

**Reading Community
District
Staff Handbook
2019-2020**

**810 East Columbia Avenue
Reading, OH 45215
www.readingschools.org**

DIRECTORY

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READING BOARD OF EDUCATION

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**** For a complete listing of all staff go to www.readingschools.org**

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR EDUCATORS

Educators are entrusted by the public with the responsibility of providing a high-quality education to every student. Through various roles, these professionals devote themselves to providing a safe and nurturing environment in which all students can learn. In alignment with the *Standards for Ohio Educators* and the *Ohio Academic Content Standards for Students*, our state's educators strive for excellence through high expectations that they hold for themselves and their students. The professional conduct of every educator affects attitudes toward the profession. Educators are trustees of the profession and share with the broader community the responsibility of providing high-quality public education.

Aware of the importance of maintaining the confidence and trust of students, parents, colleagues, and the public, Ohio educators maintain the highest degree of professional conduct for themselves and their peers. The *Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators* serves as the basis for decisions on issues pertaining to licensure that are consistent with applicable law, and provides a guide for conduct in situations that have professional implications for all individuals licensed by the State Board of Education, such as teachers, principals, superintendents, and other persons serving schools (e.g., school nurses, coaches, substitute teachers).

Ohio is nationally known as a state that produces high-quality educators and recognizes that its 250,000 practicing educators hold the fundamental beliefs defined in the following eight principles:

1. Educators behave in a professional manner, realizing that one's actions reflect directly on the status and substance of the profession.
2. Educators maintain a professional relationship with all students at all times, both in and outside the classroom.
3. Educators accurately report information required by the local board of education or governing board, state education agency, federal agency or state or federal law.
4. Educators adhere to federal, state and local laws and statutes regarding criminal activity.
5. Educators comply with state and federal laws related to maintaining confidential information.
6. Educators serve as positive role models and do not use, possess or unlawfully distribute illegal or unauthorized drugs.
7. Educators ensure that school property, public funds or fees paid by students or the community are used in the best interest of students and not for personal gain.
8. Educators fulfill all of the terms and obligations in their employment contract.

As education is a public trust, the Ohio Department of Education pursues allegations of unprofessional conduct. By law, educators are entitled to all due process rights, with each circumstance considered on a case-by case basis to determine appropriate action.

The *Licensure Code of Professional Conduct for Ohio Educators* includes the presumptive range of applicable disciplinary actions involving any individual licensed by the State Board of Education.

Source: Ohio Department of Education website.

For additional details, please follow this link:

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/>

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

The Reading Community City School District utilizes FRONTLINE for teacher absences and securing substitutes. It is the responsibility of each teacher to log in to FRONTLINE as soon as they are aware they will be absent from school so that a suitable substitute may be found.

To access the FRONTLINE website, go to www.aesoponline.com. You will initially be prompted to create an account. Once created, you will be able to log-in with your username and password.

SICK LEAVE

Each teacher receives 1.25 days sick leave per completed month of service. Sick leave may be used for the following:

- A. Personal illness
- B. Personal injury, pregnancy related illness
- C. Exposure to contagious disease which could be communicated to other employees or students.
- D. Illness, injury or death of immediate family defined as: spouse, mother, father, son(s), daughter(s), grandparents, or other person(s) living under the member's roof. Sick leave may be used for siblings and in-laws in cases of serious and/or catastrophic illnesses. Illness, injury or death of a member of the immediate family (as defined) is to be charged against sick leave unless a member's sick leave is exhausted in which case personal business leave can be used as a back-up to sick leave.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Each teacher receives four (4) personal days per year. The following restrictions apply:

- No more than ten percent (10%) of the staff at each building may use personal leave on any given day.
- Personal leave may not be taken the day immediately following or preceding a holiday or vacation, on the first or last day of the school year, or days in which a state mandated achievement test is scheduled.
- Prior to the first and last ten (10) instructional days of the school leave.
- The building principal may disallow personal leave if it would unduly interrupt or hamper the functioning of the instructional process.

*Exceptions may be approved solely by the Superintendent or designee upon request.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

Teachers may be approved for professional leave to improve professional scope and knowledge.

Possible reasons for professional leave:

- Workshops, conferences, conventions, and/or seminars
- To attend with the principal's approval, meetings with individuals, businesses, etc. that directly related to the teacher's work activities.
- To visit other schools to view programs.
- To attend meeting of professional organizations

AUDIO/VISUAL RECORDINGS

- Use of audio or visual equipment to record classroom activities must be approved by the principal and the teacher. No visitor shall be allowed to videotape students in the classroom as it violates the privacy rights of students unrelated to the visitor. Recording of other school activities will be in accord with Policy.
- If the nature and instructional purpose of any activity calls for students to be segregated by gender, only visitors of the appropriate gender may observe those groups.
- If a parent or other visitor wishes to tape record a conversation or meeting with a teacher or the principal, s/he should request permission from the teacher or principal. If the teacher or principal

wishes to record a conversation with a parent or other visitor, s/he is to inform that person that the conversation is being recorded before the conversation begins.

- Federal law allows a parent to record an I.E.P. and, if the parent does record, the District should record the conference also.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE REQUEST

Repairs or maintenance items need a building maintenance request form turned in to the office. If there is a problem in your room, please notify the office as soon as possible so that the problem is not allowed to get worse.

BULLYING, HARRASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION

Bullying, Harassment and intimidation by any student in the Reading School District is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school per the policy of the Reading Board of Education.

Definition: State law defines bullying in Ohio schools as any intentional written, verbal, graphic or physical act that a student or group of students exhibits toward another student more than once, and that behavior both cause mental or physical harm to the other student and; is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for other students.

Such behaviors are prohibited on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school provided transportation, or at any official school bus stop that a reasonable person under the circumstance should know will have effect of:

- Causing mental or physical harm to the other students including placing an individual in reasonable fear of physical harm and/or damaging of student's personal property; and,
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other students.

Verified acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall result in an intervention by the building principal or his/her designee that is intended to provide that the prohibition against harassment, intimidation, or bullying behavior is enforced, with the goal that any such prohibited behavior will cease.

Teacher/Staff Reporting

Teachers and other school staff who witness acts of hazing, bullying and/or dating violence as defined above, promptly notify the building principal/designee of the event observed, and promptly file a written incident report concerning the events witnessed. Teachers and other school staff who receive student or parent reports of suspected hazing, bullying and/or dating violence promptly notify the building principal/designee of such report(s). If the report is a formal, written complaint, the complaint is forwarded to the building principal/designee no later than the next school day. If the report is an informal complaint by a student that is received by a teacher or other professional employee, he/she prepares a written report of the informal complaint that is forwarded to the building principal/designee no later than the next school day.

All complaints will be promptly investigated in accordance with the following procedures:

Step I: Any complaints, allegations, or rumors of aggressive behavior and/or bullying shall be presented to the building principal or assistant principal or the Superintendent. Students may also report their concerns to teachers or counselors who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or Board of Education official. Complaints against the building principal shall be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent shall be filed with the Board President. Information may be initially presented anonymously. All such information will be reduced to writing and should include the specific nature of the offense (e.g., the person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected aggressive behavior and/or bullying, and the names of any potential witnesses). If the person filing the formal complaint is an adult, s/he must sign the charge affirming its veracity. If the person filing the formal complaint is a minor, s/he may either sign the charge or affirm its veracity before two (2) administrators.

Step II: The administrator/Board official receiving the complaint shall promptly investigate. Parents will be notified of the nature of any complaint involving their student. The administrator/Board official will arrange such meetings as may be necessary with all concerned parties within five (5) work days after receipt of the information or complaint. The parties will have an opportunity to submit evidence and a list of witnesses. All findings related to the complaint will be reduced to writing. The administrator/Board official conducting the investigation shall notify the complainant and parents as appropriate, when the investigation is concluded and a decision regarding disciplinary action, as warranted, is determined. A copy of the notification letter or the date and details of notification to the complainant, together with any other documentation related to the incident, including disciplinary action taken or recommended, shall be forwarded to the Superintendent.

Step III: If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at Step II, s/he may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent or designee. Such appeal must be filed within ten (10) work days after receipt of the Step II decision. The Superintendent or designee will arrange such meetings with the complainant and other affected parties as deemed necessary to review and discuss the appeal. The Superintendent or designee shall provide a written decision to the complainant's appeal within ten (10) work days of the appeal being filed. Documentation related to the incident, other than any discipline imposed or remedial action taken, will be maintained in a file separate from the student's education records or the employee's personnel file.

Stay Safe, Speak Up Hotline: 1-866-listen2me or www.readingschools.org "Report Bullying"

CELL PHONES

During work hours, personal communications made or received can interfere with employee productivity and distract others. Teachers are asked to limit personal communications to breaks and lunch periods, and to inform friends and family members of the Board's policy in this regard.

COMMUNICATION

Final Forms - Reading Community City Schools uses the Final Forms online database to manage student/staff information. This site can be accessed through the Reading website (www.readingcommunityschools.org) by clicking the Quick links to "For Staff." Information should be kept updated using this link.

School Messenger –Call/Text/Email System is used for communication of important information, school delays, and emergencies. Staff members are automatically enrolled in the call system/email system. For **text messaging**, staff must "**Opt in**" to add the Text Messaging option. You can opt-in by texting "Yes" to 67587.

COMPUTER USE

Teachers are strongly encouraged to utilize computers to support and enhance instruction. In addition to computers in each classroom, computer labs are available for group instruction. Students must have a signed permission slip on file before using the internet for assignments.

Classroom computers may also be used for teacher research, curriculum development and the maintenance of class records. Remember to monitor these records so that students do not have access to them. Examples of unacceptable use of district computers include: illegally installing copyrighted software, using the network for commercial/for profit purposes or political lobbying, developing programs that harass other users, damaging or altering components of a computer system and submitting, publishing or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, offensive or threatening materials/messages.

DISCIPLINE

Teachers should handle the minor discipline problems in their classroom. If a problem persists (or is severe), don't hesitate to involve the principal. Before problems become serious, talk to the student and the parent about the situation. Frequent contact with parents is important in maintaining good discipline.

DRESS

Staff should dress in a manner that represents our profession. If you have questions about what is appropriate, don't hesitate to ask. Additionally, staff attire should not contradict anything that is prohibited for student attire. The student dress code is published in the student planner. Fridays are casual days and an opportunity to wear jeans, spirit clothes, etc.

EMAIL

Depending on the content of an e-mail message, it may be a public record or an educational record that needs to be maintained by the District in accordance with Policy – Public Records or Policy – Student Records, and made available for inspection and/or copying upon request by a member of the public, or a parent or student age eighteen (18) or older. In addition, an e-mail may constitute electronically stored information that is subject to a Litigation Hold pursuant to Policy – Information Management. The following procedures are established so that the District's e-mail and Internet capabilities are not compromised, and e-mail messages are maintained in accordance with State and Federal law.

General Rule:

- Do not put anything in an email that you would not put on School District letterhead.
- Do not subscribe to the following through the district email account;
Daily Jokes, Daily horoscopes, daily recipes, vacation information or similar items of information or amusement
- Please use your own personal e-mail account for such items
- Do not respond to chain letters via your district e-mail account. These letters often come from outside sources, which increase the risk of e-mail based virus infection. Such e-mails multiply exponentially, and cost the district in terms of time, money and resources.

Distribution List/Global Address Book

- When using a district-wide or building-wide distribution; all members of that group should be intended targets. Distribution lists are only to be used when it is necessary to convey information to every member of a group. This includes all distribution lists.
- It is your responsibility to know to whom your information will be sent if you choose to utilize district-wide or building-wide distribution lists.

Signature Blocks

- Email message from all employees must contact the following signature block:
Employee Name, Position/Title, Building Address & Phone Number, Reading Logo, and the Notice:
CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This message may contain confidential information, including, but not limited to, student personally identifiable information. Such information is intended only for the use of the individual or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, printing, distribution, or the taking of any action in reliance on the contents of the information contained herein is strictly prohibited.
- Employee signature blocks may not include quotes, regardless of the source (e.g., no quotes from famous historical figures, biblical figures, or anyone else).

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Superintendent may close the schools, dismiss students early or delay the opening of schools in the event of inclement weather or other emergencies which threaten the safety or health of students or staff members.

The Superintendent takes such action only after consultation with transportation and weather authorities. In the event that the Superintendent/designee shortens the school day by no more than two hours due to hazardous weather, either at the beginning or the end of the given school day, that day will not be

designated a calamity day. Parents, students and staff members are informed early in each school year of the method of notification in the event of emergency closings or early dismissals.

In the event schools are closed more than the state allowed calamity days, those days will be made up during spring break or at the end of the school year

The District utilizes online make up days (three calamity days) by providing lessons on our website for students. Teachers will prepare “blizzard bags” containing paper copies of the lessons posted online. Paper copies will be update or replaced throughout the year based on the online lessons. Blizzard bags will be provided to students within two (2) days of the reopening of school after a calamity day.

Communication for Emergency Closing and Delays: If school must be closed or the opening of school is delayed because of inclement weather or other conditions, we will utilize the Call Command system, School Messenger, to notify parents/guardians. Communication will be sent over local radio and television stations as well as post on the School’s web page at www.readingschools.org. Our announcements are made in the name of Reading Community City Schools. The announcement will be either that our schools are closed or on a time delay. If no announcement is made for Reading Community City Schools, it can be assumed that our schools are open and operating on the regular schedule. Parents and students are responsible for knowing about emergency closings and delays.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND DATES (OTES)

All instructors who meet the definition of “teacher” under R.C. 3319.111 and this policy shall be evaluated based on at least **two** formal observations and periodic classroom walkthroughs **each school year**.

Teachers on a limited contract who are under consideration for renewal/nonrenewal shall receive at least three formal observations in addition to periodic classroom walkthroughs.

Timetable

Evaluations will be completed by May 1 and each teacher will be provided a written report of the results of his/her evaluation by May 10.

FUNDRAISING

Please complete the appropriate form for your fundraising project and submit it to your building principal. All fundraising must be pre-approved by the Principal and Superintendent. This is to prevent simultaneous fundraisers (which diminishes their effectiveness).

HOURS AND TIMES

District policy requires teachers to have a schedule of 7 hours and 40 minutes per day. If you arrive late or need to leave early, notify the office. Extra effort should be made to insure you arrive on time each day. Remember, you need to be in your designated area at the assigned time.

- High School 7:35 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
- Middle School 7:35 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
- Elementary 8:05 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

IDENTIFICATION BADGES

Staff are required to wear I.D. badges. The effectiveness of this safety measure will be compromised if adults in the building do not wear their badges on a daily basis.

LESSON PLANS

Every teacher is responsible for planning on a weekly and daily basis. Lesson plans are to be developed within the context of the applicable courses of study and learning units and should be designed for individual student programs being cognizant of student strengths and weaknesses. Lesson plans for individualized programs should reflect a general overview and purpose of the instructional program based

on the Course of Study. Individual student records may serve as an integral part of the lesson plan. Lesson plans as well as adequate directions are to be provided for substitutes so they can continue the ongoing program as closely as possible.

MONEY

All money received by clubs, classes, or any organization under the direction of the school is classified as school money according to law and must be accounted for within the school bookkeeping system. Money is not to be left in your room during the day or night, but instead turned in to the office as soon as possible.

PARENT MEETINGS

Any comments or concerns are to be discussed with the teacher before or after the school day when students are not present. Parents are to be encouraged to meet with the principal and teacher during non-instructional hours to discuss the observation and to obtain answers to their questions. If a parent has a concern about what may be transpiring in his/her child's classroom, s/he should follow the Board's Policy which states that the parent is to address the matter first with the teacher and, if not rectified, to then meet with the principal.

SAFETY

Student and staff safety is a priority. The District has prepared emergency plans in cooperation with the Reading Fire Department and Reading Police Department in the event of fire, civil emergencies and natural disasters. Drills provide students and staff with practice in responding to emergency conditions in case an event occurs. Fire drills, tornado drills and lockdowns are all practiced during the school year. The school complies with all fire safety laws and will conduct fire drills in accordance with State Law. The school conducts tornado drills during the tornado season following procedures prescribed by the State. The school also conducts emergency lockdown drills as prescribed by law. Please be reassured children are always educated about the purpose of these drills and knowledge and preparation can help us keep students safe. Teachers will provide specific instructions on how to proceed in the case of fire or tornado and will oversee the safe, prompt, and orderly evacuation of the building in such cases.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Employees are not to speak to media outlets unless approved by the Superintendent.

Staff members shall only engage in electronic communication with students via email, texting, social media and/or online networking media, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, Skype, blogs, etc., when such communication is directly related to curricular matters or co-curricular/extracurricular events or activities with prior approval of the principal.

Staff members are prohibited from electronically transmitting any personally identifiable image of a student(s), including video, photographs, streaming video, etc. via email, text message, or through the use of social media and/or online networking media, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, Skype, blogs, etc., unless such transmission has been made as part of a pre-approved curricular matter or co-curricular/extracurricular event or activity such as a school-sponsored publication or production in accordance with Policy.

TECHNOLOGY PRIVACY 7540.01

The Board of Education recognizes its staff members' right to privacy in their personal lives. This policy serves to inform staff members of the Board's position with respect to staff-member privacy in the educational and workplace setting and to protect the Board's interests.

All computers, telephone systems, electronic mail systems, and voice mail systems are the Board's property and are intended to be used for business purposes. The Board retains the right to access and review all electronic and voice mail, computer files, data bases, and any other electronic transmissions contained in or used in conjunction with the Board's computer system, telephone system, electronic mail system, and

voice mail system. Staff members shall be notified that they have no expectation that any information contained on such systems is confidential or private.

Review of such information may be done by the Board with or without the staff member's knowledge. The use of passwords does not guarantee confidentiality, and the Board retains the right to access information in spite of a password. All passwords or security codes must be registered with the Board. A staff member's refusal to permit such access may be grounds for discipline up to and including discharge.

Computers, electronic mail, and voice mail are to be used only for business and educational purposes. Personal messages via Board-owned technology should be limited in accordance with the Superintendent's guidelines. Staff members are encouraged to keep their personal records and personal business at home. Because the Board's computer and voice mail systems are to be used primarily for business and educational purposes, staff members are prohibited from sending offensive, discriminatory, or harassing computer, electronic, or voice mail messages.

The Board is interested in its resources being properly used. Review of computer files, electronic mail, and voice mail will only be done in the ordinary course of business and will be motivated by a legitimate business reason. If a staff member's personal information is discovered, the contents of such discovery will not be reviewed by the Board, except to the extent necessary to determine if the files/e-mail/voice mail constitute a public record or if the Board's interests have been compromised. Any information discovered will be limited to those who have a specific need to know that information.

The administrators and supervisory staff members authorized by the Superintendent have the authority to search and access information electronically.

All computers and any information or software contained therein are property of the Board. Staff members shall not copy, delete, or remove any information or data contained on the Board's computers/servers without the express permission of the Superintendent or designee, or communicate any such information to unauthorized individuals. In addition, staff members may not copy software on any Board computer and may not bring software from outside sources for use on Board equipment without the prior approval of the Technology Coordinator. Such pre-approval will include a review of any copyright infringements or virus problems associated with such outside software.

VISITORS

Any visitor to the building must report first to the office to obtain approval for the visit. ***All visitors will be required to have a valid driver's license or state ID in order to enter the building.*** Once verified, a building pass will be issued. Persons in the building without passes will be asked to leave and are subject to penalties under State Law which prohibits trespassing in public schools. Students are not permitted to bring visitors to school, including young children to spend the day or eat lunch.

No visitor may see a student in school unless it is with the specific approval of principal. If an emergency situation requires that a student be called to the office to meet with a visitor, a member of the administrative staff must be present during the conference. A student is never to be permitted to leave the school with anyone who is not clearly identified as his/her parent or an appropriately authorized person.

No staff member is to transact business with a visitor who has not duly registered at the school office and received authorization to be present for the purpose of conducting business.

Classroom Visitors – Prior permission must be obtained to visit a classroom. A parent will not be permitted to observe classes in session.

Tutors/Mentors – The building principal will grant permission for tutors/mentors to be in the building. All tutors/mentors are under the supervision of the requesting teacher and are not left attended with students.