



Dover Area School District

*“Every Student, Every Day,
Whatever it Takes”*

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Personal Care Assistant and Paraprofessional

Handbook

Rationale

The Dover Area School District believes in “Every student, Every day, Whatever it Takes!” Your role is vital to the education of our students. This handbook is designed to provide resources to you as an employee, as well as protocols and procedures to follow throughout the school year.

Roles

Your Role as a Personal Care Assistant (PCA)

A Personal Care Assistant (PCA) works directly with the student in cooperation with the special and regular education teacher(s) and all of the student’s providers (OT, PT, Speech, Vision, Hearing, Nurse, etc.). An Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Service agreement has been developed for the student you are servicing/assisting. The service you provide is part of that document. You should be aware of your role in supporting your student in achieving his/her goals. You should also be aware of adaptations or modifications that are needed to ensure the student is succeeding in both the general and/or special education classroom. If there is an issue with the student during the school day, (sick, upset, gets hurt in gym, etc.), it is your responsibility to tell the teacher(s) and all other pertinent school personnel. Effective communication between you and the teacher(s) is essential for the success of the student. Speak directly with the teacher(s) if you have any questions about your daily routine with the student. Fundamental to this job is the concept of building independence in the student with whom you work. You are there to assist the student, but you need to help the student become independent in as many ways as possible. A School Board approved job description may be obtained by contacting the Human Resources Department.

Your Role as a Paraprofessional

A Paraprofessional works under the direction of the special education teacher. The teacher will assign you a daily schedule or routine to follow. The teacher may have you run small group activities and/or work one-on-one with a student within the regular education or special education class or assist with clerical types of tasks, etc. It is your job to keep the teacher informed about students’ progress during the time you work with them. A School Board approved job description may be obtained by contacting the Human Resources Department.

Job Duties in the Classroom

While PCAs and Paraprofessionals are encouraged to engage as members of the school team, it is not the responsibility of either to adapt materials or create accommodations for students. These are responsibilities of the regular education and/or special education teachers. Support staff may use the materials provided to them by the teachers to assist or provide practice to the students.

First Aid/CPR Certification

PCAs and Paraprofessionals must have First Aid/CPR certification. This certification must be obtained within sixty (60) days from the date of hire and must be kept current. Failure to maintain First Aid/CPR certification will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from Dover Area School District employment. Copies of First Aid/CPR certificates must be turned in within the 60-day time period to the Human Resources Department.

Annual Highly Qualified Hours

PCAs and Paraprofessionals must complete a total of twenty (20) professional development hours on a yearly basis between July 1st of each year and the last staff day of the school year in order to remain “highly qualified.” Additional hours beyond the twenty (20) may not be carried over to the following year. You will only be paid for a total of 20 completed hours regardless if you complete more than this amount. Failure to complete and submit the required twenty (20) hours to the Director of Exceptional Children by the last staff day of each school year may result in termination of employment as this is an annual requirement of the position.

Highly Qualified Timecards

In order to be paid for your Highly Qualified Hours, you must submit a timecard for those hours within the pay period of the time worked. Timecards are issued every two weeks and available from your building secretary. For district sponsored trainings, timecards will be available at the training. Timecards may also be found on the Dover School District website under Staff Resources.

Highly Qualified Logs

Upon completion of your 20 hours, you must fill out a Chapter 14 Special Education Paraprofessional Training Hours Log. This log is to be used for both PCAs and Paraprofessionals.

Make sure to include the following:

- The exact date of the training
- Description of the training
- Include any supporting documents such as certificates or letters received as a result of your training.
- Initials of the teacher or trainer if documentation is not provided
- The completed log and attachments must be turned in by on the last staff day of the school year.

Blank and sample HQ logs can be found on the Dover School District website under Staff Resources.

Acceptable Use of Computer Technology Policy

A signed Acceptable Use of Computer Technology Policy must be maintained in your personnel file. All employees of the Dover Area School District must use good judgment in the composition of electronic mail and in the selection of recipients. The policy applies to all system users at any location including home and privately-owned computers that access the system. Users must understand that any information sent by email becomes a Dover Area School District record that may be accessed and its contents disclosed. There is no guarantee of privacy and it is also possible that others may view e-mail messages inadvertently. If confidentiality is a priority, other methods of communication should be used. All Dover School Board policies can be accessed through the Dover School District Website under School Board and Policies.

Accessing Information

Communication is key to any successful organization. You are an integral partner in the educational services the district provides its students. Therefore, it is important that you make every effort to check your school email frequently and consistently. All employees are issued a school district email account. If you need assistance in accessing your email account, please contact the Administration Building Receptionist at x80200.

Child Abuse (Suspected)

One of our greatest responsibilities is protecting the students we serve. In accordance with this fundamental belief, school staff, by law, have an obligation to report suspected instances of child abuse. All staff members filing a report by phone must complete a CY-47 form and submit it to the building principal for notification to the district office; if you report online you do not need to complete the form. Should a staff member need support in completing the reporting process, building administration is available to provide assistance. At no time should a staff member complete their own investigation into suspected abuse.

Individuals Under 18 Years Old

If a staff member believes that abuse may be present in life of an individual under 18 years old, he/she is required to immediately contact Childline and file a report. The Childline phone number is 1-800-932-0313.

Individuals 18 Years or Older

Adult Protective Services should be contacted if you feel anyone aged 18 – 59 with a disability is being abused. The number for Adult Protective Services is 1-800-490-8505.

Attendance and Punctuality

PCAs and Paraprofessionals have specified daily starting and ending times. If you are uncertain of your work hours, please ask for clarification. Plan to arrive at work so that you are at your assigned work area by your specified report time. Report times may be adjusted based on the needs of the student(s). In addition, it is vital to our students that you are consistent with your attendance. While your paid days off are there for your use during scheduled work days, unpaid (dock) days are to be limited. The excessive use of unpaid days may result in unpaid days being denied by your supervisor. Excessive absences may result in a disciplinary action. As a PCA or Paraprofessional, it is important to realize that consistent attendance is not really about a work agreement with an employer; it's about the service you are providing our students. Our students need you, and they thrive on consistency. Also, although assistance in the classroom is appreciated, employees are not permitted to “volunteer” time.

Procedures for Absences

All absences must be put into AESOP by 7 AM. If you miss this deadline, a call must be made to your building secretary. She will be able to put your absence in AESOP for you as well as notify your teacher. If you find coverage for your absence it still needs recorded in AESOP. If you are switching shifts, you still need to record your shift absence in AESOP. This is not only for accountability but it is for safety. Building principals need to know who is present in their buildings at all times. AESOP access and instructions can be found on the Dover Area School District website under Staff Resources.

Planned Absences

If you have a planned absence, please do the following:

- Find coverage for your absence, starting with the personnel within the room you work as they are most familiar with your student(s) and needs.
- Let your teacher and building principal know at least one week ahead of time via school email.
- Enter your absence into AESOP, and put ***no coverage*** under “substitute required.” You will need to write the name of the person covering your shift in the “Notes to Administrator” box on the bottom of the page.
- You must record your absence in Aesop.

Covering/Switching Shifts

If you cover the shift of another staff member, notify your teacher and building principal. In addition, if you are switching a shift with another staff member, seek prior approval and notify your teacher and building principal.

Leaving on Breaks

If you are leaving school property on your break, make sure that you tell the office secretaries and sign out in the office. Upon return, make sure you are signing back into the office. This is for your safety in case of an emergency within the building. In addition, be punctual when returning from your break. Return immediately to your assignment after clocking back in from your break. Again, students thrive on common procedures and consistency.

Funeral Leave

All Employees are eligible for leave of absence of three (3) days without loss of pay in the event of a death of an immediate family member. Immediate Family is defined as Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Son, Daughter, Son-In-Law, Daughter-In-Law, Husband, Wife, Parent-In- Law, Grandchild, or near relative residing in the Employee’s household, or any person with whom the Employee has made his/her home.

An employee shall be granted a one (1) day leave of absence without loss of pay on the day of the funeral in the event of the death of a near relative. Near Relative is defined as First Cousin, Grandfather, Grandmother, Aunt, Uncle, Niece, Nephew, Brother-In-Law, or Sister-In-Law.

Student Absence

Personal Care Assistants, in the event that your student is not in school due to illness or an appointment, call the the Administration Building Receptionist. You may be reassigned to another class and/or student for that day/shift. If you are required to report to another building, you may not be able to clock in at the other building so you will need to submit a timesheet for that day’s hours.

Confidentiality

Employees are bound to confidentiality with respect to Dover Area School District students. At no time should a staff member discuss a student, his/her behavior, his/her academic performance, and so on with anyone who does not have a direct relationship with the student. In addition, no staff member should discuss a student with whom he/she has no professional relationship regardless of who asks. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects students from schools disclosing personally identifiable information. Should a staff member be asked about a student by someone other than that student's parent/guardian or a faculty/staff member with a direct relationship, the staff member should direct the inquiring individual to the building principal. A direct relationship would be the student's current teacher(s) or related service providers, nurse, school counselor, Dean/Intervention Specialist, administrative assistants, and building/district administrators. Disclosing confidential information may result in disciplinary action.

Parent Communication

The District does not support staff members sharing personal contact information with parents. Daily communication logs, if appropriate, may be maintained by a PCA or Paraprofessional. Daily communication logs must be seen by the teacher(s) and approved at the beginning and end of the day in order for the teacher(s) to maintain open communication among the school/home team. All communication to the parents should be directed through the teacher(s) and not through the PCA or Paraprofessional.

Professionalism

As an employee of the Dover Area School District, you are representing the district and your students. During your shift, refrain from unrelated classroom talk, gossiping or making jokes about other staff members/students in front of students and other staff members. Remember, even if you do not think they are, your students and colleagues are listening. For the good of our students and the work environment, remain respectful to all students and communicate and collaborate with all staff members during your shift. Your focus should be the students you represent and serve. Please take that responsibility seriously.

Personal Business

Unless it is an emergency, you must conduct personal business during duty-free time. Duty free time is lunch and before and after your work day. This also pertains to extra-curricular activities or events that are school-sponsored, but outside of the classroom.

Cell Phone Use

In order for staff to maintain focus on students, all cell phones must remain on silent and out of sight during a staff member's shift. Cell phone use should only occur during duty free time. Duty free time is lunch and before and after your work day. The only exception to this policy is if asked by a teacher or administrator to possess a cell phone for safety purposes. Pre-approval must be given by a building principal or administrator if the staff member has an emergency situation and must be contacted immediately via cell phone.

Social Media

In keeping with confidentiality, at no time should students' names or pictures be placed on social media sites by staff members. The use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, texting, ...) during the work day is not acceptable. It is also an expectation that you do not communicate with students through any type of social media. It is not appropriate to post anything about the student(s) with whom you work. This would be a breach in confidentiality and a violation of FERPA. Violations of this section may result in disciplinary action. Please refer to Dover Area School Board policies "Freedom of Speech in Non-Instructional Settings" and "Policy 824: Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries." All Dover School Board policies can be accessed through the Dover School District Website under School Board and Policies.

Access Billing

PCAs must complete EasyTrac logging if your student qualifies for Medical Assistance. The ACCESS Coordinator will notify you if your student meets the qualifications for ACCESS billing.

You will be provided login information by the ACCESS Coordinator. If you forget your username and/or password please contact the ACCESS Coordinator. For security reasons, you will periodically be asked to update your password. EasyTrac access and instructions can be found on the Dover Area School District website under Staff Resources.

Logging Reminders

- All comments logged need to be professional and objective.
- No other names are to be included in the Daily Progress Note. Do not include names of teachers, other students in the classroom, or the PCA.
- All logs need to be authentic, and representative of the day and student you are logging for. These should not be copied from other students and/or the previous days/weeks.
- Logging for students only occurs when you are giving direct service to the student. Logging needs to occur for all students that you give direct services to throughout the day.
- If you take any type of break, the time for your logs need to stop, and then restart upon your return. For example - You are working with Student A starting at 8:00 AM, but stop to go to the bathroom at 9:28 AM. You must log needs from 8:00 AM to 9:28 AM, and then restart upon return from the bathroom at 9:33 AM.
- PCAs will keep their own personal notebook to record the student's day and activities in order to assist with completing logs and communicating with parents. This log needs to remain confidential and in the student's file at the conclusion of each day. It may not go home with you.
- If a student that you work with is not on your roster, notify the ACCESS Coordinator immediately.

Logs need to be updated and completed by noon on Monday for the prior week. Failure to complete all logging requirements to proper specifications within the allotted time frame may result in disciplinary action. EasyTrac access and instructions can be found on the Dover Area School District website under Staff Resources.

Random Moment of Time Studies

You may be randomly selected to participate in a time study by answering six questions describing what you were doing during your assigned “moment” on a specific work day, at a specific time. You should be able to complete the required information in less than five minutes. Details on Random Moment Time Studies are included in the EasyTrac instructions and can be found on the Dover Area School District website under Staff Resources.

Dress Code

As an employee of the Dover Area School District you are representing the district when you are working with our students in the schools and community. With the exception of classes requiring modified dress for safety purposes, the dress is jeans or casual professional. As a rule, while leggings allow for ease of movement, they will not protect from bites and are not considered safe or appropriate apparel. Clothing which interferes with the ability of a staff member to perform his/her duties, or disrupts the educational process, should not be worn. As models for students, the basic dress code located in the student handbook should also be followed by staff members. To maintain professionalism and safety, special attention should be paid to the tightness of clothing, length of skirts, and appropriate coverage of the body. Any questions regarding appropriate dress may be directed to your building principal or supervisor.

Inclement Weather

Follow the district guidelines for delays and cancellations. An annual memo explaining weather related procedures will be distributed via district email and placed on the Dover Area School District Website under Staff Resources.

Annual Performance Evaluations

Each school year PCAs and Paraprofessionals are evaluated on a the following items:

- Job Knowledge, Quality of Work, and Quantity of Work
- Work Habits
- Work Environment/Safety
- Interpersonal Skills/Communication
- Appearance, Attendance and Dependability

An example of the previous year’s Performance Evaluation may be found on the Dover Area School District Website under Staff Resources.

Assistance/Questions/Concerns

The general “chain of command” for addressing concerns is as follows, although all situations are individual, and we will work together to direct you to the person who can provide you the assistance you need:

Teacher, Instructional Advisor (Internal Coach), Building Administrator, Assistant Director and Director of Exceptional Children, or Human Resources

Contact	Name	Location	Phone
ACCESS Coordinator	Deb Milford	Administration Building	717-292-3671, x80104
Administration Building Receptionist	Kelly Rudacille Rochelle Messersmith	Administration Building	717-292-3671, x80200
Administrative Assistant to the Department of Exceptional Children	Kelly Funke	Administration Building	717-292-3671 x80114
Instructional Advisor (Internal Coach for Elementary AS and LSS)	Tina Warfel	Homebase of North Salem Elementary	717-292-8071 x60402 Emergency (School cell): 717-495-0060
Building Principals	Jared Wastler Victoria Gross Christopher Cobb Tuesday Hufnagle Galen Rupp Troy Wiestling	High School Intermediate School North Salem Elementary Weigelstown Elementary Dover Elementary Leib Elementary	717-292-8066 x10111 717-292-8067 x20111 717-292-8071 x60111 717-292-8072 x70111 717-292-8068 x30111 717-292-8070 x50111
Assistant Director of Exceptional Children	Bobbie Strausbaugh	Administration Building	717-292-3671 x80107 Emergency (School cell): 717-487-2291
Director of Exceptional Children	Katherine Guyer	Administration Building	717-292-3671 x80114 Emergency (School cell): 717-654-7202
Human Resources Payroll Coordinator/HR Secretary	Heather Thomas	Administration Building	717-292-3671 x80225
Human Resources Director	Kristina Jacoby	Administration Building	717-292-3671 x80226