

# **Pelican Rapids Public Schools**

## **ISD 548**

### **Employee Handbook 2025-2026**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

An employee handbook can cover many subjects. This handbook is no different. The Pelican Rapids School has many practices, rules and procedures that apply to every employee of the district. Within the district there are also numerous contracts, work schedules and benefits that are managed by the administration and central office. This written document will cover general employment topics and administrative procedures to help coordinate all these items under one heading: "Employee Handbook". The Employee Handbook is written to answer questions and explain what is expected of an employee. As with any document there may be areas not covered in total or only partially. Revision will occur with notice to employees should an error or need arise requiring clarification or the addition of new topics. The contents of this handbook are intended only as an outline and working guide for some of our policies and procedures.

Independent School District #548 policies whether included in this handbook or not, are subject to change. Although ISD 548 will always try to keep you advised of any changes to the guidelines and policies outlined in this handbook, changes may occur before any written revisions are distributed.

Employment with ISD 548 consists of both unionized and at-will employment. No at-will employee is guaranteed employment for a specific duration. ISD 548 has the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice. Unionized employment will follow current bargaining unit contracts, in which employees are provided the right of union representation regarding their employment.

*This handbook is not intended to be nor does it constitute an express or implied contract of any kind in favor of the employee. Nor shall any employee or applicant for employment have any contractual rights, claims or privileges against the Pelican Rapids Public Schools by virtue of this handbook. Moreover, nothing in this handbook is intended to create any type of agreement for employment or continued employment or guaranteed hours of work.*

Nothing in this Handbook is intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent concerted activity as protected by the National Labor Relations Act or Minnesota Public Employees Labor Relations Act. Such activity includes employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment. Information provided in this handbook will not supersede language of any Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) applicable to employees who are members of bargaining units. ISD 548 employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.

We are constantly working towards improving our policies and the positive relationship that we have with our employees. If you have any questions about anything in this handbook or about your employment with the Pelican Rapids Public Schools, do not hesitate to see your administrator. They will see to it that all your questions are answered.

## ***EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY***

The Pelican Rapids Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer, and provides equal opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, religion, age, disability, gender identity, genetic information, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local human rights commission, service in the military, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law. Equal employment opportunities applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, benefits, work force changes, training, and all other conditions or privileges associated with employment. It is our long-standing policy that the district treats all employees and applicants fairly, whether or not they are members of minority groups, equally according to their individual qualifications, ability, experience and other employment standards. There is to be no discrimination because of any of the characteristics mentioned above. It is also the practice and policy of the district to comply with all applicable federal, state and local labor laws.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act and Reasonable Accommodation:**

To ensure equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, ISD 548 will make reasonable accommodations for the known disability of any otherwise qualified individual, unless doing so would result in undue hardship. ISD 548 is committed to complying with both the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as the State of Minnesota's Human Rights Act.

Employees or applicants who may require reasonable accommodation should contact Human Resources and/or the District Office.

## **Employee Items**

### ***Activity Passes:***

Activity passes to Pelican Rapids athletic events are provided to all employees at no charge. This pass is good for the employee + 1 guest to all home events. It is expected that should the need arise, employees in attendance will assist supervisors at the event.

### ***Appearance/Dress Code - Image:***

Employees must wear professional looking clothing suitable to the type of work you are doing and the environment in which you work. Clothing should be neat, clean, in good taste and not a safety hazard. In specific areas, should safety become an issue, supervisors will deal with the situation. School spirit can be emphasized in casual dress by wearing school colors and logos.

### ***Absence Reporting:***

All employees are expected to arrive on time, ready to work, every day they are scheduled to work and at the prescribed time after rest and meal breaks. Absenteeism beyond the contractual paid time off provided by the district creates unnecessary educational disruption for the students. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness may result in discipline, up to and including termination. Failure to show up or follow the TimeTracker protocol without prior approval could also result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

If an employee becomes ill or is injured on the job, notify your supervisor or building principal as soon as possible. Employees are required to complete a first report of injury form, immediately, or as soon as possible, and must complete the online form with the HR Manager.

When an absence is due to illness or injury that occurred outside of work, you will be paid according to the sick leave provisions of your contract or policy.

If you are unable to report to work for any reason you are to report your absence on TimeTracker per the protocol below in a reasonable amount of time so that a substitute can be located and/or arrangements can be made for your work.

### **TimeTracker Protocol**

- 1) All staff must report absences in the absence reporting system (whether or not a substitute is required). This includes all certified and non-certified staff as well as kitchen, custodial, and office staff. In reporting absences staff must be cautious to select the correct reason for the absence to generate approval.
- 2) **Pre-planned absences** (i.e.: Medical Appointments, Personal Leave, Etc.) need to be entered in TimeTracker at least two days before the requested absence, or within the amount of time required pursuant to other policy; for all pre-planned absences staff must confirm that the absence has been approved by the building administrator/or immediate supervisor. All paras and teachers are required to find their own sub. Once a sub has been confirmed, complete the Sub Form found under Staff Resources on the district website. Upon completion and submission of the form, the staff member will receive an email confirmation. This form will be sent to the substitute coordinator for the district, Emily Evenson. If a sub cannot be found, contact substitute coordinator, Emily Evenson.

At all times, the building administrators and/or immediate supervisors reserve the right to approve or deny pre-planned absence requests for any reason, and all requests will be approved on a case-by-case basis. Completing a pre-planned absence request does not guarantee that the request will be approved.

- 3) **Unplanned absences** (illness/circumstances that require a substitute the same day of the request) will not require building administrator/supervisor approval prior to calls being initiated for a substitute. Staff will be asked to report the absence as soon as possible to allow ample time to find the substitute. Before school absences should be reported using the substitute request form. If an employee must leave once the school day has begun he/she should notify the building administrator and administrative assistant in their building, as soon as possible so that if needed, a substitute can be secured.

Staff will be responsible for providing substitute notes, classroom rules, and class lists for the day of absence.

- 4) Absence requests requiring a long term substitute should not be entered into TimeTracker by the employee, but instead should be discussed with the building administrator to initiate the selection of substitute for the absence.
- 5) In the event an employee is unable to access TimeTracker, they must contact the building administrative assistant or Building Administrator or Principal via phone and/or email as soon as possible to ensure timely notice of the absence.

*Should there be cause, The district may require employees to furnish medical documentation verifying or supporting any medical leave of absence.*

**Attendance Records:**

A summary of your attendance is available on the SmartER website. If you have any questions please contact the payroll office.

**Bereavement Leave:**

All unionized positions must defer to the language of their CBA for the applicable bereavement leave policy.

Non-union employees must contact the building administrator and/or immediate supervisor in the event of a death. Employees must report any bereavement absence through the TimeTracker protocol.

**Meal and Rest Breaks:**

Employees are entitled to a 30-minute meal break during any workday that exceeds eight consecutive hours. If a non-exempt employee is required to work through a meal break, they will be paid for the meal period. Certified staff covered under a CBA will be paid for their lunch break as defined in the CBA. During the workday, non-certified employees are entitled to take 1 break of 15 minutes every four hours worked. Certified staff covered under a CBA must follow the break policy in the applicable CBA. Meal and rest breaks must be coordinated and approved by your immediate supervisor. A break of this nature is not to be taken away from the building in which you work. The break is not to be lumped together, or taken off to add time to a lunch break or to leave work early.

**Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting:**

The State of Minnesota has by law, mandated that professional educators who have knowledge of or reasonable cause to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused shall immediately report such information to the **Ottertail County Child Protection Agency and/or the Minnesota Department of Education if the incident took place at school**. All reports must be documented. Forms are available from the principal, social worker/counselor and health office. It is the expectation that all employees will abide by the statutory reporting requirements placed upon them in that capacity, and notify the District as soon as practicable of any report involving an incident that takes place at school.

**Coaches Handbook:**

A coach's handbook will be provided by the activities director.

***Duty Day and Hours of Work:***

The workday of classroom teachers will begin thirty minutes before the designated starting time for students with the teacher being at his/her first class station fifteen minutes before the designated starting time for students. The workday of classroom teachers will end thirty minutes after the designated dismissal time.

The normal workweek for employees shall be determined by the administration and shall not exceed forty hours per week for non-certified employees. A typical workweek is scheduled Monday through Friday but weekend work is not uncommon. Daily hours are determined by the administration and will be based on the needs of each building or area of responsibility. Administrators are to notify the district office of any changes.

Individual work schedules and hours may vary depending on any applicable collective bargaining agreement stating otherwise.

Any change to a work schedule needs to be approved by the district office and/or immediate supervisor prior to implementing the change. The business office needs a written notice of the change to make payroll and work record changes.

***Gambling:***

The Pelican Rapids Public Schools system takes the position that gambling among its employees is not appropriate and may be illegal. Gambling is not to be condoned in the workplace, and employees are to act accordingly. Complaints will be investigated. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

***Garnishment of Wages:***

There are certain times when a creditor or the IRS may take legal action to garnish or withhold your wages. The District will follow all applicable laws for garnishment actions.

***Holidays:***

The District observes and allows time off with pay for eligible employees for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- MEA
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve Day

When a holiday falls on the weekend, an alternate holiday date will be observed as designated by the district.

**Holiday Pay:** Full-time 12-month employees are eligible for holiday pay. Unionized positions are eligible for holiday pay in accordance with their applicable CBA. Teachers and principals and non-certified employees working less than 12 months are not paid additional wages for holidays. The district observes the right, if necessary, to schedule a workday on a holiday such as Martin Luther King Day, President's Day or Good Friday. If time off is requested in observance of other holidays not covered above, the employee may do so under the practices covered under other leaves of absence or without pay. Time off for other observed holidays must be submitted using the TimeTracker protocol and are subject to approval from the employee's supervisor. Holidays do not count as a vacation day or a sick day if on such a leave. Full holiday pay for non-unionized employees will be eight hours.

***In-Service Days & Conference Days:***

Should non-union employees be required to attend an in-service training or conference day, employees will be compensated. All unionized positions must refer to the language in the applicable CBA for the policy covering in-service days and conference days.

***Jury Duty:***

Unionized positions must refer to the applicable CBA for the policy covering jury duty leave.

Any employee who is called to serve jury duty will be given paid leave. The employee is to notify the district office upon receiving notice to serve and keep your supervisor apprised of your schedule. You will not lose any pay or other benefit while on duty but you will have to remit to the district any stipend received for jury duty unless it is more than your daily salary in which case you may choose between the two.

***Key Policy:***

Employees are issued keys that provide access to buildings, classrooms, work areas and office space. It is very critical that locked spaces remain locked or are re-locked when not in use. Should you lose a key you are required to report the loss immediately. You are responsible for the key(s) assigned to you. Do not lend them to anyone, or open areas not in your area of responsibility. If you suspect that someone has acquired a key you are to report it so the locks can be changed.

If key privileges are abused, employee(s) may be denied the opportunity to have key access. The school district key card system will be monitored by the administration throughout the school year. Administration has the authority to approve or cancel any staff member's key card access as assigned duties change. Staff will be notified prior to access changes.

***Layoffs:***

There are times when the district may consider or be required to reduce staff due to budget constraints, program discontinuance or loss of pupils. The administration will make recommendations to the board as to what program should be reduced and/or what personnel should be laid off. Any employee affected by a layoff will be notified by the administration.

Another type of layoff occurs when someone was hired to perform a specific duty such as a management aide for a specific child. If the child leaves the district or no longer needs the service, that position may be adjusted and a layoff procedure would be implemented.

Union employees must refer to any layoff policy in the applicable CBA.

***Leaving the Building:***

Employees are expected to be in the buildings during working hours. You are to notify the office personnel and administrator if you must be out of the building. Please inform them of your destination and the time frame for returning. This is a professional practice that enables personnel to contact them during their absence from the building. Employees are encouraged to refrain from leaving the buildings during the day unless it is necessary. Employees are also encouraged to schedule appointments at times that do not interfere with work but if necessary, there are leaves of various types available.

***Leaving the Classroom:***

If, for any reason, a staff member who is responsible for students, regardless of age, needs to leave the classroom you are to contact the office immediately to provide supervision. Do not split your classes without assuring ahead of time that both groups are supervised.

***Lockers:***

Employees may use school lockers on the condition that the employee will follow all district locker use policies. Please remember that you are responsible for any valuables you choose to leave in the lockers. A sturdy lock is advised. Should you discover something missing notify the appropriate person so that steps can be taken to recover the item and/or prevent future losses.

The District is not responsible for lost or stolen valuables, and employees do not maintain an expectation of privacy while using the school locker.

***Lost and Unclaimed Checks:***

Employees are responsible for issued checks that are reimbursements or incidental payments. Checks lost or missing should be reported immediately to the bookkeeper. A replacement check will be issued.

***Meal Allowances:***

The district does reimburse employees for meals that occur while conducting necessary school business, which cannot be scheduled to occur during regular working hours. Meal reimbursement is based on an itemized receipt provided by the employee. Employees must request approval for meal allowances and reimbursements from their supervisor or building administrator prior to making the purchase. Meal allowances for employees are based on the following limits, and allowances exceeding these limits must be approved on a case-by-case basis by the District. Breakfast - \$15.00, Lunch - \$15.00, Dinner - \$25.00. Cash for Student Meals—Any requests for Cash to use for student meals (typically taken out of activity account,) You will need to include a roster with a list of students attending. Meal expenses reimbursed for one day absences will be reimbursed through payroll and will be taxable to the employee.

Union employees should refer to any meal allowance policy in the applicable CBA.

***Meals Policy:***

Only food service employees may receive a meal, free of charge, each workday. All meals are to be consumed on premise.

An employee meal consists of the following:

One adult "Type A" meal, including accompaniments.

Or Ala Carte menu items of equal value to the adult Type A meal

All other school district employees and volunteers must purchase meals at the set rates.

Providing meals free of charge to individuals not meeting these criteria may result in penalties according to the regulations set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program.

***Medical Needs:***

Employees may contact the district health aid for certain types of medical needs. The District health aid may not be able to treat all types of medical needs. Employees, not the District, are responsible for seeking the appropriate medical care to fit the individual medical needs of the employee. If you are ill or injured on the job, contact the health aide for medical assistance, followed by the HR Manager as soon as practicable to complete a first report of injury form.

***Military Leave:***

The School District will follow federal and state law in regard to any military leave. Your supervisor must be notified immediately of any request for leave.

***Family and Medical Leave:***

ISD 548 will grant unpaid leaves of absence to qualified workers for certain medical and family-related reasons in compliance with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Employees are to refer to District Policy 410 for the complete information.

***Moonlighting:***

Employees sometimes take second jobs in addition to the job in the district. This is permitted as long as the outside employment does not interfere with the employee's job performance with ISD 548.

Employees with a second job are expected to work their assigned schedules. A second job will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, or leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours. If outside work activity causes or contributes to job-related performance or other issues, the employee could be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

***Probationary Period:***

There is a probationary period for every new support staff employee. Your supervisor will be responsible to review your work performance during the probationary period. A written review will be placed in the personnel file. Supervisors will make recommendations to the Superintendent about the possibility of a continuing contract.

Union employees should refer to any probationary period language in the applicable CBA.

***Performance Reviews:***

A performance review will be developed for each employee. The performance review will be conducted by their supervisor. The review will be in writing and placed in the employee's personnel file in the district office. If the employee has questions or believes the review is not accurate, they may conference with the supervisor, building administrator or superintendent. They may also add a written explanation to the review that covers areas or concerns not addressed in the written review. A teacher, who is non-tenured, will have three reviews each year until tenured, with the first evaluation occurring within the first 90 days of teaching service.

***Personal Leave:***

The number of personal leave days granted are stated in each of the local agreements. Employees are to enter the absence in TimeTracker. (See Absence Reporting section) If an emergency comes up and advance notice cannot be given, contact the superintendent or building administrator as soon as practicable. Personal leave days are limited per building.



***Purchases are for a Public Purpose:***

School districts can expend taxpayer money only for a public purpose. An expenditure serves the public purpose if it benefits the community as a whole, is directly related to the functions of the school district, and does not have as its primary objective, the benefit of a private interest. As a public employee you cannot use school district funds to purchase items for your personal use, or use school district funds to give something to someone else for their personal use.

***Resale:***

The district is required to charge students sales tax for re-sale items purchased from the district (not for fundraisers)—this would include band resale, IT and Home Ec Resale. At the end of the year the district will complete a form with the IRS.

***Requisitions and Purchasing Procedures & Guidelines:***

Employees are not to order or purchase any item without first receiving prior approval from an administrator and approved purchase order from the business office. The district will not be responsible for purchases made by an employee that does not have prior approval from the principal and business office.

Staff members shall make all requisitions for books, supplies and materials for instruction through SmartER. Requisitions from the Student Activity Fund require the signature of the advisor and a student from that organization.

Building administrators will review and approve requisitions through SmartER.

Approved requisition will be routed to the District Business Office for final approval. A purchase order is a legal contract. At this time the only individuals who have the authority to approve a purchase order are the Finance Director or Superintendent.

Staff members must have an approved purchase order issued by the office before any order or purchase can be made using school funds.

When the item has arrived, you are to initial the packing slip/invoice and return it to the District office.

In some instances, a building administrator may allow an employee to make a purchase with their own financial resources and request a reimbursement for the purchase. Approval of the building administrator BEFORE making the purchase is required.

***Reimbursement Procedure:***

When an employee makes a purchase for school use with their own money state tax law states that they must pay sales tax. However, when the employee turns in original receipts for reimbursement they will not be reimbursed for the sales tax because public schools are exempt from paying sales tax on instructional products. (The only exceptions for reimbursement are sales tax on meals at restaurants and lodging at hotels.)

Employees are required to notify their supervisor and obtain pre-approval for all expenses they intend to incur before incurring said expenses. When requesting a reimbursement for school business expenses paid with your own money the original copy of the receipt must be attached to your claim form. Reimbursement will not be made if a receipt is not attached. The District reserves the right to decline

any request for reimbursement that does not follow District policies, and/or that does not further a public purpose. All claims must be submitted within 60 days of purchase. This helps the administration monitor how much of the budget is left to spend for educational expenses during the rest of the school year.

All claims must be turned in for electronic reimbursement via SMARTeR and will be paid out per procurement payroll calendar. Instructions can be found under District Forms on SMARTeR.

All invoices must be turned in electronically via email to district office to follow proper procurement accounts payable calendar. The Board of Education approves bills for payment at their monthly meeting.

School district vehicles are available for employee use for school business, however sometimes an employee may use their personal vehicle. An employee may be reimbursed for mileage incurred when traveling to school sponsored activities. The mileage rate is set by the IRS and all other mileage rates are approved according to the current board approved designation rates.

***Leases and Agreements:***

An employee of the school district does not have the legal authority to enter into any agreements or contracts or labor agreements on behalf of the district. Be careful not to sign any document or make verbal arrangements for any services on behalf of the district.

An agreement may be as simple as a document from a sales man ordering phone directories. An employee may determine the purchase to be requested, however, if any document needs a signature it should be sent to the school Finance Director for signature.

A labor agreement may be as simple as when an employee brings individuals into their classrooms for special presentations. Be careful not to promise any payment for this service without prior approval. Your building administrator and District business office need to be involved in any arrangements for payment of "labor" services provided.

***Resignations:***

A resignation is a voluntary termination of employment. A two-week notice is generally an acceptable notice for support staff. Teachers must request to be released from their contract during the regular school year. A tenured teacher may submit a written resignation for the next year before April 1 in a non- negotiating year, or before July 15 in a negotiating year, provided a contract covering the terms and conditions of employment for the succeeding school year has not been adopted by the District prior to March 1.

A resignation also occurs when an employee is absent without authorization or notification to the district for three or more consecutive work days, or fails to return to work after the summer.

Union employees should refer to any language in the applicable CBA.

***Safety and Health:***

The Pelican Rapids School District, the State of Minnesota and other agencies are making every effort to ensure and encourage safe work areas. Each employee is required to meet certain safety standards by following basic rules and attending all health and safety meetings required by the district. Employees are required to know and understand the following criteria:

- Employee Right to Know
- Blood Borne Pathogens

Mental health support is available to our staff and their families through Lakeland Mental Health Center; 3 FREE and confidential EAP sessions are available. Additional information regarding mental health support can be found on SmartER.

***School Vehicle Usage:***

There are school vehicles available for your use when on school business. School vehicles may not be used for non-school sponsored events. These vehicles are available by signing up through SmartER. On occasion you may be bumped or a vehicle is not available so you will be reimbursed the established mileage rate for using your own vehicle. First priority will go to an individual transporting students, second priority will go to those traveling the farthest distance. Staff must complete Type III training annually if they transport students and staff may not transport students in their own vehicles. Vehicles may only be driven by employees of the school district. All school vehicles are for school business; any other use of school vehicles is prohibited. School vehicles may not be kept at employee homes unless approved by the superintendent.

***Snow Days:***

Upon occasion, inclement weather requires that a decision be made that would determine if school should be opened later, dismissed earlier or closed for the entire day. This decision affects not only the students but also employees. Notification will be via instant alert. If inclement weather conditions exist employees are expected to listen to the radio, watch TV, check district website and email for announcements on any decisions regarding school cancellations or late starts. ***If there is a late start***, all teaching staff members, teacher aides, custodians, cooks and secretaries are to report as soon as possible. If an employee is unable to report to work they may have a pay deduction or use their personal leave.

***If school is dismissed early*** all staff is expected to stay in the building until directed otherwise by the superintendent. The superintendent will notify each building administrator as to the dismissal time so that it is universally distributed at the same time throughout the district.

***If school is closed for the day*** all employees, except twelve-month employees, are not to report to work unless otherwise directed. Administrators are to report if possible. Snow days, outside the allotted days built into the master calendar, will be made up as directed by the school board either later in the school year or at the end of the school year.

Union employees should refer to the language in the applicable CBA.

### ***Staff Lunch Accounts***

If you purchase school meals, an account will be set up in your name. Funds may be added to this account by depositing funds with the building front office staff or on the school website through SchoolPay. You will be responsible for maintaining a positive balance in the account, there is no charging of school meals. If your account balance is negative, you will be prohibited from utilizing the school lunch program.

### ***Staff Participation in Political Activities***

The board recognizes that employees of ISD #548 have the same fundamental civic responsibilities and privileges as other citizens. Among these are campaigning for an elective public office and holding an elective or appointive public office.

In connection with campaigning, no employee shall use school system facilities, equipment, or supplies, and any campaigning should be done on personal time only.

No employee of the school district shall solicit support of any political candidate, partisan or non-partisan, during regular working hours on school district property.

### ***Supervising Student Activities***

Meetings and rehearsals for students require supervision. While conducting student activities and programs it may occasionally be necessary to borrow equipment and properties from individuals and organizations. In such cases the faculty member supervising the activity must assume full responsibility for seeing that such properties are returned promptly in good condition. **Students must be supervised at all times. If you are holding practice you must be present where the students are practicing, not just in the building. As a staff member you cannot work in your room and have your own children play in the gym. Any activity in the gym or building needs a supervisor, there are no exceptions.**

### ***Unpaid Leaves:***

Employee use of unpaid leaves will be strictly limited to avoid excessive absence of student contact time. Should the need arise for unpaid leave the employee must submit a written request to the building principal in advance of arranging any unpaid time.

Union employees should refer to the applicable CBA for unpaid leave of absences.

### ***Vacations:***

Extended contracted staff such as custodians, district office personnel and the superintendent, who have vacation based on contract provisions, have the opportunity to utilize earned vacation days on approval. Vacation schedules are to be established with your supervisor in advance. Prior to the vacation enter your request on TimeTracker for approval from the building administrator and district office. The number of support staff on vacation is limited per building and during certain times of the contract year.

### ***Chaperones for School Trips:***

Union employees should refer to the language in the applicable CBA regarding school trips.

Non-union employees wishing to attend school trips for a personal reason may use personal leave days or pay for their substitute if they qualify for that option per the master agreement if they will miss any scheduled workdays. Any days absent after using personal days and paying for their substitute will be unpaid. If the non-union employees are assigned to chaperone a school trip by administration, there will be no deduction of personal leave or pay.

**Workers Compensation:**

Workers' compensation provides compensation for medical expenses and wage losses to employees who are injured or who become ill because of employment.

Employees with a work-related injury should contact their supervisor and/or Human Resources immediately, or as soon as possible following the injury to complete a First Report of Injury. HR will file a claim with the insurance company. In cases of true medical emergencies, report to the nearest emergency room.

Workers' compensation benefits (paid or unpaid) will run concurrently with FMLA leave, if applicable, when permitted by state and federal law.

## Compensation

Union employees should refer to the language in any applicable CBA for compensation and benefit information.

*Nothing in this section is intended to be, nor does it constitute, an express or implied contract of any kind in favor of the employee with respect to compensation and benefits. Nor shall any employee or applicant for employment have any contractual rights, claims or privileges against the Pelican Rapids Public Schools by virtue of this section regarding compensation and benefits. District 548 reserves the right to exclusively modify or change any of the terms and conditions governing non-union employees at any time.*

**Compensation:**

Employees are paid on a salary basis according to days worked, hours scheduled and any additional work time with prior approval.

**Direct Deposit:**

All district employees will be involved in the district's direct deposit system for payroll.

**Lane Change Request Due Dates:**

October 1

March 1

**Overtime:**

Union employees must refer to the language in the applicable CBA for the overtime policy.

When required due to the needs of the District, an employee may be asked to work overtime. Overtime is hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek, in which non-exempt employees will be paid time and one half (1 ½) their regular rate of pay for all overtime hours worked in a workweek. Only hours actually worked apply toward overtime; paid leave, such as holiday, vacation, sick, bereavement, and jury duty, does not apply toward hours actually worked. A supervisor or manager must approve all overtime work prior to the employee working in excess of 40 hours in a workweek.

Non-certified, or non-union employees have the option of receiving additional comp time in lieu of overtime pay. Employees must request approval from their supervisor first.

**Pay and Pay Dates:**

The district uses a semi-monthly pay system for all employees. All employees will be paid over twenty-four (24) pay periods each year. Payday is on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the last day of the month. Should the normal pay date fall on a Friday or holiday, payday will be on the preceding day.

Extra-curricular Pay: Upon completion of season and “end of season” checklist

November 15 – Fall Activities

March 31 – Winter Activities

June 15 – Spring Activities & All Year Activities

**Submitting hours for payment:**

Vouchers submitted for payment of hours must be approved by the supervisor and must be submitted to payroll in the month following the dates worked or sooner so hours may be paid and reported timely.

**Payroll Deductions:**

Employees have a variety of opportunities for payroll deductions. If you are interested in any programs utilizing deductions, you should contact the district business office as there may be limitations in some cases. Payroll deductions will not be made without prior written authorization from the employee.

## Communications

**Computer usage by staff:**

The Pelican Rapids Public Schools provide staff with computers and software to use in their duties as teachers and support staff. All employees are subject to all rules and regulations of the “Appropriate Use Policy”. Email is available for staff to use for school related communications. Inappropriate usage of school district technology may lead to disciplinary actions.

**Electronic Communications:**

Pelican Rapids Public Schools provides electronic communications tools that include e-mail, voice mail and access to the internet to help employees conduct school business.

*Appropriate Use Policy:* These tools are provided to help you do your job and are not to be used for any other reason including soliciting for commercial ventures, religious or political causes or other personal uses. Inappropriate messages are strictly prohibited. Avoid anything offensive, disruptive, and harmful or considered to be harassment. Inappropriate messages may be grounds for discipline.

*Privacy:* You must have permission to access another employee’s personal electronic files.

*Employees do not maintain an expectation of privacy when using the District computer or software programs. The Pelican Rapids Public Schools reserves the right to enter employees’ electronic files if the district decides there is a legitimate business reason. All computer passwords must be known to Pelican Rapids Public Schools. The District has the right to access all computer files at any time. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.*

*All records, files, memoranda, reports, drawings, plans, sketches, documents and equipment which employees use, prepare or come into contact with are considered Pelican Rapids Public Schools property and must remain confidential.*

Upon terminating employment the Pelican Rapids Public Schools requests at the end of your period of employment, employees must hand over any documents, papers or other materials that they have that contain or involve confidential information. Pelican Rapids Public Schools retains ownership of work performed by employees. From time to time, the District may request that its ownership of work be documented.

***Messages:***

The Pelican Rapids Public Schools encourages contact with parents and students. To help the professional staff stay in touch with your parents and students, the district has established a communications system that includes a voice-mail system and email for each teacher and administrator. With these communication tools comes the responsibility of regularly checking your voice mail/email and responding promptly to those who communicate with you.

***Telephone Use:***

District employees have telephones available to use for school business. Long distance calls are to be brief and to the point. Avoid excessive long distant phone calls.

Phone call messages will be handled like other messages in that the caller will be advised that the employee is working now, but a voice mail box is available for a message and that the employee will get back to them as soon as they are available. Personal use of the phones is prohibited.

## **Confidentiality (Data Privacy)**

***Confidentiality (Data Privacy):***

While working at Pelican Rapids Public Schools, you will learn a lot about our student body, employees and computer systems. You are free to discuss any information that is already available to the public. Any other information is considered confidential and may only be revealed with written permission. This information remains confidential even after your employment at Pelican Rapids Public Schools ends.

Employees are prohibited from identifying or referencing District 548 students, parents or guardians of students, employees, administrators, school board members, or vendors without express permission. Employees may not post images of coworkers or students without proper consent, i.e. parent or guardian consent for students.

Employees may not improperly disclose private or confidential data that is protected by the data privacy laws. Employees should contact their supervisor and/or building administrator for questions regarding what data is protected.

***Data Privacy:***

Employees have certain rights to privacy. Data is one area that is often misunderstood. There are certain types of data that are considered to be information the public can obtain. These items include; name, position, work schedule, salary and benefits. There are other items that are generally deemed to be private and cannot be released, unless release is required pursuant to law, such as your address, phone number and personnel file. Please refer to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Chapter 13 for additional information.

Each employee will have a *personnel file* that is maintained in the district office. This file will include records of performance reviews, contracts, and information for salary and benefits. In addition, the business office will maintain a record of all leaves of absence such as sick leave, jury duty, personal and special leave, etc. There will also be a record of the number of credits approved and earned for advancement on the teacher's salary schedule. Any medical information will be kept in a separate confidential medical file. Employees have the right to see what is in their personnel file, record of leaves of absence and credits. A report of any absences is available on the ESS website. Employees must request to see their personnel file in advance. The superintendent will arrange for the employee to view the file. If the employee has questions or concerns they may respond in writing.

***Personal Data:***

Employee personnel records are required of each employee. Data is requested on employment forms upon first employment and if changes are made both the employee and supervisors are responsible to report changes in the data collected.

***Release of Information:***

Employees must obtain prior approval from the building administrator or supervisor prior to speaking on behalf of the District to the media, and are prohibited from disclosing otherwise private or confidential information without proper release.

The official spokesperson for the district is the superintendent. Please refer any media inquiries to the superintendent.

***Continuing Education for Teachers:***

The Pelican Rapids District supports continued professional growth through staff development and a continuing education system. The continuing education system is tied to a person's license and is dependent on continued education units. This means if your license expires, you must have 125 clock hours or units before you will be granted your next teaching license. If you have questions, see the continuing education coordinator for the district.

*Important: You are responsible for securing your own license. Failure to have a current license could lead to termination of employment.*

***Contributions, Solicitations or Distributions:***

Solicitations for contributions, sale of merchandise, solicitation for membership in clubs or organizations and all other forms of solicitation by employees that are not directly related to school interests or employment are prohibited during working hours.

***Copyright Policy:***

*(Adopted from the US Congress Copyright Laws – January, 1996)*

As an educator, you must know about the copyright law and how it applies to the work that you perform. The law limits what you may copy, under what conditions and for what purposes. US copyright law covers all forms of expression as long as they are put down in some concrete form; written on paper, recorded on tape, or software in a computer. Authors have certain rights under the law that cannot be denied. The copyright law confers five rights on the creator of the copyrighted work:

Reproduction (in copies)

Adaptations, or creation of derivative works

Distribution of copies by sale, gift, rental, lease, or lending



Public performance of the work (for literary, musical dramatic works and dance, plus motion pictures and other audio-visual works)

Public display (for literary, musical, dramatic, pantomime and dance works plus pictorial, graphic, sculpture works and individual images from motion pictures and other audio-visual material).

The creator of the work owns these five rights, subject to limitations called "Fair Use".

*Fair use* provisions of the copyright law grant certain types of user's conditional rights to use or reproduce certain copyrighted materials as long as the reproduction or use of those materials meets defined guidelines. The burden of proving fair use falls to the educator that is using the material so thorough knowledge of copyright law and associated guidelines is essential for librarians and educators using copyrighted works.

***Forms on File at the District Office:***

Upon being hired by the district, new employees must provide the following information:

Social Security Card

Teacher's Retirement Association Number

Teaching Certificate

Withholding Tax Deduction Certificate

Form I-9

Address and Telephone Number

Background Check Request

Direct Deposit Information

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## Building Items

### ***Animals in the Building:***

Animals such as dogs, cats, mice, etc. are not to be brought into the building unless it is for a short visit to the class and with prior approval of the building principal. Requests will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis. The principal must see current vaccination records of any animal allowed into the building. Animals must be under control at all times, and must either be leashed or caged at all times. Children may be allergic to certain animals so be sure that your students are aware of the animal coming to visit your class. Animal deposits do raise health concerns so leave your pets at home if you are working in the building after hours.

Nothing in this section is intended to limit or restrict an individual with a disability from having a service animal in the building. The District will follow all federal and state laws that apply to the use of service animals on District property.

### ***Bomb Threats:***

Upon occasion the district receives a bomb threat. It usually comes by phone but may arrive through another channel. If an employee receives any bomb threats, quietly notify your supervisor or go directly to the building administrator or superintendent immediately. All threats will be taken seriously. Should the threat be “real”, the staff will be notified and directed to follow the procedures as outlined in the emergency handbook. Employees will receive further instructions regarding the situation as it happens. If a day is missed and/or made up, employee work schedules would be adjusted. *Employees are responsible to read and understand the emergency procedures outlined in the emergency guide.*

### ***Fire Alarms and Lock Downs – Drill or Real:***

The building administrator is required to regularly conduct fire, lock down, and/or tornado drills. As an employee you are required to know the district procedures for each situation. All employees are to participate in all alarms as if they are real or otherwise directed. Like any situation, you may never know if it is a drill or real. Read the “Emergency Procedures Guide” for complete details.

### ***Lost and Found:***

Items are lost occasionally and employees are to turn in items recovered to the building office. This will aid in finding the owner and prevent any problems with the items in question.

### ***Scheduling School Activities:***

All school activities are to be first approved by the appropriate administrator before placing it on a master calendar in the Activity Directors office. All facility use beyond the normal school day should be cleared through the Activities Department. In scheduling an event, check the master calendar first. Generally, scheduling will be on a “first come, first serve” basis but special situations will be considered. Schedule early.

### ***Security:***

Security is very important in public facilities, especially when combined with the number of people who come and go, as well as the amount of time the buildings are open. Employees are expected to be watchful and report unusual situations such as unidentified people in the building, students in lockers other than their own and unusual use of keys and people in the building at odd times. Report any suspicious conversations or activities between students to the appropriate administrator. Employees are issued keys for certain areas and are required to report them lost or stolen as soon as possible. Make

sure that you lock all doors that were locked when you arrived and do not loan keys out. Keys will be issued on a need basis for only certain doors. This may mean a single point of entry for teachers entering the building in the off hours. Staff is also expected to refrain from letting students or friends in to use the buildings in off-hours without prior approval. Because security is important, acts of disregard for proper security may lead to disciplinary action.

#### ***Drug-Free Workplace:***

It is the policy of ISD 548 to maintain a drug and alcohol-free work environment that is safe and productive for employees, students, and others having business with the district. Employees are to refer to district policies 418 and 416 for the complete information.

To summarize, use or possession of controlled substances, toxic substances, medical cannabis, and alcohol before, during, or after school hours, at school or in any other school location, is prohibited as general policy. ISD 548 also prohibits reporting to work or performing services while impaired by the use of alcohol or consuming alcohol while on duty or during work hours.

#### ***Visitors:***

All visitors are to report to the main office in the building before going to other areas. Visitors who are not familiar to you and are not wearing a badge should be referred to the office where they can sign in and pick up a visitors' badge. Notify the office if they are unwilling to go to the office. Employees should refrain from having visitors during their student instructional time unless they are volunteering or serving as a classroom guest. It is important to be a good will ambassador but also be alert and conscientious about visitors in the building.

## **District Items**

#### ***Church Night:***

The district has established with the area churches that all school activities should be concluded by 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday nights. If there is ever the need to schedule a student activity on Wednesday evening, you are to confer with the Activities Director in advance of scheduling the event.

#### ***Election Night:***

State law prohibits activities between 6:00 & 8:00 p.m. on election days. It is your responsibility to know the election dates.

#### ***Field Trips Procedure***

All requests for field trips must follow the policy approved by the school board. Policy 610 can be obtained from the district office or the website.

#### ***Fundraisers:***

Fundraisers have become an essential activity for school groups as they attempt to enhance their programs with outside funds. Fundraisers have both a positive and negative side when it comes to dealing with the public. On the positive side it gives people a way to support their schools, it gives students some ownership, and it enhances the program. On the negative side the public is often overwhelmed by the number of fundraisers, the pressure to buy, and it may create a negative attitude

toward the school system. To determine the extent of fundraising and have some control on the level of fundraising within the district the following procedures have been established. Fundraisers will need prior approval from your building administrator and must be registered so the district can monitor fundraising activities. A fundraiser is any activity that is connected to any school function that will raise money for a school program. Fundraisers come in many shapes and sizes, but we recognize that most involve selling a product, selling food, or selling a service.

### ***Procedures***

Prior to announcing any level of fundraising activity to students or parents, the advisor must take the following two steps.

**Step one.** Meet with the appropriate administrator for the fundraiser. Explain your fundraising plan, what you plan to do, how much you hope to earn and what the money will be used for within the school system. The administrator will consider the request and give approval if it is appropriate. Careful study of the number and frequency of fund raisers already planned will be taken into consideration. If approval is granted move to step two.

**Step two.** Register the fundraising plan in the district office. Information that needs to be in the plan includes:

1. Proposed Fundraiser.
2. Dates of the Fundraiser.
3. How much do you plan to raise in the fundraiser?
4. What do you plan to use the funds for within the school district? Who are the recipients?
5. Contract, if there is one.
6. Product, food or service provided.
7. Person responsible for the fundraiser.

You should get approval and register your fund raiser as soon as possible because you risk non-approval due to conflicting dates or products. This includes the “one of a kind” type as well as that traditional type conducted annually.

***If you do not have approval and the fund raiser is not registered you will not have district endorsement and support. If you have any questions about potential fund raisers it is strongly advised that you talk to your building administrator.***

### ***Interruptions into the Classroom:***

It is the practice of the district to avoid classroom interruptions whenever possible. Questions, messages, phone calls or visitors will be held until the regular class is over, unless it is an emergency. Use of the intercom is to be limited to only the beginning or end of each instructional period, unless it is an emergency. The majority of messages will be sent to the individual’s voicemail or email.

### ***Money Collections:***

The collection of money from students has become more prominent within our school system. There are various activities or organizations that are collecting money either as fundraisers or for fees associated with that group. There are also sales for such items as books, T-shirts or candy which require the collection of money and safekeeping of those funds. Any collection of cash must be approved by the District Office in advance, whether that is through an approved fundraiser or otherwise. If cash collection is approved, employees must request a cash box from the District Office. The cash box request requires at least one week’s notice.

Employees are personally responsible for the collection of any cash collected, and must account for all cash received, and store cash in a safe and secure area of the building as directed by the District Office. Employees are prohibited from using any cash in furtherance of personal use. All expenditures of cash proceeds must follow the district's expenditure policy, including but not limited to the requirement that funds be used to purchase expenses that further a public purpose.

***Public Relations:***

The Superintendent is the official spokesperson for the district. Please feel free to share with the district office any accomplishments, activities, or other upcoming events related to the district.

All news releases are to be made through the respective principal's or Superintendent's offices only. Remember your actions around the students are important. Our students are the school's best publicity agents. Your actions in and around our community also reflect on you and the school system.

***Property of the District:***

Equipment, supplies and facilities are property of the Pelican Rapids School District. It is everyone's responsibility to treat school property with due care and not be negligent or irresponsible. The personal use of school district property is prohibited unless it has been authorized. Even though employees have access to equipment or facilities, one must be careful not to use these items for personal use.

***Solicitations:***

It is the practice of the district that unauthorized solicitations of employees on the premises are not permitted by outside vendors. This applies to employees and outsiders. Requesting for staff gifts such as retirements, birthdays, etc. are authorized. Fundraisers that are part of the school activities, and received appropriate approval from the district, should be handled so that solicitations do not interfere with the school operation.

## **Student Items**

***Computer usage by students:***

All students who use district computers need to read and sign an "Appropriate use Agreement". Students who misuse the Internet or abuse computers and software will risk losing access privileges. Close supervision is critical and expected.

***Permanent Record Folders:***

Student permanent record folders are to remain in the office. Student cumulative folders ***must never*** leave the school building for any reason. They contain ***Confidential Materials***. The student's cumulative record card must be kept up to date by the semester or year. All teachers should sign each time they review the cumulative folder.

***Physical Contact:***

Law and policy prohibit student disciplinary action that results in physical contact with a student. If an employee is reported to have used physical force on a student, the district is required by law to report the incident to the local authority who may then conduct their own investigation. The district will also investigate the incident and the results may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. There are very few exceptions to the physical contact rule when disciplining students.

Maltreatment of students includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and in schools, corporal punishment.

- **Physical abuse:** A report should be made in any case involving physical injury or threatened injury. Egregious and documented mental injury is also included in the definition of physical abuse.
- **Sexual abuse:** A report should be made in any case that involves illegal sexual contact. This does not include verbal sexual harassment, which may have separate reporting obligations under the District harassment policy.
- **Neglect:** A report should be made in any case involving failure to provide required care for a child, failure to protect a child from endangerment, or failure to provide appropriate supervision.
- **Corporal punishment:** Hitting or spanking a student with or without an object or the use of unreasonable physical force that causes bodily harm or substantial emotional harm are also maltreatment.

Additional information regarding reporting requirements for Student Maltreatment can be found at the Minnesota Department of Education website at

[http://children.state.mn.us/mde/Accountability\\_Programs/Student\\_Maltreatment/index.html](http://children.state.mn.us/mde/Accountability_Programs/Student_Maltreatment/index.html)

# Pelican Rapids Public School

## Employee Handbook

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