

Kishwaukee Education Consortium



Staff Handbook

2021 - 2022

Welcome to the Kishwaukee Education Consortium (KEC). We are a consortium of five school districts (DeKalb, Genoa-Kingston, Hiawatha, Rochelle and Sycamore) that cooperatively serve students for alternative and career and technology programs. We also serve four (Indian Creek, Somonauk, Hinckley-Big Rock, and Sandwich) other school districts in our alternative Phoenix Academy programs.

The mission of the Kishwaukee Education Consortium is to provide a safe and challenging academic environment where students develop the necessary skills to become responsible citizens and life-long learners.

Because we are a service provider we may defer to the home school for advice and cooperative student decisions. Our emphasis is on education, service, and cooperativeness. Please keep those things in mind while reading this handbook and in dealing with your fellow staff members and students.

Staff Appearance

Please remember that you represent an educational organization that is responsible for the education of youth in our communities. Your appearance reflects how you value your career, students, and yourself. Blue jeans may be worn on the last day of the week that students are present. Please maintain a neat and clean appearance at all times. Jeans may also be worn when an instructor will be doing manual labor. Physical Education instructors may wear clothing that is conducive to the activities that are being instructed. If you have any questions about what is appropriate, please speak with the building principal.

Attendance

Administration - Administrators will receive 12 sick days and 6 personal days. Administration is required to work 201 days per calendar year. Administration's school year begins five working days before the first teacher institute day and two days after the last day students are in the building. All other days may be worked during summer break, winter break or spring break.

Staff - Attendance is setting the standard for your classroom. All instructors will be required to work a **181 day school year**. The KEC allows a specified number of days of personal and sick days. All full-time instructors will receive 12 sick and 3 personal days per school year. **Part-time employees will be given 4 sick and 1 personal day per school year, however, when a part-time employee takes time off they will be docked only the percentage of time missed.** *For example, when a CTE instructor that only works during the third CTE session takes a sick day, that instructor will be docked only .33 of one full sick day.* Hourly employees will have no paid sick or personal time, however, they may fill in for each other and be paid their hourly rate when substitute teaching/working for another employee.

If any employee does not use a sick day during the current year, they will be rewarded with an additional personal day the following school year. Sick days may be rolled over if they are not used by the end of the year. Unused personal days will be converted into sick day accumulation. All accumulated sick days will be available towards retirement credit in the TRS, SURS or IMRF system (whichever applies) per state mandates.

Teaching staff should notify the substitute coordinator concerning any attendance issues. It is her/his responsibility to assure a substitute and proper planning is in place so that education can continue. A Google Form must be completed no later than the day of your absence. If your absence is an emergency or illness related please call as early as possible. A doctor's note may be required for extensive/excessive absences, or to approve a sick day.

Phoenix Academy and CTE staff members are required to be in the building by 8:10am and may leave at 2:30pm. **CTE staff members need to be on site 20 minutes before students arrive and 20 minutes after students exit the building. On Wednesdays full-time staff will be required to stay until 3:15pm for various mandatory meetings.** If a staff member does not come to a staff meeting without getting prior approval from KEC Administration, personal time will be deducted. Personal days may be denied the day before or after a holiday.

Sick days may be used for personal illness, immediate family illness, and bereavement. In the case of bereavement, personal days will be used before sick days begin to be deducted.

Maternity sick days may be used for a maximum of 15 sick days. After 15 days of sick leave have been used, the staff member will be docked pay for additional time off up to 90 days including weekends.

Paternity sick days may be used for a maximum of five sick days. After five days of sick leave have been used, the staff member will be docked pay for additional time.

If a staff member goes above his/her allotted sick or personal leave a day of pay will be docked for each absence above their allotted days.

How to record attendance

CTE instructors and Phoenix Academy instructors—**Your attendance should be completed** on teacherease.com, **within the first 10 minutes of a class period/session.** If instructors experience internet difficulties it is imperative that attendance is called in within the first 10 minutes of class. Please see Angel Harned for Phoenix Academy attendance questions or Jennifer Knetsch for CTE attendance questions.

All instructors should keep a record of student attendance in your grade book which should reflect points as a part of the student's grade.

Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs

It is the position of the Kishwaukee Education Consortium that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of tobacco and alcohol is wrong and harmful. Alcohol and drug use are highly correlated with a variety of negative outcomes, including greater risks for serious injury, suicide, violence, lost work productivity and long term health problems. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, cigarette smoking is the primary avoidable cause of death in our society. Kishwaukee College and KEC campuses are non-smoking campuses.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of students by teachers, administrators, other Consortium employees, or other persons on Consortium program sites, buses or at sanctioned school activities will not be allowed. Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, frequent, uninvited, sexually oriented verbal kidding or demeaning sexual innuendos constitute sexual harassment. Also included is unwelcome touching, such as patting, pinching or intentional brushing against another's body, or expressing humor or telling jokes about sex or gender specific traits.

Any staff member who feels that he/she or a student has been sexually harassed should report such conduct immediately to any Consortium administrator. All efforts will be made to respect the confidentiality of the individual making the report.

All KEC and host school personnel have a responsibility for assuring proper behavior of students attending KEC classes.

Hate Crimes

Verbal or physical harassment of a student(s) or staff member(s) because of race or color, religious or ethnic background, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic is prohibited. It is the goal of this program to provide a safe learning environment. Anyone who creates a hostile environment will be interviewed, educated about the law, asked to stop the behavior, and given the opportunity of counseling. If the behavior persists or is of such a severity dismissal may immediately occur. This includes actions on the internet either at school or any off campus site.

Dangerous Weapons

Possession or use of explosives, firearms, or other dangerous weapons or instruments is prohibited while participating in KEC programs or activities. Weapons may include guns, knives, wallet chains, mace, pepper spray, or any other device that could create a dangerous situation. Failure to comply may result in termination from the program and intervention by local police authorities.

Conferences/workshops

The KEC encourages its staff to attend conferences and workshops to promote staff development activities. Please submit requests to the administration for approval. Some conference/workshop expenses will be reimbursed and some are at the staff member's expense. Please inquire about this when requesting leave.

Copyrighted materials

Please do not make or request to make copies of copyrighted material in which we have not been given permission to copy. Please do not put office staff in a position to have to make these decisions. Some printed material can be copied if it is out-of-date or permission to use can be obtained. The law in regard to video and music is such that you may use personal copies of music and videos for one-time use in a setting not with a large audience and not stored for multiple uses. Absolutely no pirated software should be used or stored on any of our hardware.

Credit Card Policy

All purchases made on KEC's credit card must have the executive director or assistant director's approval and must be within the budget before using the card. The KEC card cannot be used for cash advances, personal or non-school related purchases or the purchase of alcohol.

Card numbers should not be distributed beyond the cardholder's designee and should not be saved in online accounts to which others have access.

Receipts need to be turned in to the business office at the earliest opportunity. Any receipts for meals, lodging or entertainment must clearly indicate the names of all persons attending the meal and the business purpose of the meeting.

Phoenix Academy Duties

There are a variety of duties that all Phoenix Academy staff members are expected to participate in during the school day. Bus, hall, washroom, lunchroom, break duties are among those. We will divide up the duties every four weeks so there will be fair and equal participation of all Phoenix Academy staff.

CTE Duties

CTE staff members are expected to walk their students from class to the bus exit and wait with the students until their buses pick them up. Please try to be in the halls to meet your students when they arrive. CTE students should not be wearing hats, listening to music, using cell phones, etc until they are out of the building.

Grades/Progress Reports

KEC is committed to frequent communication with the home school and the families of the students about their academic progress.

Progress reports may and should be sent at any time to reflect either a positive or negative change in student behavior/grades.

At semester end in December and May instructors will finalize grades in TeacherEase. The semester grade is a cumulative grade of the work of 1st/2ndquarter or 3rd/4th quarter.

Instructors must keep a current, updated online record of student points and grades in TeacherEase. Grades must be updated each Tuesday by 8:00 AM.

Grading

KEC uses 90, 80, 70, and 60 as percentage guidelines for letter grades.

90% or above	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% or lower	F

Included in the grade should be written work, tests, projects, attendance, and

behavior. Points for attendance and behavior help reflect the whole student in the grade they earn. **30% of a student's grade is based on attendance/behavior/participation.** For example: **15 points per day may be designated for attendance and behavior.** If a student is absent, the point value is 0. The student still has the right to make up their written work, but they cannot recover their attendance points.

If a student is in class, but behaves so poorly that they disrupt the environment (this includes sleeping), they also might receive only 10, or 5, or 0 points in this category for the day. Repeated absences and poor behavior then are reflected in their grades in an objective way.

Graffiti

Please be aware of your environment—folders, walls, tables, chairs and look for graffiti. Please bring any graffiti issues to the administration's attention as soon as possible.

Internet

Use of the internet is strictly monitored by the KEC. Staff is required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy before being issued a KEC email account and password. Violation of the policy may result in disciplinary action on the part of the staff. Email sent from KEC computers or through KEC e-mail accounts is the property of Kishwaukee Education Consortium.

Insurance

KEC will pay the first \$225 (updated per Board approval in May-2016) per month of individual insurance through the KEC Health Insurance Plan (includes dental and vision/or vision). The individual employee is responsible for any fees the plan calls for after the initial \$225 monthly payment from KEC. New staff hired during the fiscal year are required to wait 30 days for eligibility into the insurance program.

Lesson Plans

Each teacher will create lesson plans for each school day throughout the school year. Teachers may keep their lesson plans in their room, but may be asked to produce those plans for administration at any time throughout the school year for review.

Movies/Music/Literature

Please use discretion when introducing movies, music, and literature to the students. There needs to be a sound educational reason for using these materials and the appropriateness of the material needs to be carefully scrutinized. Please discuss your plans, the names of videos, literature, and any music/entertainment type media that you will be using in your classroom with administration if you are unsure of its appropriateness. The administration reserves the right to question and refuse the use of any material in accord with its educational relevance.

Employment of Relatives

In order to avoid potential conflicts and the appearance of impropriety it is the policy of KEC that the hiring of immediate family members of existing KEC employees will be prohibited if either person is in a supervisory position. The hiring of non-immediate family members of existing KEC employees will be up to the discretion of the executive director.

Pay Scale

The starting salary for a full-time teacher at KEC shall be \$37,076 beginning in FY23 & \$40,000 in FY24 (Board approval in March, 2019) . There will be a \$1500 increase when a certified teacher obtains 15 graduate hours above their Bachelor Degree OR for CTE staff that qualifies to teach dual credit with our partners (\$3000) (effective FY19). There will be another \$1500 increase when a certified teacher obtains their Master's Degree for full-time staff (prorated for part- time faculty) OR dual credit qualified instructor in CTE who has obtained an MBA (effective FY20). All increases in pay for advancement in education will not take place until the following school year. Staff yearly increases shall be determined by the KEC Board of Directors.

Stipends

Stipends may be given out for a variety of things, including but not limited to, sponsoring clubs, CTE certifications, independent studies, working extra hours, etc... At the end of each year, a detailed report will be turned in to the building principal that justifies the stipend that a staff member has received. If it is found that the stipend has not been justified or a report has not been turned in, the stipend may be removed for future years.

Plan Periods

Phoenix Academy Staff will receive a plan period during the school day. Staff may be asked to substitute teach during that plan period when the permanent substitute is unavailable. After a teacher has given up their plan period four times, they will be compensated at a rate of \$15 per period that they substitute teach. It may be possible to give up your plan period to teach an overload if administration sees a necessity for an extra class. If this is the case, a \$1850 stipend per semester will be granted.

Retirement

All staff working prior to the 2009-2010 school year are on the SURS retirement system, unless approved for TRS by administration. All certified staff from the 2009-2010 school year and beyond will be on the TRS retirement system, all non-certified staff will be on social security. Please see the respective websites of each retirement organization for further information.

Supervision

Supervision is critical. Students should NEVER be left unsupervised. If it is necessary to leave your room, please use the phone to call the office. Never send a student off campus for any reason unattended.

Travel Reimbursement

Staff will be reimbursed for approved travel mileage expenses at a current rate of \$.565 per mile (subject to change per state mandate). Staff will be reimbursed an amount of \$38 per day for food expenses that are incurred on approved overnight travel expenses. These rates are subject to change per state requirements throughout the year or by approval of the executive director. All purchasing cards and/or credit cards who have reward points attached, will be the ownership and responsibility of the employee who holds the card as the responsible party. Please check with the executive director for further information.

Tenure

Because KEC is grant funded, no tenure rights can accrue.

Salary Reduction Plan

An employee who elects to participate in hospital, vision, dental, life and medical insurance coverage as per the terms and conditions of the group insurance plan and this Agreement on or before the first day of each school year may at that time elect that the Board remit for him/her during said school year to the insurance carrier a sum equal to the employee's share of the premium for the coverage elected. Said election shall be made on an annual basis. This provision is intended to constitute a salary reduction plan under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code and the Treasury Regulations promulgated thereunder.

The amount of gross wages due such employee in the form of salary shall be the sum specified on the salary schedule less the payment by the Board, paid in installments as otherwise provided herein, provided the Board shall deduct from said gross wages all sums required by law or as authorized by the employee pursuant to this Agreement. The employee shall have no right or claim to the funds so remitted. Once the election is made as provided above, it may not be rescinded unless there is a change in family status or other circumstances as provided in Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code and the Treasury Regulations promulgated thereunder.

The Board does not warrant that the deduction made in the amounts as listed on the compensation schedule by the Board for the employees as set forth above are deemed excludable from the employee's gross wages, and as such, the Association and each individual employee shall and do hereby indemnify and hold harmless the Board, its members, its agents, and its employees from any and all claims, demands, actions, complaints, suits, assessments or deficiencies or other liability by reason of the payments of insurance premiums pursuant to the provision of this section and the lack of tax withholding thereon.

The Kishwaukee Education Consortium is an equal opportunity employer/program.

I have read and understand the content of the Staff Handbook and agree to abide by the guidelines with-in the handbook.

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____