

Niles Community Schools



Employee Handbook

Welcome to Niles Community Schools.

Within the ninety square miles of the district, we have a nice mix of urban, suburban, and rural settings. Diversity is one of our district's strengths, with a student population of 17% African-American, 70% Caucasian, 10% Hispanic, 2% Native American, and 1% Asian American.

We are the largest district in the area with nearly 3,200 enrolled students. We offer more sports, more extracurricular activities, and more academic opportunities than any other district, yet we are small enough to make personal attention a priority.

You will be contributing to and sharing in the District's efforts to provide the highest standards in instruction, academic achievement, and an ongoing reputation for quality. Every employee plays an important role in the overall development of a child. Your interest in and dedication to Niles Community Schools is appreciated.

This handbook outlines important information about workplace policies, personnel policies, and benefits. If you are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, you will need to reference your contract's terms and conditions of employment. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it for future reference. Welcome to Niles Community Schools. May we have a long and successful partnership in the education of our children.

Dr. Adam Burtsfield
Superintendent



DISTRICT MISSION

Niles Community Schools inspires and prepares all learners through diverse opportunities to challenge the present and enrich the future.

DISTRICT VISION

Dynamic Learners • Diverse Opportunities • Driven to Succeed

INDEX

APPLICABILITY	5
APPROVED LEAVE DURING SCHOOL CLOSINGS	14
ATTENDANCE	8
BENEFITS/INSURANCE	14
BEREAVEMENT LEAVE	12
BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS	21
CALENDAR	9
CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER	18
COMPENSATION AND WORK HOURS	9
CONFERENCE/MEETING ATTENDANCE	18
CONFIDENTIALITY	5
CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN	18
CUSTODIAL REQUESTS	19
DIRECT DEPOSIT	10
DISCIPLINE	6
DIVERSITY	19
DRESS	19
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL	20
EMAIL ACCOUNTS AND WEB PAGES	20
EMPLOYER PROPERTY/SEARCHES	20
EMPLOYMENT RECORDS	6
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	6
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY	7
EVALUATIONS	7
FACILITY USAGE	21
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT	13
HARASSMENT	17
HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL AWARENESS	21
HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)	7
HOLIDAYS	13
HOLIDAY PAY	10
INCLEMENT WEATHER	10
INTRA-DISTRICT MAIL	21
JURY DUTY PAY/LEGAL LEAVE	12
KEYS	22
LUNCHES	21
MILEAGE AND EXPENSES	21
MOONLIGHTING	8
NAME BADGES	2
NEPOTISM	8

NEWS RELEASES	23
NO CALL/NO SHOW	9
ORGANIZATION OF NILES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	4
OVERTIME & COMP. TIME	9
PARKING	22
PAYROLL	10
PERSONAL BUSINESS TIME	11
PERSONAL ITEMS & VALUABLES	22
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND OFFICE PROCEDURES (BULLYING)	15
PURCHASES	22
QUALIFYING PERIOD	8
RETIREMENT	15
SEPARATION	15
SELF-REPORTING REQUIREMENT	22
SICK LEAVE	11
SMOKING	22
SPECIAL LEAVES	13
SUPPLIES, MATERIALS, AND EQUIPMENT	23
TELEPHONES	23
TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT	5
USE AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION	23
WORKERS COMPENSATION/WORKPLACE INJURIES	15

ORGANIZATION OF NILES COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Niles Community Schools provides dynamic learning experiences and innovative opportunities. We empower all to create, disseminate, discover, model, and apply knowledge in a diverse intellectual culture. We inspire leaders who challenge the present and enrich the future, striving for civic growth for our schools and community.

Niles Community Schools operates programs and/or services at several different sites, each providing a positive, diversified learning environment for students:

- Niles Community Schools Administration & Education Center (269-683-0732)
Houses administrative offices for the Superintendent, Curriculum, Personnel, Business, Special Education, Niles Virtual School, and WAY/WAY Forward Program (an alternative education program for secondary students).

- Niles High School (269-683-2894) – Grades 9-12
- Niles Cedar Lane High School (269-684-9554) – Grades 9-12
- Ring Lardner Middle School (269-683-6010) – Grades 6-8
- Southside School (269-683-0421) – Grades 6-12, Up to age 26 (Special Education Program)
- Eastside Connections School (269-683-2585) – Grades K-8
- Ballard Elementary (269-683-5900) – Grades K-5
- Howard-Ellis Elementary (269-683-4633) – Grades K-5
- Northside Child Development Center (269-683-1982) – Early Childhood Special Education; YMCA provides GSRP, Preschool, and Child Care

Niles Community Schools operates under the authority of a seven-member Board of Education. The Superintendent is the chief administrative officer of Niles Community Schools. The Board sets the policies governing Niles Community Schools. Regular meetings of the Board of Education are on the first and third Mondays of the month (unless announced otherwise) at the Administrative Center. An individual wishing to be included on a board meeting agenda should provide the Superintendent with a written request at least seven days in advance of the scheduled meeting date. The request should indicate the purpose of such an appearance with supporting evidence as may be required.

APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this handbook apply to all staff employed by Niles Community Schools. Individuals covered under a collective bargaining agreement should also refer to their respective agreement.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

This employee handbook DOES NOT constitute an employment contract between Niles Community Schools and its employees. All Niles Community Schools employees who are not governed either by an individually signed contract or by a negotiated collective bargaining agreement are employed on an “at-will” basis and are subject to termination at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice, at the option of either the employer (Niles Community Schools) or the employee.

CONFIDENTIALITY

From time to time, in the course of your employment, you may have access to information about students and/or other employees. Often, this information is to be kept confidential. If you are uncertain about whether information is confidential, check with your supervisor BEFORE discussing it with anyone. Breach of confidentiality could result in disciplinary action.

DISCIPLINE

While Niles Community Schools generally ascribes to the philosophy of progressive discipline (i.e. the level of disciplinary action should be commensurate with the infraction), this should in no way be construed to mean that the district may not terminate the employment of any “at-will” employee without cause or notice or that the district is required to follow any defined sequence of steps. By way of example, the following constitutes a partial list of the types of infractions that may be subject to disciplinary action:

- poor performance
- conduct which violates Board policy, rules, or regulations
- conduct which is unprofessional
- conduct which is inconsistent with commonly established standards of justice, ethics, or morals
- insubordination
- excessive tardiness
- excessive absenteeism
- breach of confidentiality
- other misconduct

EMPLOYMENT RECORDS

Niles Community Schools maintains a cumulative personnel file for each employee. The Office of Personnel maintains these files. This record contains pertinent information on each employee including but not limited to, performance evaluations, disciplinary records, certificates and licenses, job applications, and other information. Under the Bullard-Plawecki Employee Right to Know Act of 1978 (PA 397) employees are able to inspect their personnel records upon a written request filed with the Office of Personnel during normal working hours if it does not interfere with the employee’s assigned duties. If it is determined to interfere with the job, time will be set during non-working hours.

If you should disagree with what is in your personnel file, please contact the Assistant Superintendent or the Director of Personnel.

It is important to know that as public employees, information contained in your personnel record may be subject to public disclosure. Certain information, including individual performance evaluations, may be required to be released via a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Additionally, information relating to unprofessional conduct must be released to prospective employers upon request.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employees may be hired for specific, predetermined periods of time, for completing specific projects (temporary) or for longer, unspecified terms with various weekly schedules (part-time or full-time). Generally, full-time employees work a minimum of 37.5 hours per week. To be eligible for benefits, you must work 30 or more hours a week.

EVALUATIONS

Performance evaluations may be given as often as deemed necessary by the employer or as specified in the employee's contract. Evaluations will be given using the appropriate district procedure and will be stored electronically.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Niles Community Schools is an equal opportunity employer, and as such, will comply with all federal and state laws with respect to non-discrimination. Specifically, Niles Community Schools will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, handicap or any other reason prohibited by law. In compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Niles Community Schools will provide reasonable accommodation for religious beliefs as well as mental and physical limitations that may affect an employee's ability to perform the necessary and essential functions of their job. Reasonable accommodation is considered to be an accommodation that would not impose an undue hardship upon Niles Community Schools or its activities and responsibilities.

Employees with a disability who feel that a reasonable accommodation is necessary must inform the Office of Personnel in writing as soon as possible after the date the employee knew, or could have known, that the accommodation was necessary.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, it is the policy of Niles Community Schools to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with respect to employment, access to facilities or programs, or treatment.

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)

The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) grants individuals the right to receive notice of the uses and disclosures of their protected health information (PHI) that may be made by the district, and sets forth the individual's right and the district's legal obligations with respect to PHI. The district declares itself a hybrid entity under the law.

The district will maintain all PHI in accordance with law. Protected health information does not include information contained in student education records covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or employment records held by the district in its role as an employer.

Protected health information will only be available to designated employees who need to have access to those records in their employment capacity with the district and with other authorized entities. The district will not disclose or use PHI unless an appropriate written consent/authorization exists, or unless otherwise authorized by law. The district will train all employees who may have contact with protected health information on the law and the district's policies and procedures as necessary and appropriate for the employee's position. Any employee failing to comply with district policies, procedures, or law may be disciplined up to and including termination.

The district will not intimidate, threaten, coerce, discriminate against or take other retaliatory action against any individual for exercising his or her rights; participating in any process; filing a complaint; testifying, assisting or participating in an investigation, compliance review, proceeding or hearing; or in good faith opposing any act or practice the individual believes is unlawful in accordance with law.

The district's Privacy Official is the Human Resources & Benefits Coordinator, who will receive and review any complaints.

MOONLIGHTING

While Niles Community Schools does not prohibit outside employment, staff are expected to devote their primary work efforts to the district. It is, therefore, mandatory that they refrain from engaging in other employment that: 1) could be inconsistent with the professional interest of the district 2) could be construed to be detrimental to the district's public image, or 3) could require devoting a level of time and effort that could adversely impact the employee's work.

Furthermore, the use of any confidential or proprietary information maintained by the district in the pursuit of outside employment would be prohibited and could be grounds for dismissal.

Employees are strongly encouraged to discuss potential outside employment with their supervisor in order to comply with this policy.

NEPOTISM

In order to ensure high standards of integrity and impartiality, the Board shall avoid any action that may result in, or create the appearance of, a conflict of interest in the hiring and employment of district personnel.

QUALIFYING PERIOD

Non-bargaining unit employees will be employed for a qualifying period of 90 calendar days. Satisfactory completion of the qualifying period does not in any way imply the existence of any tenure rights and does not affect the “at-will” status of the employee. Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement will serve the probationary period as specified in each contract.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential functions of one’s job responsibilities. An employee is expected to observe working hours and days. Excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, are not acceptable. A record of absences is maintained for each employee by Niles Community Schools and may be used to evaluate, on an individual basis, the impact that a given employee’s absentee rate may be having on the job, unless protected by Federal or State statute.

In case of illness or absence for any reason, an employee must inform the appropriate person as soon as possible, but no later than the end of an employee's shift. In the event of three consecutive absences, an employee must provide the supervisor with a physician’s statement showing the employee was under their care which will be forwarded to the Office of Personnel.

NO CALL/NO SHOW

An employee is considered to be a No Call/No Show when they fail to report for work without contacting their supervisor or without following any applicable department-level procedures for absence notification. After three (3) consecutive No Call/No Shows. An employee is considered to have voluntarily abandoned employment with Niles Community Schools. Any instance of a No Call/No Show is subject to discipline up to and including termination. If an employee has good cause for a No Call/No Show and can demonstrate this, any discipline may be waived.

CALENDAR

Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement or an individual contract need to check the contract for work reporting dates. Year-round employees do not have start or end dates. All employees paid year-round are to report to work the week before school begins and end the last day with students. All other employees report to work the first day of school and end the last day with students.

COMPENSATION AND WORK HOURS

Normal employee work schedules may vary, in terms of starting and ending times, depending upon the individual's assignment. Employees who are paid on an hourly basis are responsible for accurately completing the required information. Any falsification of timesheets will be disciplined up to, and including, termination. This information serves as the basis for pay and needs to be accurate and timely.

OVERTIME & COMP. TIME

Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement need to check the contract for overtime language. Niles Community Schools has the right, and may require from time to time, to request employees to work overtime. When hourly and/or non-exempt* employees work in excess of 40 hours per week, compensation or comp time will be at the rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times the regular rate of pay. Exempt employees will not receive overtime pay when working beyond 40 hours per week. If your supervisor requests overtime work, advance notice will be given if reasonably feasible. (NOTE: In order to receive compensation for overtime work, signed approval must be given by your supervisor PRIOR TO the performance of the work.) Hourly and non-exempt employees should NOT begin work prior to their normal starting time, work through their normal lunch breaks, nor work beyond their normal quitting time without prior approval by their supervisor.

Overtime compensation may be paid in either of two ways with pay or compensatory (comp.) time.

Comp. time may be granted by mutual agreement between the employee and the supervisor only and must be used during the school year in which it was earned. Comp. time will not be carried over to the following year and will be paid out at the end of the school year. Comp. time must be used prior to other forms of leave. If prior agreement is not obtained and recorded, it will be assumed that overtime compensation will be through payroll. Payroll will be at the rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times the regular rate when actual hours worked per week exceed 40. Any questions regarding comp time, contact the Office of Personnel.

**Determining whether an employee is “exempt” from overtime or “non-exempt” is sometimes difficult. Generally, all employees who are paid on an hourly basis are “non-exempt” (i.e. entitled to overtime compensation). Generally, administrators and professionals who sign individual contracts are exempt (i.e. not entitled to overtime compensation). Always check with your supervisor to ascertain your status with respect to overtime eligibility.*

PAYROLL

Employees will be paid on a bi-weekly basis by direct deposit. Generally, if a payday falls on a holiday, the payroll will be deposited on the last working day prior to the holiday. The pay week is from Sunday - Saturday; a chart of the current year's pay days is located on the Niles Community Schools website.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Participation in direct deposit will be a condition of employment. Employee pay will be electronically deposited directly into one or more checking or savings accounts designated by each employee. Accounts must be established with a financial institution that supports direct deposit. Direct deposit arrangements must be made with the Human Resources & Benefits Coordinator.

HOLIDAY PAY

Whether an employee receives holiday pay varies by position and collective bargaining agreements. For more information regarding holiday pay refer to your collective bargaining agreement or the Office of Personnel.

A holiday eligible individual will not receive holiday pay if the employee does not work on that scheduled holiday or did not work his/her last regularly scheduled work day preceding and following the holiday unless pre-approved.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Whether an employee reports to work or receives “Weather Closure Pay” varies by position and collective bargaining agreements. For more information regarding Weather Closure Pay and your eligibility, refer to your collective bargaining agreement or the Office of Personnel.

The Superintendent or his designee shall have the responsibility to close Niles Community Schools programs and facilities due to weather. When Niles Community Schools are closed, all

programs will be closed. Offsite programs that are not located in schools and certain custodial and maintenance personnel follow special closing guidelines. Please contact your supervisor for specific instructions. Athletics practices and contests will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

SICK LEAVE

Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement or an individual contract need to check the contract for sick leave provisions. For non-bargaining Group 4 employees without a contract or letter of employment- sick leave will be frontloaded at the beginning of the school year on the basis of one day earned for each month of service. Group 1, 2, 3 and Part-Time employees will earn sick leave at a rate of one (1) hour for every thirty (30) hours worked. Please contact the Office of Personnel for further information.

Sick leave is to be used for absences in accordance below:

- Their own physical or mental illness, injury, or health condition.
- Medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of their own, a family member, domestic partner, or a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis health condition.
- Preventive medical care for themselves or a family member.
- Matters related to domestic violence or sexual assault affecting the employee or a family member (as defined by ESTA MCA - Act 338 of 2018).
- For meetings at a child's school or place of care related to the child's health or disability.
- Closure of the employee's place of business or a child's school due to a public health emergency.
- Sick leave benefits are not applicable to unpaid emergency school or office closures (e.g., snow days).

The unused portion of such allowance shall accumulate from year to year. New employees shall be credited with sick leave equal to one day per month worked for the balance of the school year. Five of the above ten days may be used for serious illness of immediate family members who do not reside with the employee. Immediate family members shall include the employee's wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, or sister. However, if the employee qualifies for FMLA leave, FMLA guidelines shall prevail. (See district website for FMLA policy and procedure)

Staff have the option of using no-pay days even if they have accrued sick days. However, if the employee qualifies for FMLA leave, FMLA guidelines shall prevail. (See school district website for FMLA policy and procedure).

Upon request by the administration, the employee must submit a certificate from a medical doctor indicating that the employee is physically or mentally able to perform regularly assigned duties prior to returning to work. The administration, at its discretion, may also require that the employee submit a note from a medical doctor verifying that a basis for sick leave did exist.

PERSONAL BUSINESS TIME

Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement need to check the contract for accrual and use of personal business time. Niles Community Schools has several job classifications that do not have personal business days. Please contact the Office of Personnel for further information.

Non-bargaining unit employees (IF GRANTED SICK DAYS) may be granted personal business days to use during the year. The personal business days will be deducted from the individual's sick bank. Personal business leave may only be taken with PRIOR approval by the employee's supervisor, and should be requested at least two days in advance. Personal business leave is non-cumulative. Personal Business leave will not normally be granted for the work days immediately before or immediately after a holiday.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Employees covered under a collective bargaining unit need to check the contract for Bereavement Leave provisions. For non-bargaining unit employees, bereavement leave will not be deducted from sick leave.

A paid leave of absence of up to Five (5) workdays may be granted for the death of a spouse, child, parent or step-parent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother and sister, and stepchild or grandchildren if the staff member is the legal guardian.

A paid leave of absence up to Three (3) workdays may be granted for the death of a grandparent, a sister/brother-in-law, a son/daughter-in-law, a grandparent-in-law, and grandchildren (if not the legal guardian).

One (1) day of leave per occurrence may be granted to attend the funeral of relatives not listed above. The relationship to the employee must be identified on the form. Said day shall be deducted from sick leave accumulation.

JURY DUTY PAY/LEGAL LEAVE

Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement need to check the contract for legal leave provisions. For non-bargaining unit employees, there is an income protection which is the difference between jury duty pay and an employee's regular days pay for time spent serving on jury duty. Generally, income protection for time spent serving on jury duty will be provided for a maximum of five workdays. Additional income-protected time away from the workplace for this purpose will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Legal leave is subject to the following conditions and limitations:

- An employee, who is summoned or subpoenaed during work hours as prescribed by law, may be granted legal leave for those dates and times as indicated.
- The employee will provide the Office of Personnel written proof of the summons or subpoena and, upon return from legal leave, provide satisfactory evidence as to the amount the employee was paid by the court less any mileage reimbursements.
- The amount of compensation paid by the court (if any) will be deducted from the employee's gross daily salary so that the net effect will be no loss of pay.
- Legal leave is not applicable when the employee is under court order to appear in his/her own defense for a violation of the law and to which he/she pleads or is found guilty. In cases where "plea bargaining" or out-of-court settlement has left innocence or guilt unresolved in court, the administration will make the determination of availability of this leave.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 applies to all employees who are eligible and provides UP TO 12 weeks of leave time during a rolling 12-month period provided that the employee has worked for at least 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months. To determine if you are eligible, please contact the Office of Personnel, who, if eligible, will direct you to the necessary FMLA paperwork.

Niles Community Schools has elected to use the 12- month period measured forward from the date of your first FMLA leave usage. FMLA leave may be unpaid, but does provide for continuation of insurance benefits. FMLA leave is not in addition to the other leave provisions contained herein but rather runs concurrently with them.

Employees are required to use all accrued paid leave days (as specified in the contract or per the provisions of this handbook) as part of the FMLA leave but only to the extent of the 12-week entitlement.

It is intended for:

- Birth of a child
- Adoption of a child or placement of foster child
- Caring for a spouse, child or parent with a serious medical condition
- The employee's own serious medical condition in which the employee is unable to perform the requirements of the job
- Qualifying Exigency of spouse, child or parent who is on active duty or called to active duty
- A spouse, child, parent or next of kin who is caring for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury incurred or aggravated while service member was serving in active duty - 26 work weeks of FMLA coverage

For further details regarding FMLA leave, check the Personnel website under Benefits for more information regarding FMLA and Niles Community School's process. If your questions are not answered, please contact the Human Resources & Benefits Coordinator.

SPECIAL LEAVES

Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement need to check the contract for special leave provisions. Non-bargaining unit members may request special leaves with or without pay. These leaves must be requested through, and approved by, the Superintendent. Leaves without pay will also be without fringe benefits (including, but not limited to, insurance, experience credit, holidays, vacation, other paid leave entitlements unless covered under FMLA).

HOLIDAYS

The following days are to be reimbursed as paid holidays for all regular **Full-Time** and Groups 3 and 4 (See Appendix A) employees who have been employed in the same capacity for at least thirty (30) days.

Labor Day	1	day
Thanksgiving	1-1/2	days
Christmas	2	days
New Year's Day	2	days
Day before Spring Break	1/2	day
Memorial Day	1	day

Unless on an approved paid leave, such as a sick day, an individual will not receive holiday pay if that person has not worked his/her last regularly scheduled work day preceding the holiday and his/her first regularly scheduled work day following the holiday.

An employee will not receive holiday pay if the holiday occurs while the employee is on an unpaid leave of absence.

Employees will receive holiday pay at their regularly earned daily rate.

APPROVED LEAVE DURING SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Approved paid leave (i.e., sick leave, vacation, business leave, etc.) that is taken during days when the building where the employee is assigned is closed due to weather will be reinstated, and the employee will not be charged for the use of such days unless the person is on an extended leave.

BENEFITS/INSURANCE

Niles Community Schools offers medical, dental, vision and other insurance benefits to its Full-Time employees or those working over 30 hours per week on a consistent basis. Individual coverage may vary depending upon employment status and the provisions of the employee's contract. Coverage for Instructional Assistants hired after 3/11/2016 will be limited to single coverage. Employees can opt for two-person or family coverage but the employee will have to pay the full premium less the amount the district pays for single coverage.

If eligible per IRS guidelines, employees may opt out of medical insurance benefits and receive Cash in Lieu, less any taxes instead. Cash in Lieu is paid on the second paycheck of each month. If you have questions regarding the cash-in lieu amount, please contact the Human Resources Benefits Coordinator.

In addition, specific benefit options may vary from time to time as determined by the Board. Individual employees must assume the responsibility of signing up to receive insurance benefits, as benefits are not automatic. Any changes in dependent status or address need to be reported within 30 days to the Office of Personnel. If changes are not made during this 30-day window, changes will not be eligible until Open Enrollment. Benefit election enrollments, changes, and cancellations are an electronic process. Please consult with the Human Resources & Benefits Coordinator for answers to specific questions that you might have regarding your benefits.

The insurance/stipend benefits will be effective on the first of the month following the employee's first day of actual work and/or eligibility, unless the employee has a different benefit start date per their contract.

In addition to the benefits listed above the Board will pay a life insurance policy and Long Term Disability Insurance-after 90 days of disability or the expiration of accumulated sick days, whichever is later. Employees taking Medical Insurance through Niles Community Schools will receive an additional life insurance benefit. Employees covered under a collective bargaining agreement need to check the contract regarding LTD benefits.

When an employee terminates employment with the school system for any reason during the school year, all school-paid insurance benefits will terminate on the last day of the month in which the employment was terminated.

WORKERS COMPENSATION/WORKPLACE INJURIES

Michigan Workers Compensation insurance is carried on all employees. An employee who is involved in an accident resulting in an injury during work hours must report the incident as soon as possible, no later than 24 hours, to his/her supervisor. The supervisor must notify the Office

of Personnel immediately after being notified of the incident. The employee must go to the doctor selected by the district.

SEPARATION

Either Niles Community Schools or the employee may initiate a separation. Niles Community Schools encourages employees to provide at least two weeks (10 days) written notice prior to the intended separation date. After receiving such notice, an exit interview will be scheduled by the Office of Personnel. An employee who terminates with Niles Community Schools for any reason will receive final payment of wages at the regularly scheduled time of payment for hours worked, and any school-paid insurance benefits will terminate on the last day of the month in which the employment terminated. Immediately upon request, or on the last day of employment, employees must return all Niles Community School property that is in their possession or control. Failure to return requested property will result in a deduction from the employee's final paycheck.

RETIREMENT

Niles Community School employees are enrolled in the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System (MPERS) on the first day of employment. The Niles Community Schools Board of Education has authorized the payment of the employer's share into the retirement system. An additional amount will be deducted from the employee's pay and forwarded to the retirement system. Following retirement from the public schools, a schedule of pension payments will be prepared by MPERS. For specific questions about your retirement situation, please contact the Michigan Office of Retirement Services.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND OFFICE PROCEDURES (BULLYING)

It is the policy of the district to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students and employees. This policy applies to all activities on school property and to all school-sponsored activities, whether on or off school property.

Bullying or other aggressive behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, including Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors, and volunteers, is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes physical, verbal and psychological abuse, such as hazing, gestures, comments, threats or actions to a student, which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety or personal degradation. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect and refusing to tolerate

harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

This policy applies to all activities in the district, including activities on school property and/or in a school vehicle as well as those occurring off school property. This policy also applies to a student or employee attending any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school's control or where an employee is engaged in school business. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment.

"Bullying" is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic or physical act, including electronically transmitted acts (i.e. internet, telephone or cell phone, personal digital assistant or wireless hand held device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment or by any other distinguishing characteristic. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, or at any school-sponsored function or in a school vehicle.

Aggressive behavior is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student's educational, physical, or emotional well-being. An example of such behavior is bullying, hazing, stalking, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, or making threats. "Bullying" is conduct that meets all of the following criteria:

- Is directed at one or more students
- Substantially interferes with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more students
- Adversely affects the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the district's educational programs or activities, placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing emotional distress
- Is based on a student's actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic (see above), or is based on an association with another person who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics.

A student who believes he/she has been or is the victim of bullying, hazing or other aggressive behavior should immediately report the situation to their teacher, the building principal or the assistant principal. The student may also report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or Board official. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President.

Every student is encouraged and every staff member is required to report any situation that they believe to be aggressive behavior directed toward a student. Reports shall be made to those

identified above. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

All complaints about aggressive behavior that may violate this policy shall be promptly investigated and documented. If the investigation finds an instance of bullying or aggressive behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial action. This may include, up to expulsion for students, up to discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors, and removal from any official position and/or a request to resign for Board members. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. The complainant shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and as appropriate, that remedial action has been taken.

Retaliation against the person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of aggressive behavior, is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as aggressive behavior. Making intentionally false reports about aggressive behavior for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above. See Board Policy #5517.01 for further clarification.

HARASSMENT

Niles Community Schools will not tolerate any form of unlawful discriminatory harassment based on a person's race, religion, ethnicity, handicap, sex or other unlawful factor. A grievance procedure for reporting complaints of discriminatory harassment is found in Board Policy 5517, 4362, and 3362.

Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct or communication constitutes harassment when:

- Submission to the conduct or communication is made either as an explicit or implicit condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in an employment decision affecting the harassed employee; or the conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's employment or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Examples of prohibited conduct may include, but are not limited to, lewd or sexually-suggestive comments; off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature; slurs or verbal, graphic or physical

conduct relating to an individual's sex; or any display of sexually explicit pictures, greeting cards, articles, books, photos, or cartoons.

Any employee who feels that they have been the victim of sexual harassment should bring the matter immediately to the attention of their supervisor. If that would prove to be uncomfortable, the employee should contact the Office of Personnel. All such claims will be investigated as quickly as possible, and Niles Community Schools will take appropriate corrective action as dictated by the investigation.

Any employee who is determined, after investigation, to have engaged in harassment in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. Furthermore, Niles Community Schools will not permit or tolerate any form of reprisal or retaliation against an employee or applicant reporting any incident of claimed harassment.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER

It is important that the district always maintains accurate information with respect to an employee's home address and phone number. This information is necessary for emergency contacts as well as for insurance information, and other items. It is the responsibility of the employee to keep his/her supervisor and the Office of Personnel up to date of any changes of address or phone number. Phone numbers that are "unlisted" will be considered confidential and distributed only to appropriate administrators.

CONFERENCE/MEETING ATTENDANCE

Attendance at conferences, meetings, or in-services is subject to the approval of the supervisor. Approval will be granted only for meetings that are relevant to the employee's job. Requests should be presented as far in advance as possible on the appropriate form (Form 3243f1). The employee's contract may contain additional information. The Superintendent or designee must pre-approve any overnight travel.

CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

A Crisis Response Plan and Crisis Response Team have been established to assist in managing tragedies that have a significant impact on the workplace/schools (i.e. student or staff deaths, critically ill or injured students/staff, terminal illness, natural disasters, hostages or abduction situations). All crises are reported to the Superintendent. Board members will be notified by the Superintendent as soon as time allows. During a crisis, staff members are not to talk to the media. The Superintendent will distribute all information.

CUSTODIAL REQUESTS

Requests for minor items that may involve custodial assistance (i.e. picture hanging, minor repairs of furniture) may be made directly to the appropriate custodian. Requests for custodial assistance requiring significant service should be submitted to the Director of Maintenance and Operations using the Google form available through the building's secretary.

DIVERSITY

Niles Community Schools will strive to create an environment for its employees and students that recognizes individual differences and commonalities, promotes the exchange of diverse ideas, and encourages mutual understanding.

DRESS

Niles Community Schools is a professional organization that operates for the benefit of students and the community it serves. As good role models for students, the staff will dress in a professional manner appropriate to their position. Niles Community Schools Bylaws and Policies concerning dress are as follows:

Board Policy 3216/4216 - STAFF & SUPPORT STAFF DRESS AND GROOMING

The Board of Education believes that professional staff & support staff members set an example in dress and grooming for their students to follow. A professional staff member who understands this precept and adheres to it enlarges the importance of his/her task, presents an image of dignity, and encourages respect for authority. These factors act in a positive manner toward the maintenance of discipline.

The Board retains the authority to specify the following dress and grooming guidelines for staff that will prevent such matters from having an adverse impact on the educational process. When assigned to District duty, all professional and support staff members shall:

- A. Be physically clean, neat, and well-groomed
- B. Dress in a manner consistent with their professional responsibilities
- C. Dress in a manner that communicates to students a pride in personal appearance
- D. Dress in a manner that does not cause damage to District property
- E. Be groomed in such a way that their hairstyle or dress does not disrupt the educational process nor cause a health or safety hazard

Traditional business attire is expected of all employees, with the occasional casual business attire during approved periods only. Basic elements for appropriate and professional business attire include clothing that is in neat and clean condition. Appropriate workplace attire does not

include clothing that is too tight or revealing; clothing with rips, tears, or frays; or an extreme style or fashion in dress, footwear, accessories, fragrances, or hair.

Employees are expected to demonstrate good judgment and professional taste. Use courtesy towards coworkers and your professional image to students as factors you use to assess whether you are dressing in business attire that is appropriate. An employee who is unsure of what is appropriate should check with his or her manager or supervisor.

Any staff member who does not meet the attire or grooming standards set by Niles Community Schools will be subject to corrective action and may be asked to leave the premises to change clothing. The time away from work because of failure to comply with designated workplace attire and grooming standards will not be compensated.

Inappropriate clothing includes but is not limited to: T-shirts, shirts with inappropriate slogans, tank tops, muscle shirts, crop tops, shorts, pants worn below the waist or hip line.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

It is the policy of Niles Community Schools to maintain an alcohol and drug-free work environment for all employees. In order to ensure a safe and efficient workplace, no employee shall possess, distribute, use, or be impaired by alcohol or illegal prohibited drugs on district property or during working hours.

Niles Community Schools reserves the right to search any employee, the employee's work area, or an employee's vehicle while on district property if the district has reasonable suspicion that this policy has been violated. Refusal to cooperate in these procedures may result in discipline or discharge. Furthermore, the district reserves the right to test employees covered under the provisions of this handbook for drugs and/or alcohol when necessary.

EMAIL ACCOUNTS AND WEB PAGES

The district provides each employee with an email account. Niles Community Schools uses email as one of the ways to communicate with its employees. It is the expectation of the district that employees check their district email account at least once a day. Email accounts shall not be used for commercial purposes without the consent of the superintendent.

Employees are encouraged to use web pages to provide valuable information to students, families, and the public. However, staff members need to be aware of copyright law and should not post any third-party material without the expressed written consent of the author. All employees using district websites and networks must have a signed Acceptable Use Policy on file.

EMPLOYER PROPERTY/SEARCHES

While employees have a reasonable expectation of privacy with respect to their designated workspace and equipment, Niles Community Schools reserves the unqualified right to maintain, inspect, and update its facilities, supplies, and equipment without notice. In addition, upon reasonable suspicion of inappropriate use, the district reserves the right to inspect, monitor, and/or search all district property, including internet access, with or without notice and in the employee's absence. Employees shall not alter the physical space (walls, wiring, etc.) without approval of the Director of Maintenance and Operations and/or the Director of Technology.

The Board of Education authorizes the use of video surveillance and electronic monitoring equipment at various school sites throughout the District and on school buses. The video surveillance/electronic monitoring equipment shall be used to protect Board property and assets from theft and vandalism, through deterrence and video documentation. The system is not designed or intended to protect individuals from being victims of violent or property crimes, nor to detect other potentially illegal and undesirable activities that may occur, although information may be used as evidence in such cases. For more information, refer to Board Policy 7440.01.
unpaid

FACILITY USAGE

An employee who wishes to use one of the district's facilities for personal use should ask the appropriate building administrator for specific instructions. Final approval for building use must be given by the building administrator. Fees may be assessed according to the fee schedule available in the Business Office.

HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL AWARENESS

Niles Community Schools is in compliance with the Michigan Right-to-Know Law, which mandates that employees will be provided information regarding possible exposure to hazardous chemicals in the workplace. All new employees have access to information regarding hazardous chemicals. For further clarification, contact the Office of Personnel.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Bloodborne Pathogens guidelines and forms can be found in the Niles Community Schools Administrative Guidelines. These guidelines provide the district's compliance with federal regulations for protecting staff members against exposure to blood and other infectious materials, which can cause Hepatitis B and/or HIV viruses. Niles Community Schools requires

all employees to be trained on bloodborne pathogens on a yearly basis. If you feel that you have been exposed to blood or other potentially infectious material, (OPIM) you are to contact your supervisor immediately to determine if additional actions are necessary.

INTRA-DISTRICT MAIL

The Niles Community Schools van travels once a day to each school building during the school year. Employees are strongly encouraged to use the van for sending materials and packages from building to building.

LUNCHES

Employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement must check the contract for lunch period provisions. Non-bargaining unit employees will have lunch periods that vary according to building assignment. Lunch periods are unpaid and should be taken in designated areas if at school. Employees should not work during unpaid lunch periods without prior authorization from their supervisor.

MILEAGE AND EXPENSES

Mileage and expense reports must be submitted in a timely manner. The expectation is that employees submit those expenses monthly.

NAME BADGES

The district will issue name badges to all employees. These name badges are not to be altered or tampered with and must be worn during work hours. Employees who lose their name badges are required to notify the Personnel Office immediately. The cost of replacing the name badge (for any reason) is two dollars (\$2). Upon separation of employment with Niles Community Schools, an employee must return the name badge to their supervisor.

KEYS

All employees who have been issued keys, pass codes, or key fobs for access to a building beyond normal working hours for the purpose of conducting district business are personally responsible for their use, and in no case should these be “loaned” to other individuals. Employees are asked to ensure that all doors and windows are locked and secured when they leave in order to ensure the safety and security of the building. Employees who lose their keys

are to notify Personnel right away. The cost of replacing keys/key fobs is \$10 (for lost or damaged keys/key fobs). Key fobs that stop working will be replaced for free. Upon separation of employment with Niles Community Schools, an employee must return all keys and key fobs to their supervisor or a fee of \$10 will be charged to the employee's final paycheck.

PARKING

Employees are to observe the specially designated areas that are reserved for handicapped parking.

PERSONAL ITEMS & VALUABLES

Niles Community Schools does not assume responsibility for personal items and valuables that are lost, stolen, or destroyed.

PURCHASES

All purchases for goods and services must be approved by your supervisor. Niles Community Schools will not be responsible for any unauthorized purchases. Questions regarding the purchase order process should be directed to your supervisor or the Business Office.

SELF-REPORTING REQUIREMENT

PA 129-131 & PA 138 have a requirement for employees to self-report when they are arraigned/charged with certain identified crimes. Forms are available in the Office of Personnel and employees must do so within three business days or they could be guilty of an additional crime.

SMOKING

In the interest of providing a safe and healthy working environment for employees, students, and visitors, and in accordance with Michigan PA 140, the use of tobacco and vaping products is strictly prohibited in buildings and on real estate owned, leased, or otherwise controlled by Niles Community Schools.

SUPPLIES, MATERIALS, AND EQUIPMENT

The Business Manager has responsibility for all supplies and equipment necessary for the operation of the district's facilities. Non-routine items may be requested through the office requisition procedure. Consult with your supervisor for specific details. Employees are responsible for the proper care of all office equipment. Malfunctions should be reported to your supervisor. Any equipment that may be loaned is the responsibility of the employee borrowing such equipment. Damage due to negligence is also the responsibility of the employee at a cost to be determined by the district. Any employee who is found to have neglected or misused Niles Community Schools' property will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

No employee should expect any privacy on Niles Community Schools premises or when using Niles Community Schools' property or networks, except that which is required by law.

USE AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

"Information," as the term is used in this policy, includes without limitation any information owned or used by Niles Community Schools, such as:

- Any school employee, customer or student lists.
- Any school database information, including addresses and telephone numbers.
- Any information from employee personnel files, including employee addresses, telephone numbers, employment status and wage history.
- Any photographs, videotapes and sound clips of any Niles Community Schools' employee, customer or student.

No employee may knowingly dispense such information to any outside party unless authorization has been granted. This could include other employees who do not have the right to know such information. Any breach will be considered a violation of NCS policy concerning confidentiality, and it may constitute a violation of state or federal law.

NEWS RELEASES

Public awareness of Niles Community Schools programs, services, and other items of public interest is desirable and encouraged. At the same time, it is imperative that the information be accurate, timely, and consistent. As such, the Superintendent or designee must authorize all releases to the media.

TELEPHONES

Employees are strongly discouraged from using personal or school telephones during working hours for personal calls. Long-distance personal calls are not allowed on school phones. Board Policy 7530.01 prohibits the use of personal electronic devices during instructional time for personal business.

Appendix A

Employee Groups

Group 1

General Fund
Overload
Parent Volunteer Coordinator
Summer Workers/Substitutes
Title I Intervention IA
Title I Learning Lab
Title 1 Kinder Connections IA
Translation

Group 2

31 A
Band IA
Behavioral Specialist IA
College Career IA
CTE IA
Federal Grant IA
Home School accounts payable
Home School Events Coordinator
Home School field trip coordinator
Hunter Lab IA
Noon supervisors
Online IA
Perkins IA
Security Aides
Social Learning Specialist IA
Student Success Center IA
Voice Choreographer

Group 3

Media IA
Ring Lardner ISR

Group 4

Academic advisor
Assistant Academic Advisor
Adult Ed
Library IA
Pre K Coordinator
Special Education IA's
Special Ed
Vocal Music Accompanist
ECSC



We hope that this was helpful, and we look forward to working with you. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of Personnel at (269) 683-6662. In the future, please check the Personnel website for subsequent copies.

If this handbook does not provide the answers to your questions, please check with your supervisor or the Human Resources & Benefits Coordinator.

Go Vikings!
#VikingPride



Board Adopted October 2025

HANDBOOK RECEIPT

My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of the Niles Community Schools District Handbook and understand where to find it on the Niles Community Schools website for future updates. I understand that this manual contains information regarding the District's rules, regulations, and benefits, which may or may not affect me as an employee.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand District policies.

I also understand that the District may revise, supplement, or rescind policies, procedures, or benefits described in the manual as required by changes in legislation, regulations, or district safeguards, and that individual notification of such updates may not always be provided, with or without notice.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____