

# Denver Public Schools Guest (Substitute) Teacher And Substitute Para Handbook

Updated as of July 2018





Dear Guest Teacher,

Welcome! We at Denver Public Schools would like to express our thanks and appreciation for all you do for our students, teachers and community. There are few things more reassuring to a teacher than the knowledge that a caring and professional guest teacher is on hand when he or she is absent from school.

At the heart of our vision in the Denver Public Schools, *Every Child Succeeds!*, is our belief in the thousands of dedicated people focused on delivering the best education to the kids of Denver. Your role as an effective guest teacher is an essential component to the success of our work.

As a guest teacher, you play a very important role— providing our classes with a sense of continuity during their teacher’s absence. To ensure you have what you need to make the most of your time in the classroom for both you and your students, we have created this handbook that we hope you find helpful. It is our intention to ensure you are fully prepared to begin your important new position. If you have any questions, please contact HR.Connect at 720-423-3900.

Congratulations and welcome to DPS!

Debbie Hearty  
Chief Human Resources Officer

## Important Disclaimer

Please note: This handbook is not a contract of employment or an offer for a contract of employment. It is not a promise of employment for any length of time or under any particular conditions.

All guest substitute teachers and substitute paras are employed at-will, and employment may be terminated by either party at any time, with or without cause.

Denver Public Schools reserves the right to amend or abolish this handbook, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without prior notice.

This handbook supersedes any previously issued Guest Substitute Teacher and Substitute Para Handbooks and effective July 31, 2018, the provisions of any such previously issued handbooks are null, void and of no effect.

No employee or representative of Denver Public Schools, other than the superintendent acting with Board authorization, has the authority to offer or promise employment for any length of time or under any particular conditions, and any such offer must be in writing and signed by the superintendent.

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## Equal Employment Opportunity

Denver Public Schools is dedicated to the principles of equal employment opportunity. The Denver Public Schools shall operate as an equal opportunity employer by providing and safeguarding the opportunity for all persons to seek, obtain, hold and advance in employment within the district without discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation, based solely upon qualification. We prohibit unlawful discrimination against applicants or employees on the basis of age, race, sex, color, religion, national origin, disability, genetic information, or any other applicable status protected by state or local law.

All employees shall review and become familiar with the District's Equal Employment policy online.

## Sexual Harassment

DPS strongly opposes sexual harassment and inappropriate sexual conduct. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for decisions affecting an individual's employment.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

All employees shall review and become familiar with the District's Equal Employment policy.

## Employee Status

Denver Public Schools guest substitutes teachers and substitute paras are at-will, temporary employees who perform services on an as-needed basis. Denver Public Schools makes no representations, warranties, or assurances regarding any minimum, number, duration, or frequency of work assignments to be offered during the school year. Also, see "Reasonable Assurance" section.

## Job Assignments

Job assignments are made in a variety of ways through the SmartFind Express (SFE) automatized System. Guest teachers and Sub-Paras can be called by the SFE system from 5:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

- School staff may call a guest teacher and or a sub-para at any time as requests for guest teachers and or sub-paras come in.
- Guest teachers/Sub-paras can call into SFE and secure an assignment. The best time to call in to secure assignments is when SFE is not calling out. The telephone number for SFE is 720-501-6291.
- Guest teachers can secure an assignment online through the SFE website: <https://denverps.eschoolsolutions.com/logOnInitAction.do>

As a guest teacher or sub para, we request that you accept positions offered to you for which you are comfortable teaching. Please be sure to make yourself unavailable in SFE for any period of time you are not able to work. This will allow SFE to devote limited call capacity to contacting guest teachers or sub paras who are available to accept an assignment.

Should a guest teacher be scheduled for an assignment in error and show up for that assignment, that guest teacher will be paid for four hours, unless the school is able to provide that guest teacher with work. It is essential that you obtain and/or write down the job number every time you accept a job, regardless of how you obtain the assignment. (Substitute Paras need to contact the HR Guest Teacher program if this occurs.)

### Reporting to and Completing an Assignment

All substitutes (guest teachers and sub paras) should report to the main office upon arrival at the school and will receive pertinent information regarding the assignment for that day.

When the assignment has been completed, the substitute is expected to report to the school office to check out before leaving the school. Be sure to return keys and any other materials that you may have received. Find out if you are to return the following day.

### Working Hours

Guest teachers will be expected to maintain the regular teacher's time schedule, whatever that may be. Guest Teachers work either a 4-hour day or an 8-hour day. Guest teachers are expected to report for duty at the time designated by the school and to remain on duty until the regular teacher's dismissal time. SFE will advise guest teachers of the reporting time.

When a guest teacher works a total of four hours or less on any assignment, the guest teacher shall be paid on a half-day basis. SFE will advise the guest teacher of the reporting time for the half-day assignment. The guest teacher shall remain on duty for the duration of the classes scheduled for coverage during the half-day assignment. If it appears that the scheduled half-day assignment will exceed 4 hours, the guest teacher must immediately notify the principal.

If a guest teacher accepts an assignment after the scheduled reporting time, the guest teacher has one (1) hour from the time he/she accepts the assignment to arrive at the school. In general, Denver Public Schools reserves the right at its sole discretion to withhold a pro-rata amount from a half-day or full-day payment for inappropriate conduct or performance.

Substitute Paras will be expected to maintain the regular classroom para's time schedule (defer to SFE assignment times). Sub-ECE paras may work up to an 8-hour day. Sub-Special Education paras may work up to a 7-hour day. SFE will advise the sub-para of the reporting time. Substitute paras are to remain on duty until the regular para's dismissal time. Denver Public Schools reserves the right at its sole discretion to withhold a pro-rata amount from hours worked for inappropriate conduct or performance.

## **Minimum Work Activity**

Attaining a 100% district guest teacher fill rate is a top priority and you are an important part of meeting this goal! Therefore it is requested that guest teachers and substitute paras work a minimum of 5 job assignments a month. By meeting this expectation, we can achieve a 100% district wide fill rate. Human Resources will be monitoring all substitutes work activity. Substitutes that show a zero work activity and have not communicated with the guest teacher program during periods of when students are in session could negatively impact their employment status with the district as a substitute.

If you refuse all job assignments offered within two quarters (estimated four months), you will be deemed to have voluntarily terminated your employment and you will not be eligible for unemployment benefits.

## **Job Cancellations**

In general, when a substitute cancels a previously accepted assignment, he or she should ensure that they update SFE regarding the cancellation.

If a substitute is cancelling an assignment within 3 school days of the date of the assignment, the guest teacher must also notify the school office support staff about the cancellation in addition to the above.

If a substitute is cancelling an assignment the same day of the assignment, the substitute must notify the guest teacher program at: [hr\\_guest\\_teacher@dpsk12.org](mailto:hr_guest_teacher@dpsk12.org) or call HR Connect at 720-423-3900 in addition to all of the above.

Same day cancellations or demonstrating a pattern of job cancellations will not be tolerated as schools are left with little or no opportunity to fill the classroom position. If concerns are brought forward in regards to this and after final review of outcome has been determined a pattern of job cancellations occurred, disciplinary action and up to termination can be taken.

## **Long-Term Substitute Assignments**

Any job assignment that runs over 16 continuous days for the same teacher automatically becomes a long-term assignment. On the 17<sup>th</sup> day, the guest teacher's pay will be raised to the long-term rate retroactive to the first day in the assignment. If a guest teacher has been in a continuous assignment and is approaching 16 days (on or about the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> day) contact the guest teacher program immediately. Qualified guest teachers need to be moved to a long-term status. (This only applies to Guest (Substitute) Teachers not substitute paras).

Long-term guest teachers must hold an active teaching license or a 5 year substitute authorization. The guest teacher must also be highly-qualified (by No Child Left Behind standards) in the subject matter they are teaching. If the guest teacher does not meet these requirements, they will be immediately removed from the position.

## **Payroll Information**

Paychecks are issued twice a month. The pay cycle begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for paychecks issued on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of each month. The next pay cycle begins on the 16<sup>th</sup> – end of the

month for paychecks issued on the 7<sup>th</sup> of the next month. If the 7<sup>th</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> fall on a weekend or holiday, the pay date will be the weekday prior. It will be to the substitute's advantage to keep an accurate daily record of the number of days, job numbers and the schools assigned (view SFE calendar). Questions about pay may be directed to Payroll Business Services at 720-423-3900, Option 2.

## Employee Information

Inform the Denver Public Schools Human Resources Department immediately regarding a change in your personal information by updating it online.

**Address, phone number, name change:** Employees can go online to the [DPS Website](#) select "Infor HR/Finance Systems" under the "Employee" tab. Click on the heading "Access Info HR". Use your DPS User Name and Password to log in. Once in "Infor Employee" screen:

Click on the "My Profile" icon. Click on the following links to update the appropriate information:

- Above the "At a Glance": Select "Change Name"
- Personal Information: Review/change contact information (personal email address, home address, emergency contacts, etc.) Please note that although there are fields for storing information about dependents, these fields are not being used so please, do not enter information here.
- Talent profile: You may update your education, credentials and skills here.

## Benefits

Guest teachers and Substitute Paras are eligible for the following benefits:

- Public Employee's Retirement Association (PERA): PERA provides retirement and other benefits to the employees of more than 400 government agencies and public entities in the state of Colorado. PERA is a substitute for Social Security for most of these public employees. Benefits are pre-funded, which means while a member is working, he or she is required to contribute a fixed percentage of their salary to the retirement trust funds. This percentage is 8 percent for all employees of DPS.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - a free, confidential, referral and counseling service available to balance the challenges of home, work and contemporary life. The EAP can help you with marital and relationship counseling, child and elder care, alcohol and drug abuse, legal assistance and debt management. You may receive up to five counseling sessions per issue per year. Call 855.327-1377 to speak to a counseling professional who will listen to your concerns and can guide you to the appropriate services you require.
- Employee Discount Program - Take advantage of special pricing on popular products and services at <http://www2.beneplace.com/dpsk12>
- Microsoft Software Discounts- DPS employees can purchase discounted Microsoft software through our Department of Technology Services (DOTs) department. The software is

licensed to the district and not to be used for purposes other than personal use. Visit the website for available options: <http://dotsweb.dpsk12.org/msorderform.htm>

- Professional Development Opportunities – A great benefit for individuals who want to increase their teaching skills. There is no charge for our substitutes to attend district offered professional development as long as there is space available in a session. Participation is on a voluntary basis and not considered time worked, therefore unpaid.

## DPS Policies & Procedures

### **Military Leave of Absence**

If you are a member of the U.S. Armed Forces Reserve, National Guard or performing other protected uniformed service, you are granted an unpaid leave of absence when called for active or inactive duty training.

If you are inducted into a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces for an extended period, upon returning to the District after separation from military service, you may be reinstated in accordance with the provisions of the Law and Denver Public School policies.

### **Jury Duty**

Colorado statute requires employers to allow employees time off for jury duty. Also, employers are required to maintain for all "regular employees" regular wages up to \$50.00 per day for the first three days of jury duty for state district or county courts. "Regular employment" includes part-time, temporary, and casual employees whose work hours during the three-month period preceding the jury duty were determined by a schedule, custom or practice. If compensation is due, you may be required to provide proof that you accepted the pre-planned assignment prior to the jury duty summons. Daily Guest Teachers and Substitute Paras are considered hourly employees and do not get paid for Jury Duty.

### **Classroom Computer Use**

Use of DPS computers in the classroom is closely monitored. During your time in the classroom, please refrain from logging onto SFE, doing homework, personal bookkeeping, or browsing the web for personal issues during the work day. If requested by the teacher's lesson plan or sub-para's duties, you may conduct internet searches related to the lesson. Unauthorized use of DPS computers will not be tolerated and may result in termination.

### **Confidential Information**

Substitutes handling confidential information are responsible for its security. Extreme care must be exercised to ensure that it is safeguarded to protect the District. District business

affairs should not be discussed with anyone outside the District, except when required in the normal course of business.

Disclosure of confidential information to unauthorized persons is potentially harmful to District business and should be limited to those employees who "need to know." Any copying, reproducing, or distributing of confidential information in any manner must be authorized by management. Confidential information remains the property of the District and must be returned to the District on demand.

These restrictions are not intended to prohibit the disclosure to outsiders of information about DPS that is routinely made available to the public by advertisement or otherwise, such as the nature of the District's products and services and its business hours.

\*NOTE: Listed information should be consistent with any formal confidentiality agreements with individual employees and should not contain an overbroad definition of confidential information which would include an employee's terms and conditions of employment.

### **Professionalism, Dress, Accessories and Grooming for Substitutes**

Substitutes must adhere to lesson plans and must comply with any instruction or directive from the principal, any school administrator, or their designee. Substitutes are also expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and cordiality in all interactions and communications at all times.

Appropriate professional experience is essential for a strong working and learning environment that is conducive to high student and staff performance. Professional attire includes, but is not limited to, collared shirts, dress slacks, dress coordinates, suits, dresses, ties and sport coats.

Attire that is not acceptable includes but is not limited to:

- Attire prohibited in the student dress code
- Sunglasses or hats inside the building
- Skirts and dresses shorter than mid-thigh
- Rubber shoe "flip flops" or bedroom slippers
- Athletic wear, such as jogging suits, unless engaged in a physical education class or event
- Underwear as outerwear
- Inappropriately sheer, tight or short clothing
- Garments that inappropriately expose traditionally private parts of the body including, but not limited to, the stomach, buttocks, back and breasts. This includes tube tops, halter tops, midriffs, garments made of fishnet, mesh or similar material, tank tops and "muscle" tops.
- Any clothing paraphernalia, grooming, jewelry, hair coloring, accessories or body adornments that contain advertisement, symbols, words, slogans, patches, or pictures that are sexually suggestive, that are drug, tobacco or alcohol related or that are obscene, profane, vulgar, lewd, indecent or plainly offensive or pose a safety or welfare risk to the employee or other person.

- Any other similarly inappropriate clothing, accessory, body ornament, etc. or inappropriate grooming or hygiene.

## **Accident Reporting/Workers Compensation Coverage**

All accidents which occur on school property involving substitutes employed with Denver Public Schools must be reported to the school office immediately. This includes injuries involving the students in the classroom, as well as to the substitute.

If a substitute is injured on the job, immediately call CorVel at 877-764-3574 at which time you will be connected with a registered nurse. They will obtain your information and provide further instructions. If possible, contact the guest teacher program within 24 hours of the injury via e-mail: [hr\\_guest\\_teacher@dpsk12.org](mailto:hr_guest_teacher@dpsk12.org) or phone HR Connect at 720-423-3900. If injury is life or limb threatening call 911 or go to the nearest emergency provider.

## **Conflict Resolution**

Employees who disagree or are dissatisfied with an organization practice should promptly discuss the matter with your school principal, where appropriate. Normally, this discussion should be held within three to five days of the incident, or in a timely manner. Discussions held in a timely manner will enhance DPS' ability to resolve concerns while matters are fresh in everyone's mind. The majority of misunderstandings can be resolved in this manner. After the completion of successfully conversations, notify the guest teacher program for documentation purposes.

If the solution offered is not satisfactory, or if it is inappropriate to go to the supervisor, then employees are encouraged to contact the guest teacher program or report the problem on our web-based form located at: <https://dps.i-sight.com/i-sight/dps.nsf/captureext> or by contacting HR Connect at 720-423-3900.

NOTE: Any sexual harassment or child abuse concerns must be reported immediately.

## **Smoking**

In order to promote the general health, welfare and wellbeing of employees and students, smoking, chewing or other use of any tobacco products by DPS employees shall be prohibited from all school buildings, at all school-sponsored activities and from all school vehicles.

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

Alert and rational behavior is required for the safe and appropriate performance of job duties. Therefore, working after the apparent use of alcohol, a controlled substance or abuse of any other substance is prohibited. Furthermore, the possession, purchase, or consumption (use) or sale of a controlled substance or alcohol on DPS premises or while conducting DPS business is prohibited.

## Anti-Violence

Employees must not engage in intimidation, threats, or hostile behaviors, physical/verbal abuse, vandalism, arson, sabotage, or any other act which in management's opinion is inappropriate to the workplace. In addition, bizarre or offensive comments regarding violent events and/or behavior are not tolerated.

DPS prohibits the possession or carrying of weapons on DPS property, regardless of whether or not that person is licensed to carry a weapon. This guideline applies to all DPS employees (with the exception of authorized Department of Safety Employees), including contract and temporary employees, visitors and customers on DPS property, regardless of whether or not they are licensed to carry a concealed weapon. Carrying a weapon onto the grounds or into the facility of a K-12 school is a class 5 felony.

**"DPS property"** covered by this guideline includes all DPS-owned or leased buildings and surrounding areas such as sidewalks, walkways, driveways, stadiums, athletic fields and parking lots under the District's ownership or control. This guideline also applies to all DPS -owned or leased vehicles and all vehicles that come onto DPS property.

**"Dangerous weapons"** include, but are not limited to, any firearms (handguns, rifles, shotguns, etc.), explosives, and knives over 3.5" or knives with a fixed blade (not folding). If employees have a question regarding whether an item is covered by this guideline, they should call Human Resources Security office at 720-423-3344. Employees have the responsibility to make sure that any item not specifically listed above that is possessed by the employee is not prohibited by this guideline.

DPS reserves the right at any time and at its discretion to search all DPS-owned or leased vehicles and all vehicles, packages, containers, briefcases, purses, lockers, desks, enclosures, and persons entering DPS property, for the purpose of determining whether any weapon has been brought onto its property or premises in violation of this guideline. Any employee failing or refusing to promptly permit a search under this guideline will be subject to discipline up to and including Termination.

Any behavior listed above should be immediately reported to a supervisor or Human Resources representative. Complaints will receive attention and the situation will be investigated. Based on the results of the inquiry, action will be taken which management believes is appropriate. Employees should directly contact law enforcement personnel if they believe there is an imminent threat to the safety and health of employees or property.

## Discipline/Discharge

It may become necessary to formally correct the performance and/or conduct of individuals and, in some cases, to terminate the employment relationship.

DPS may impose counseling or disciplinary action including termination, which, in its judgment, most effectively takes care of the problem. Any action taken by management in an individual case should not be assumed to establish a precedent in other circumstances.

## **Separation of Employment**

If you decide to leave the District, contact HR Connect at 720-423-3900 to review the separation of employment procedures. Or email the Guest Teacher Program at: [hr\\_guest\\_teacher@dpsk12.org](mailto:hr_guest_teacher@dpsk12.org)

## **Reasonable Assurance of Employment**

After the conclusion of the school year, an informational note will be displayed on the DPS SmartFind Express (SFE) website homepage informing you as to whether you have reasonable assurance of being employed for the subsequent academic year. This informational note will also be displayed year round on the DPS "Infor Lawson" homepage.

Under Colorado law, if you have reasonable assurance of continued employment, you will not be eligible for unemployment benefits for any established vacation period, holiday recess, or summer break between academic years.



## Handbook Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Denver Public Schools Guest (Substitute) Teacher and Substitute Para Handbook and that I have been instructed to read it.

I acknowledge that this handbook is not a contract of employment or an offer for a contract of employment. It is not a promise of employment for any length of time or under any particular conditions.

I acknowledge that all substitutes are employed at will, and employment may be terminated by either party at any time, with or without cause.

I acknowledge that Denver Public Schools reserves the right to amend or abolish this handbook, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without prior notice.

I acknowledge that this handbook supersedes any previously-issued substitute handbook(s), and effective July 31, 2018, the provisions of any such previously-issued handbook(s) are null, void and of no effect.

I acknowledge that no employee or representative of Denver Public Schools, other than the Superintendent acting with Board authorization, has the authority to offer or promise employment for any length of time or under any particular conditions, and any such offer must be in writing and signed by the Superintendent.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Substitute Para - ECE

Substitute Para – Special Education

Please sign and date this page acknowledging you have received and read the Guest Teacher Handbook. Signature of this page also confirms you attended a Guest Teacher Orientation.