



Para-educator/Nurse

Guide Book

*Created 2010-2011 & Updated May 2014
By the District Special Education Team and Director of Nursing*

Dear Para-educator:

Welcome to the Oskaloosa Community School District. As a Para-educator, you will be assisting with our students in a variety of ways. Each Para has different duties and responsibilities based upon the needs of the students with which they work.

Each of our students is unique, and contributes to the distinctiveness of each of the classrooms in the four buildings we serve. Because of the nature of your job, it is not uncommon to be overwhelmed at times. Being a Para-educator is an extremely important position. Ask tons of questions and, hopefully this guidebook, will serve as a resource for you as well. Your work is valued and appreciated. We could not serve our students without you!

Sincerely,

The Oskaloosa Community School Administration and Staff

It is the policy of the Oskaloosa Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the district's Equity Coordinator, Andy Hotek, MS Principal/Equity Coordinator, 1704 N. 3rd St, Oskaloosa, IA 52577, 641-673-8308, hoteka@oskycsd.org

GENERAL INFORMATION

ABSENCES

Unexpected: If you will be absent from work for any reason, please call your supervising teacher(s)/nurse and your building before 6:45 if possible to notify them of your absence.

Planned: If you will be absent and know in advance, please complete a leave form and give to your building office. Also, please notify your supervising teacher/nurse and inform the building secretary.

BREAKS

Iowa has no laws mandating breaks for adults. An employer does not have to pay you for a break during which you are completely relieved of your job duties. Your employer can require you to stay on the business premises during your lunch break.

In Oskaloosa CSD

The supervising teacher/nurse determines your specific 30-minute lunch break. Flexibility is key as the needs of the building and students vary throughout the year.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Federal law and school board policy protects the privacy of student education records.

- Confidentiality is the most critical and important aspect of the Para-educator's job. Abuse of confidentiality is subject to disciplinary actions, possibly dismissal.
- Both the children and the family have the absolute right to expect that all information will be kept confidential, and made available only to personnel in school who require it to ensure that the rights, health, safety, and physical well being of the children are safe guarded. In short, anyone who is not included on the child's IEP does not have access to such information.
- **At a minimum, ask yourself if you will be violating confidentiality before you tell anyone anything about a child or family in your school!**
- Questions about a student are best directed to your supervising teacher.
- Do not share other student's names or information regarding their programs with parents during IEP meetings, conferences or informal conversations.
- Information regarding specific students and programs should not be shared in the lunchroom, staff room, office areas, out in the community or any other setting. **Never** use names if you are asked about your job. Be an advocate for your students at all times!
- No matter who asks you a question about a student, if you are unsure whether you should answer, **DON'T**. Remember only staff that has a need to know should be given information about a student.
- When conferencing or writing confidential information regarding a student or family, be aware of those around you who may be within seeing or hearing

distance. Look for a more private place within the school building.

- Para-educators must support and reinforce teacher/nurse techniques, materials and methods. Questions should be directed to the specific teacher/nurse privately.

DEALING WITH CLASSROOM/Playground/Hallway/Lunchroom BEHAVIORS

- The teacher/nurse has the first responsibility for the child. Communicate with the teacher/nurse to follow the classroom behavior plan.
- Always coach and cue expectations in advance. Use praise to support positive behavior. Develop relationships with children at the beginning of the year and maintain those relationships.
- Children need positive encouraging statements at a ratio of 7-1. This ratio is found to be effective.
- Use non-verbal cues prior to verbal cues.
- Follow the building PBIS plan for playground behaviors at the Elementary. Read and familiarize yourself with the building playground rules. When questions arise, consult with the teacher on duty. Encourage, model and teach children how to resolve conflicts.
- Follow the building plan for hallway behavior. Use PBIS Expectations at the Elementary and Middle School. Use line basic language in the elementary.
- Follow the lunchroom rule guidelines and support the teachers on duty. Consult with the teacher if problems arise.
- Familiarize yourself with the classroom behavior plan. Use non-verbal cues and/or picture schedules to coach behavior. Cue students of expectations in advance.

DRESS CODE

Dress appropriately and professionally at all times. Dress code may depend on the type of program to which you are assigned.

EVALUATION

Supervising teacher's/nurse's evaluate Para-educators once per year after January. When the evaluation form is completed, the teacher will discuss the evaluation with the Para-educator and make suggestions for improvement.

The Para-educator signs the evaluation form to show that he/she has conferred with the supervising teacher/nurse about the evaluation. The signature simply notes the fact that the conference was held, not that the Para-educator agrees with the evaluation.

Space is left on the form for comments by the Para-educator. The Para-educator receives one copy of the form; the remaining copies are kept on file by the supervising teacher/nurse, the building principal, and Central Office. A copy of the evaluation form is included at the end of this handbook.

**SEE CONTRACT FOR
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE, PAID HOLIDAYS, INSURANCE, LEAVE REQUESTS, PAY
PERIODS**

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS (IEP)

Each special education student has an IEP the teacher uses as a guide for that child's school activities. This program was developed in a combined meeting of a school administrator, the child's teachers, the child's parents, support personnel, and other professionals.

It is usually written for one year, and periodically reviewed throughout the year by the teacher to note progress. The teacher, other appropriate personnel, an administrator, and the child's parents assess progress made and formulate goals for the next year at an annual meeting. Para-educators may or may not take part in the meeting where the IEP is written, but undoubtedly you will be carrying out learning activities and recording progress concerning IEP goals and objectives.

IN-SERVICE

Para-educators may be asked to report to school on in-service days or professional development days. However, at the beginning of each school year, Para-educators/nurses are required to attend the district-wide meeting.

LEAVING YOUR BUILDING DURING THE DAY

Do not leave your building during the day, with the exception of lunch time, without first clearing it through your supervising teacher/nurse or your school principal if your supervising teacher/nurse is not available. Your regular schedule needs to be accessible.

RENEWAL

If evaluations are good, Para-educators/nurses can be reasonably certain of retaining their position for the following year unless a change in student population does not warrant a change. If this should happen, the Para-educators/nurses will be given first chance at other Para-educator/nursing positions that are open.

STUDENT ABSENCES

If you are a 1 to 1 Para-educator and your student is absent, you are to report to report to your assigned principal for reassignment.

TEACHER /NURSE ABSENCES

In the event your supervising teacher/nurse is absent you should report to your assigned principal, and all questions in regards to difficult situations should be directed to him/her.

TIME CARDS

Time cards indicate the hours the Para-educator worked each day during the pay period. Pay periods are approximately every two weeks. You will receive an e-mail to notify you of when time cards are due and what dates your current card should reflect. Submit your time card to the person designated for your building (usually secretary or supervising teacher) by the due date. Any changes to your schedule need prior approval from your supervising teacher. Time cards must reflect these changes. Make sure to total and sign your card. If your card is not received by the due date, your payment will be delayed until the next pay period. Record sick, personal, family illness on the time card by writing the reason across the day you were gone even if you are not sure the day(s) will be paid.

WORK SCHEDULE

It is expected that Para-educators will report to work at the time specified by appropriate building administrator. Specific number of hours assigned are addressed in individual Para-educator contracts.

ON THE JOB MEDICAL PROBLEMS

FIRST AID

Para-educators should learn the location of the first aid equipment and supplies and become familiar with the first aid book. You may be required to administer minor first aid for your students --- treating scratches and scrapes. Be sure your teacher/nurse is aware of anything of a serious nature - the school nurse handles all such problems.

MEDICATION

Health associates will be required to complete the course "Administering Medications in Iowa Schools". Health associates will be responsible for administering prescription and non-prescription medications and treatments as ordered by a physician or delegated by the school nurse. Health associates will also be responsible for reporting side effects of medications, or other concerns to the nurse.

Para-educators are not responsible for administering prescription or non-prescription medication in any situation. (For example - cough drops)

Nails

Health associates will need to consult with the school nurse before providing any nail care. Para-educators should not trim students fingernails, file their fingernails, or clean the fingernails. If you believe they pose a health issue please consult the classroom teacher about sending the student to the nurse.

Special Medical Circumstances

Will be addressed as needed

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

To promote the success of any program, a team approach must be accepted and implemented by all personnel that serve children. It is expected that all children be recipients of the privileges and services available and by the same token it is expected that a Para-educator carry out responsibilities of their job.

DEFINITION

A Para-educator (associate) is an employee who works under the supervision of teachers or other licensed personnel. The ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of education and related service programs belongs to the supervising teacher or other licensed personnel.

A Para-educator is a person hired to assist a certified teacher in the instruction of exceptional children and to improve the quality of the educational program offered exceptional children

PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

Jobs you may be required to do

- In the classroom
 - Observe and record student progress in academic areas
 - Assist students in drill and practice
 - Read/repeat tests or directions to students
 - Listen to students read orally
 - Assist students with written assignments
 - Assist students to compose original work
 - Tape record stories, lessons, assignments
 - Modify instructional materials - according to directions of instructor
 - Read to students – for example, textbooks
 - Facilitate students' active participation in cooperative groups
 - Assist students select library books/reference materials
 - Monitor students use of computers
 - Monitor student performance as directed
 - Reinforce instructional concepts introduced by the classroom teachers
 - When assigned to a classroom or student stay in assigned location or with the student
 - Others as needed

- Behavior Management
 - Participate in classroom behavioral system as directed
 - Observe and chart individual student behavior
 - Give positive reinforcement and support as directed by plans
 - Mediate personal conflicts between students
 - Provide instruction to students on how to mediate their own conflicts

- Provide cues or prompts to students with behavioral problems
- Provide physical proximity for students with behavioral problems
- Circulate in classroom to provide behavioral supports where needed
- Enforce class and school rules
- Assist students who are self managing behavior (provide cues or prompts)
- Help students develop/self monitor organizational skills
- Provide cues/prompts to students to use impulse/anger control strategies
- Provide cues/prompts to students to employ specific pro-social skills
- Facilitate appropriate social interactions among students
- Assist others in coping with behaviors of specific students

Ethics

- Maintain confidentiality of all information regarding all students
- Respect the dignity and rights of every child at all times
- Abide by school district policies, school rules, and team standards in all areas
- Provide accurate information about the student to those who have the right to know (team members)
- Carry out all assigned duties responsibly, in a timely manner
- Protect the welfare and safety of students at all times
- Maintain composure/ emotional control while working with students
- Demonstrate punctuality, good attendance and call in absences as directed.
- Maintain a professional relationship with students at all times (i.e.- do not give birthday or Christmas gifts)
- Use of cell phone – Cell phones are not to be used for texting, making calls, taking calls or surfing the Internet during school hours. Use district phones for emergency calls

Possible Duties of the Para-educator

- Assist individual students in performing activities as directed
- Assist students with personal care
- Supervise children in hallway, lunchroom, and playground situations
- Monitor supplementary work and independent study
- Reinforce learning in small groups or with individuals while the teacher works with other students
- Assist in educational demonstrations for the class or small groups
- Provide assistance with individualized programmed materials
- Assist in carrying out programs of support staff (SLP, OT, PT, APE)
- Assist the teacher in observing, recording, and charting behavior
- Assist in preparation/production of specialized instructional materials
- Carry out instructional programs designed by the teacher
- Work with the teacher to develop classroom schedules
- Carry out tutoring activities designed by the teacher
- Implement behavior management plan consistent with teacher implementation/instruction

- Operate and maintain classroom equipment
- Attend the IEP meeting, if requested
- Other duties as assigned

Health Associate Responsibilities

- Maintain certification in CPR/AED/First Aid, Blood-borne Pathogens, Medication administration (after completing a medication administration course). Perform health procedures as delegated by the School Nurse, after completion of training and demonstration of competency (includes temperature, pulse, respirations, blood pressure, blood tests, urine tests, etc).
- Manage the Health Room in the absence of the School Nurse. Entering logs of Health Room activity into Infinite Campus. Check & restock supplies. Maintain Health Room cleanliness (beds, cupboards, counters).
- Provide emergency first aid to students and staff. Provide general health care, including body fluid cleanup, to students. Follow School Health Policies and Procedures, including Individualized Health Plans and Emergency Health Plans. On-call for first aid to other parts of the building and grounds.
- Administer medications to students as delegated by the School Nurse, including oral, topical, eye & ear, inhalations, and emergency injections. Watch for and report medication reactions to the School Nurse. Maintain medication-related paper work under the direction of the School Nurse.
- Report observations and questions to the School Nurse, assist nurse with communicating student health problems to parents and staff. Assist nurse with screenings and with health records. Call parents when necessary. Maintain confidentiality as needed.
- Other reasonable duties as assigned by the School Nurse or Principal.

Unacceptable Duties or Responsibilities For Para-educators

- Being responsible for selecting or administering formal diagnostic or psychological instruments or for interpreting the results of those instruments
- Being responsible for selecting, programming, prescribing or implementing educational activities or materials for the students without the supervision and guidance of the teacher
- Being solely responsible for preparing lesson plans or initiating original concept instruction
- Being employed in lieu of certified education personnel
- Being used as a substitute teacher

INFORMATION TO ASK THE SUPERVISING TEACHER/NURSE

- Clarify hours and days you will be working – ask for a school calendar.
- What records are you responsible for keeping?
- What special services are available to the classroom and the school in which you work?
- What schedules are you responsible for following?
- When do students arrive and depart?
- What are the playground rules and regulations?

- For what lunchtime or other activities such as music, art, PE will you be responsible?
- Are there additional duties I will be assigned?
- Where are the supplies kept and how are they obtained?
- How much time will you spend in inclusion classrooms?
- How much time in the special education classroom?
- What is the line of communication and authority you are to follow?
- With whom should you discuss a problem concerning relationships? School policy?
- What should be my response when a parent raises questions on their child's functioning in the classroom?
- What pupil records are available to you?
- What is expected of you in terms of student discipline?
- What course should you follow if you feel that you do not have enough to do?
- How does your teacher/nurse view the teacher/nurse/Para-educator relationship?
- What is expected of you in terms of confidentiality of student records?

TIPS

- Share in the responsibility of discipline
- Supporting a student's program is a learned discipline. It takes time to develop mastery of the skills. Have patience and understanding toward the teacher/nurse and students.
- Let your teacher/nurse know your interests, hobbies, background and experience.
- Support all education programs verbally, enthusiastically, and actively, and by involvement whenever possible.
- Support your supervisor and/or your school in every way possible!

Teacher/Associate Discussion Items

The topics/questions below are designed to help teachers/nurses/associates clarify thoughts on "how things will work" in their efforts together. Be sure to think carefully about these topics/questions and do not gloss over them as unimportant. You can save a lot of misunderstandings and hard feelings later if you thoroughly discuss them now.

Responsibilities

1. Schedule
 - a. Arrive/leave
 - b. Lunch
 - c. Building duties
 - d. Classroom/student duties
 - e. Break? Follow contract
 - f. Student's schedule (specials, etc)
2. Coming/going from the classroom
 - a. Sign in/out?

- b. Tell someone?
 - c. Is it ok to talk?
3. Specific duties in classroom/with student
- a. (Collecting data, bath rooming, snack time, group time, centers, specials, recess, student lunch time, paper work, clerical work)

Communication

1. Input to give regarding student program and/or classroom
 - a. OK
 - b. Not OK
 - c. Communicate that there may be times they might be asked to participate on the IEP team to provide input about students
2. Sharing information with others
 - a. OK to share
 - b. Not OK to share
3. Dealing with others in the building
 - a. OK to share
 - b. Not OK to share
4. Where to go with questions? When to ask? What to do if you disagree?
5. How will teacher/nurse communicate with associate about jobs for the day, if something new

Territory/Space

1. Where to put associate's stuff (lunch, purse, coat, other personal items)
2. What to bring/not bring
3. What materials can be used without question/which to leave alone or ask for permission?

Kids

1. Discipline – how to handle student/classroom
2. Tough parents – how to handle
3. Getting to other places with the student
4. Special health/safety/toileting/feeding concerns

Pet Peeves

- (Your choice: food/drink in the room, personal talk among kids, sticking to task, dress code, use of perfume, use of lotions, etc.)

General Information

- Getting to know one another is key to the success of the student. The better you can get to know each other, the better!!

OSKAOOSA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL EVALUATION

(Process reviewed by Labor/Management Team December 2002)

Evaluation of classified personnel to be done by teacher/counselor (if applicable) in January of each school year.
Evaluation to be completed by building administrator before conclusion of the school year every second year.
Administrative evaluation will be reviewed with classified personnel by building administrator. All evaluations will be kept in the employee's personnel file.

Name of Employee: _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

School/Dept.: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

	Needs Attention			Excellent
<i>Attendance</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Punctuality</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Personal Appearance</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Initiative</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Dependability</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Open to suggests for improvement</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Ability to work as a team member</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Ability to work with supervisor</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Cooperation with fellow workers</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Technical Skills</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Attitude (with regard to job)</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Completes Routine Duties</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Ability to interact with/relate to students</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Carries out responsibilities/expectations of assigned duties</i>	1	2	3	4
<i>Seeks opportunities for growth/improvement</i>	1	2	3	4

Additional Remarks or Comments:

Employee Comments (optional):

Signature of Supervisor: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

The above signature confirms that the employee has knowledge of the contents of this appraisal but does not necessarily imply agreement with it.

Para-educator Agreement of Understanding

My building administrator has discussed the contents of this guidebook with me. My supervising teacher and I have discussed special considerations relevant to the classroom or student I am assigned.

By signing I verify that I have read, and I fully understand, the contents and expectations outlined and described in this guidebook.

Signature of Para-educator

Date

Signature of Supervising Teacher

Date