deducted from their salary.

#### **HEALTH PROVISIONS**

The Board may require a medical examination when, in the Board's judgment, such examination is relevant to an employee's performance or status.

#### **SAFETY PROVISIONS**

##### A. Unsafe and Hazardous Conditions

Employees shall be encouraged to report to the building principal any conditions which seem unsafe or hazardous.

##### B. Use of Reasonable Force

An employee may, within the scope of his/her employment, use and apply such amount of force as is necessary to quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to a pupil or teacher. Immediately upon use of such force, the employee shall make a report to the building principal or his/her designee.

#### **SERVICE YEAR**

##### A. Work Year

Employees agree to a service year of 180 days, unless otherwise stated in their contract.

##### B. Holidays

Employees shall not be required to report or perform any duties on the following holidays: Labor Day; Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following; Good Friday and the Monday after Easter; and Memorial Day. Christmas break may include more days as set by the administration/Board of Education, but must include December 24 through New Year's Day.

#### **INSURANCE**

##### A. Health and Major Medical

The District offers a paid portion of a single coverage insurance policy. Employees may elect to take additional coverage and pay for the costs

associated with the additional coverage. Payment for additional costs will be done through payroll deduction.

### B. Workman's Compensation

All employees are covered fully by the Workmen's Compensation Policy which is paid for and in force for the District.

## **YOUR ROLE AS A CLASSROOM ASSOCIATE**

Whether you are a new associate/para or a veteran, it is important to discuss the role of a classroom associate. The specifics may change slightly from classroom to classroom, but overall your role is to assist the classroom teacher in helping students learn and keeping them safe. When it comes down to it, you are there for the students. You are there to provide extra help in a classroom, so students can learn at their individual level and have their more specialized needs met. Some of these specialized needs may include toileting, self-help, behavior, academic, or communication.

So how do you know how to help them learn and meet their needs? The classroom teacher and special education teacher will guide the process. The special education teacher writes the Individualized Education plans (IEP's) for each student regarding how a child will receive educational services. The teacher knows all of the important details that must be followed. Your role as an associate is to follow the lead of the teachers. If you ever have any questions regarding student work, classroom setup, or behavior interventions, ask the teacher. Do not change things without discussing it with the teacher. It's the teacher's name on the IEP and that is who is legally responsible for getting the educational needs of each student met.

Your specific job duties will change based on the classroom you are in. You may be asked to do things such as take data, run small groups, clean parts of the classroom, provide toileting assistance, monitor break time, attend inclusion classes, redo work activities, set up activities for the following day, make new class materials, and more. If you are ever unclear as to why you are assigned certain tasks, please ask.

There are basic rules that must be followed, just like any job; such as returning from lunch and break at the correct time, not using your cell phone, limiting socializing with other staff members, and dressing appropriately. However, this job setting those rules are even more crucial because we are dealing with the lives of a very special group of children. Our jobs are extremely important. It is our job to teach children to communicate and interact with others in their community with success.

## **CONCLUSION**

Teacher Associates are encouraged to consult with their supervisor any time there are questions about information contained in this Handbook or on other District policies and practices. Teacher Associates also may contact the principal or superintendent for such assistance. Thank you for accepting this important job and for being an important part of the team at Sidney Community Schools.



**Classified Employee Incident/Documentation Report  
Sidney Community School**

<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Verbal Warning w/Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. 2nd Written Warning w/ 2 Day No-Pay Suspension
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. 1st Written Warning with Action/Disciplinary Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Probable Termination

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Employee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Incident:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Incident/Occurrence** (may attach additional documentation if needed) :  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Action/Disciplinary Plan:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Administrator Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgement of Receipt**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the **Sidney Community School District's Para/Teacher Associate Handbook** and I understand the handbook contains important information about the district and my role, responsibilities, and duties as an employee. I acknowledge that I am expected to be familiar with the contents. I also understand that I should consult the central office with any questions I have about the contents of this handbook or any questions I feel were not addressed.

I understand that the handbook is a general source of information and may not include every possible situation that may arise. I acknowledge that the

Para/Teacher Associate Handbook is not intended, and does not constitute a contract between the ***district*** and any one or all of its employees.

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Employee's Signature

Date

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Employee's Name (printed)

**TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE - COPY PROVIDED TO EMPLOYEE**