

*Regional Office Of*  
**EDUCATION**  
HENDERSON, KNOX, MERCER AND WARREN COUNTIES



# **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

Revised: July 1, 2025

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**Bushue HR, Inc.  
P.O. Box 89  
Effingham, IL 62401  
Phone: 217-342-3046  
Fax: 217-342-5673  
[www.bushuehr.com](http://www.bushuehr.com)**

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# Welcome & History

Welcome to the Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33.

We are excited to welcome you to the ROE family. Your decision to join our team means a great deal to us, and we want you to know how much we value the heart, dedication, and unique perspective you bring.

At ROE #33, we are more than just colleagues — we are a team united by a shared commitment to supporting our schools and strengthening our communities. Each member of our team plays a vital role in shaping the lives of students, families, and educators across our region.

You have been carefully chosen because you reflect the values that help our mission and vision thrive. Together, we will continue to grow and make a difference — one connection at a time.

With appreciation,

Kathryn E. Jennings  
Regional Superintendent of Schools

## **“Serving our Schools and Communities”**

Vision: To serve our schools and communities

Mission: To serve our schools and community by providing educational resources, partnerships, and opportunities.

What we Believe in:

- Customer Service
- Collaboration
- Community involvement
- Becoming the BEST ROE we can be

Purpose Statement: Positively impact lives

Diversity Statement: The ROE acknowledges, appreciates, and embraces all educators, families, caregivers, and children regardless of their race, socioeconomic status, sexuality, religion, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, language, age or ability. As an organization, we are committed to the intentional continued growth of our communities. Our goal is to implement impactful change focused on the Anti-Bias education.

### Role of Regional Superintendent

The Regional Superintendent of Schools is the chief administrative officer of a Regional Office of Education, and the only elected education professional office in Illinois. ROEs are essential

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support offices partnering with the Illinois State Board of Education to support local school districts.

As an intermediate agency between the Illinois State Board of Education and local school districts, the office of the Regional Superintendent performs regulatory functions as directed by the Illinois School Code.

#### History:

In 1865, the law was amended to create the office of County Superintendent of Schools.

- Early Years
  - Superintendents held a tenure of four years.
  - They were required to visit each school in their county annually.
  - Originally compensated \$3 per day, but this caused financial hardship.
  - In 1867, the daily compensation was increased to \$5.
- Consolidation and Restructuring
  - 1973: The 102 county superintendent offices were reduced to 78, renamed Regional Superintendents.
  - 1977: Further consolidation reduced the number of offices to 57.
  - 1994: Legislation eliminated the Cook County Regional Superintendent office as of June 30, 1994.
  - 1995: The office in Cook County was reinstated on August 7, 1995.
    - Also in 1995, the 57 Educational Service Regions were reduced to 45.
    - The 14 Educational Service Centers were merged into ROE services.
- Suburban Cook County
  - 2010: The office of Suburban Cook ROE #14 was eliminated; duties shifted to three Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs).
  - 2011: These ISCs were granted full membership in the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools.
- Further Consolidation
  - 2012: New legislation reduced ROEs from 44 to 35, requiring each to serve at least 61,000 residents.
  - County boards were directed to pass resolutions to consolidate.
- Regional Example: Knox County
  - Counties Henderson, Mercer, and Warren collaborated with Knox County to form a new multi-county ROE.
  - Knox County experienced the most change, transitioning from a single-county to a multi-county ROE.
  - In such multi-county ROEs, county boards fund the ROE based on a funding formula tied to the Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) of each county.

## **ROE POLICIES**

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# **ROE Policies**

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 maintains a strong policy of equal employment opportunity. We ensure equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment. We hire, train, promote, and compensate employees on the basis of personal competence and potential for advancement without regard for race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, age, mental/physical impairments, ancestry, arrest record, citizenship, immigration status, military status, pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

Our equal employment opportunity philosophy applies to all aspects of employment including recruiting, hiring, training, transfer, promotion, job benefits, educational assistance, and social and recreational activities.

## **EMPLOYMENT AT WILL**

It is the policy of the ROE that all employees are "employed at will," and are subject to termination or may leave on their own will at any time, for any reason, with or without notice, and with or without cause. No ROE representative is authorized to modify this policy. Any statements contained in this manual or any other policies, procedures, terms or conditions of employment, may not modify this policy.

## **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

It is our intent to administer all benefits and conditions of employment, such as those outlined in this handbook, in a fair and consistent manner. If at any time an employee doesn't feel this is being done, or has a suggestion or complaint, the employee is encouraged to review the issue with administration. We believe it is important that employees be able to discuss their concerns, suggestions, and opinions with administration.

## **ETHICS**

Regional Office of Education #33 is committed to a quality business and reputation that values integrity, respect and truthfulness, and a strong commitment to the highest ethical standards. These principles apply to employee interactions with students, the employers that hire them, coworkers, vendors, government and regulatory agencies and the general public.

In dealing with ethical problems, employees are expected to use common sense and their best moral judgement. If an employee has an ethical question, the employee should contact their immediate supervisor or the Regional Superintendent. This policy may be modified or updated at any time.

The Regional Office of Education will abide by the State Official and Employees Ethics Act (Public Act 93-615 effective November 19, 2003, and the amendments made to the Act by Public Act 93-617, effective December 9, 2003). The Act, as amended, is a comprehensive revision of State statutes regulating ethical conduct, political activities and the making and acceptance of gifts. All Regional Office of Education #33 employees are subject to this Act.

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## **FRAUD/WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

### **Purpose of Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to establish certain principles and expectations for the ROE in order to prevent fraud, to investigate fraud and to provide consequences for engaging in any manner of fraud and to heighten awareness of possible fraud. The ROE will not tolerate fraud or the concealment of fraud. This policy is intended to promote consistent organizational behavior by providing guidelines and assigning responsibility for the development of controls and conduct of investigations.

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to any irregularity, suspected or observed, involving any employee of the ROE, vendors, contractors, volunteers, outside agencies doing business with the ROE and any other persons or parties in a position to commit fraud on the ROE. Any investigation required shall be conducted without regard to the suspected wrongdoer's length of service, position/title, or relationship with the ROE.

### **Policy**

The Regional Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the detection and prevention of fraud, misappropriations, and other irregularities. Fraud includes, but is not limited to, knowingly misrepresenting the truth or concealment of a material fact in order to benefit personally, or to create a benefit for a family member/friend, or to induce another to act to their detriment. Each Department Head will be familiar with the types of improprieties that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indication of irregularity.

Any irregularity that is detected or suspected must be reported immediately to the Regional Superintendent of Schools, and the Regional Superintendent of Schools will coordinate all investigations with the State's Attorney and other affected areas, both internal and external.

### **Actions Constituting Fraud**

Actions constituting fraud include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Falsifying, or unauthorized altering of ROE documents, including but not limited to:
  - Claims for payments or reimbursements – (including but not limited to submitting false claims for travel or overtime).
  - Files (both physical and electronic forms), photographic or audio records, or accounts belonging to the ROE.
  - Checks, bank drafts, or any other financial documents.
  - Maintenance records.
  - Fire, health and safety reports.
- Accepting or offering a bribe, gifts or other favors under circumstances that indicate that the gift or favor was intended to influence an employee's decision making.
- Disclosing to other persons the purchasing/bidding activities engaged in, or contemplated by the ROE in order to give any entity, person or business an unfair advantage in the bid process.
- Causing the ROE to pay excessive prices or fees where justification is not documented.
- Unauthorized destruction, theft, tampering or removal of records, furniture, fixtures or equipment.

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- Using the ROE's equipment or work time for any outside private business activity.
- Any dishonest or fraudulent act.
- Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions.

#### Investigation Responsibilities

The Regional Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the State's Attorney, has the primary responsibility for overseeing the investigation of all suspected fraudulent acts as defined in the Policy. If the investigation substantiates that fraudulent activities have occurred, the Regional Superintendent of Schools will issue reports to appropriate designated personnel.

Decisions to prosecute or refer the examination results to the appropriate law enforcement and/or regulatory agencies for independent investigation will be made in conjunction with the State's Attorney and the Regional Superintendent of Schools, as will final decisions on disposition of the case. When an investigation is conducted concerning complaints or charges against an employee, the employee shall be accorded ethical treatment, due process of law, and shall be offered fair and impartial consideration. All ROE employees shall cooperate fully with appropriate authorities who are conducting investigations into employee conduct.

#### Confidentiality

The Regional Superintendent of Schools treats all information received confidentially. Investigation results will not be disclosed or discussed with anyone other than those who have a legitimate need to know and as may be required by law. This is important in order to avoid damaging the reputations of persons suspected unfairly of such conduct and to protect the ROE from potential civil liability.

#### Authorization for Investigating Suspected Fraud

The Regional Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the State's Attorney, will have free and unrestricted access to all ROE records and premises, whether owned or rented; and/or the authority to examine, copy, and/or remove all or any portion of the contents of files, desks, cabinets, and other storage facilities on the premises, in cases of suspected fraud or official misconduct.

#### Reporting Procedures

Great care must be taken in the investigation of suspected improprieties or irregularities so as to avoid mistaken accusations or alerting suspected individuals that an investigation is under way until the appropriate time.

An employee who discovers or suspects fraudulent activity will contact the Regional Superintendent of Schools immediately. Every effort will be made to keep the employee or other complainant anonymous. All inquiries concerning the activity under investigation from the suspected individual, their attorney or representative, or any other inquirer should be directed to the State's Attorney. No information concerning the status of an investigation will be given out. The proper response to any inquiries is "I am not at liberty to discuss this matter." Under no circumstances should any reference be made to "the allegation," "the crime," "the forgery," "the misappropriation," or any other specific reference.

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The reporting individual should be instructed not to contact the suspected individual in an effort to determine facts or demand restitution, or discuss the case, facts, suspicions, or allegations with anyone unless specifically asked to do so by the State's Attorney or the Regional Superintendent of Schools.

#### Termination

If an investigation results in a recommendation to terminate an individual, the recommendation should be reviewed for approval by the Regional Superintendent and the State's Attorney and, if necessary, by outside counsel, before any action is taken. The decision to terminate an employee is made by the elected or appointed official, in consultation with the Regional Superintendent of Schools.

#### Protection of Reporting Person

No ROE employee shall be dismissed, disciplined, or suffer an adverse personnel action for disclosing information pursuant to the provisions of this policy. Neither the ROE nor the elected or appointed official shall take any adverse action that affects the rights or interests of a person in retaliation for the person's disclosure of information under this policy. The provisions and protections of this policy shall not be applicable when an employee discloses information which the employee either knows, or reasonably should know, is false information.

#### Administration

The Regional Superintendent of Schools is responsible for the administration, revision, interpretation, and application of this policy.

### **ADVERTISING AND DISTRIBUTING MATERIALS**

No material or literature shall be posted or distributed that would: (1) disrupt the ROE service, (2) violate the rights or invade the privacy of others, (3) infringe on a trademark or copyright, or (4) be defamatory, obscene, vulgar, or indecent. No material, literature, or advertisement shall be posted or distributed without advance approval from administration.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES CONCERNING INTERNAL INFORMATION**

Employees are responsible for maintaining: (1) the integrity and security of all internal information, and (2) the privacy of confidential records, including but not limited to: student records and personnel records. Internal information is any information, oral or recorded in electronic or paper format, maintained by the ROE or used by the ROE or its employees. The Regional Superintendent or designee shall manage procedures for safeguarding the integrity, security, and, as appropriate, confidentiality of internal information.

### **PREGNANCY RIGHTS POLICY**

In accordance with the Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1 et seq.) and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, ROE will provide reasonable accommodations to employees affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or medical or common conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.

No employee will be discriminated or retaliated against because of pregnancy or because they requested, attempted to request, used, or attempted to use a reasonable accommodation as allowed by the Illinois Human Rights Act and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.

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Employees affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or medical or common conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth have the following rights:

- To ask your supervisor for a reasonable accommodation for your pregnancy, such as more frequent bathroom breaks, assistance with heavy work, a private space for expressing milk, or time off to recover from your pregnancy.
- To continue working during your pregnancy if a reasonable accommodation is available which would allow you to continue performing your job.

It is the employee's responsibility to make the request for an accommodation. If the requested accommodation imposes an undue hardship on the ordinary operation of the company as defined in the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the ROE has the right to deny the requested accommodation. The ROE will review all accommodation requests by following the interactive process as defined by the ADA. The ROE may ask the employee to provide the following documentation from the employee's healthcare provider:

- (i) The need or medical justification for the requested accommodation;
- (ii) A description of the reasonable accommodation medically advisable;
- (iii) The date the reasonable accommodation became medically advisable; and
- (iv) The probable duration of the reasonable accommodation.

It is the employee's responsibility to submit to the employer any documentation that is requested in accordance with this section.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact your supervisor.

## **NURSING MOTHERS**

In accordance with the Illinois Nursing Mother's Act and the PUMP Act, the ROE shall provide reasonable break time each day to an employee who needs to express breast milk for their infant child for up to one year following the birth of her child. The break time may run concurrently with any break time already provided to the employee. The ROE shall also make reasonable efforts to provide a room, or other location in close proximity to the work area other than a bathroom, where an employee can express their milk in privacy free from intrusion by co-workers or the public.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE POLICY**

Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 recognizes the problem of controlled substance, cannabis, and alcohol abuse in society, while also realizing that controlled substance, cannabis, and alcohol dependency and abuse can be treated and controlled. Our ROE strives to provide for the safety and security of its employees. To this end, the purpose of this policy is to provide a work environment that is free of controlled substance, cannabis, and alcohol abuse.

The ROE has set requirements and has established restrictions on the use, sale and possession of controlled substances, cannabis, and alcohol; and has identified circumstances for substance

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abuse testing. The ROE maintains a Zero Tolerance policy while on-site, on-duty, and on-call. These are outlined below:

For the purpose of this policy, the following are defined as:

“Cannabis” means a marijuana, hashish, and any other substances that are identified as including any parts of the plant. This included cannabis, cannabis concentrate, medical cannabis, and any cannabis infused products, including CBD and THC infused. For further definitions of what this includes, refer to the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act: Public Act 101-0027.

"Controlled Substance" means (i) a drug, substance, immediate precursor, or synthetic drug in the Schedules of Article II of the Controlled Substances Act or (ii) a drug or other substance, or immediate precursor, designated as a controlled substance by the Department through administrative rule. For further definitions of what this includes, refer to the Illinois Controlled Substances Act 720 ILCS 570.

“Alcohol” means the product of distillation of any fermented liquid, whether rectified or diluted, whatever may be the origin thereof, and includes synthetic ethyl alcohol. For further definitions of what this includes, refer to the Liquor Control Act of 1934 235 ILCS 5.

## **USE, SALE, POSSESSION, DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORTATION**

In keeping with the ROE's objective to provide a safe and healthful work environment:

- The use, sale, possession, distribution or transportation of controlled substances, cannabis, or alcohol while on ROE property or ROE business is strictly prohibited and may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.
- Controlled Substances, cannabis, and alcohol may not be bought, sold or consumed on any ROE-owned or leased property (including vehicles, parking lots, and job-sites). Employees are prohibited from consuming controlled substances, alcohol, and cannabis while on work time, including during meal periods and breaks.
- Employees will not be permitted to work while under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or other controlled substances.
- Employees will not be permitted to work with a detectable level of prohibited substances in their systems. Prohibited substances include both controlled substances and prescription drugs that have not been specifically prescribed by a registered physician for specific treatment purposes for the employee. Any employee who is using prescription or over-the-counter drugs that may impair the employee's ability to safely perform the job, or affect the safety or well being of others, must notify a supervisor of such use immediately before starting or resuming work.  
While the ROE has no intention of intruding into the private lives of its employees, we do require all employees to report to work in a condition that allows them to perform their duties and not impair the safety of fellow employees. Individuals who appear to be unfit for work may be subject to a fitness-for-duty examination at a designated medical facility, shall be subject to random drug, cannabis, and alcohol testing, and shall be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.
- Any employee who is designated as “on-call” will not be permitted to be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or with a detectable level of controlled substances in their system. An employee is designated as “on-call” if they have been given a 24-

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- hour notice to be on standby or otherwise responsible for performing task related to his or her employment either at the employer's premises or other previously designated location to perform a work-related task.
- Any employee who is involved with on-the-job or off-the-job controlled substance use, sale, possession, dispensation, unlawful manufacture, transportation, or distribution may be considered in violation of this policy. In deciding what action to take, the ROE will take into consideration the nature of the charges including arrest, conviction, plea bargains and employee's assignment and record with the ROE. In addition, the ROE will consider any adverse effect the employee's actions may have on its clients, other employees, the public, or the ROE's reputation and image.
  - The ROE does not intend to authorize indiscriminate searches of lockers, desks or personal effects on the ROE's property, but we do reserve the right to authorize searches for controlled substances, cannabis, alcohol, or contraband.
  - Employees in jobs designated as "safety-sensitive" who are undergoing prescribed medical treatment with a controlled substance (including medical cannabis) must report this fact to their supervisor. This information will be handled on a very confidential basis, but it is important for the ROE to know treatment is occurring. A determination will be made if the employee's assignment is temporarily affected; the employee's job will not be jeopardized.
  - An employee must report any criminal conviction for manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing, and using controlled substances to the employer.

## **SUBSTANCE TESTING**

To support the objective of a drug, cannabis, and alcohol-free workplace, testing for drugs, cannabis, & chemical substances may be required under the following circumstances:

### **(1) PRE-EMPLOYMENT**

Pre-employment testing may be a part of the employment process. Upon an offer of employment, a test may be required for all final candidates, and no applicant-testing positive for controlled substances will be employed. Applicants testing positive for cannabis or alcohol will be subject to the limits set forth in Section 11-501 or 11-502.1 of the Illinois Vehicle Code. Applicants who exceed the THC presence permissible under the Illinois Vehicle Code may not be approved for employment based on test results. Applications whose jobs require them to comply with federal DOT regulations or contract requirements may be subject to pre-employment testing and may not be approved for employment based on test results. This includes all employment and re-employment, whether for temporary, part-time or full-time positions.

### **(2) POST ACCIDENT**

After a work-related accident where judgment, coordination or physical or mental ability may have been impaired. Testing is required after an injury resulting in medical treatment or lost time or for an employee whose behavior raises a reasonable suspicion of controlled substance, cannabis, or alcohol use (Testing is also required for an employee, who causes injury to another person, and may not have caused injury to themselves). A test will also be required after a vehicle accident as defined by the ROE's administration.

### **(3) REASONABLE SUSPICION**

Employees may be required to submit to drug, cannabis, and alcohol testing whenever Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 has a good faith belief that an employee has violated any of the rules set forth in this policy. An employer has a “good faith belief” if an employee manifests specific, articulable symptoms while at work, performing job duties, or while on call that decrease or lessen the employee’s performance of the duties or tasks of the employee’s job position. Employees are subject to testing based on (but not limited to) observations by at least two members of administration of apparent workplace use, possession or impairment. Administration should be consulted before sending an employee for testing. Administration must use the Reasonable Suspicion Observation Checklist to document specific observations and behaviors that create a reasonable suspicion that an employee is under the influence of controlled substances, cannabis, or alcohol. Reasonable suspicion may arise from, among other factors,

- Movements (unsteady, fidgety, dizzy).
- Eyes (dilated, constricted or watery eyes, or involuntary eye movements).
- Face (flushed, sweating, confused or blank look).
- Speech (slurred, slow, distracted mid-thought, inability to verbalize thoughts).
- Emotions (argumentative, agitated, irritable, drowsy).
- Actions (yawning, twitching).
- Inactions (sleeping, unconscious, no reaction to questions).

### **(4) PERIODIC OR RANDOM**

On an unannounced and random basis. Random tests may be more frequent for those working in a safety sensitive position, however all positions may be subject to random testing.

#### ***Notification of Impairment***

It shall be the responsibility of each employee who observes or has knowledge of another employee in a condition that impairs the employee in the performance of job duties, or who presents a hazard to the safety and welfare of others, or is otherwise in violation of this policy, to promptly report that fact to the employee’s immediate supervisor. All reports will be taken seriously. Persons submitting false reports are subject to discipline up to and including termination.

### **SUMMARY**

While we hope that the ROE will never have to address controlled substance, cannabis, or alcohol abuse with any employee, it is only fair that every employee understands the consequences of violating this policy. Working under the influence of controlled substances, cannabis, or alcohol, as indicated by test results or other evidence, and violation of other provisions of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge - even for the first offense. In regard to cannabis testing, employees will be given a reasonable opportunity to contest the basis of the test results. If an employee plans to contest the determination, an appeal must be submitted to Administration within seven (7) calendar days of the employee being informed of the determination. In addition, refusal to participate in any part of the program can be considered an act of insubordination and may also lead to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

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*Nothing contained in this policy is intended to discriminate based on: race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, physical disability, color, age, genetics, protected veteran status, gender identity or expression, and any other characteristics protected by federal, state, and local law.*

## **HARASSMENT**

It is the policy of Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 to provide an environment free from harassment of any kind (including sexual harassment) and not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee or individual, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an unsafe, intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment. Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 is committed to maintaining a workplace where each employee's privacy and personal dignity are respected and protected from offensive or threatening behavior.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined as any use of one person's power and/or authority over another person to attempt to coerce a sexual relationship, or to subject a person to unwanted sexual attention, or to punish a refusal to comply, or to create a sexually intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment is understood to include a wide range of behaviors, including but not limited to the actual coercing of sexual relations, verbal or physical sexual advances, sexually explicit or derogatory statements, and physical aggressiveness such as touching, pinching or patting. Such behavior may offend the aggrieved party, cause discomfort or humiliation and interfere with job performance.

### **Complaint Procedure:**

1. Any harassment complaint by an employee should be communicated to the employee's supervisor. If the complaint happens to be against the employee's supervisor, the complaint should be communicated to the Regional Superintendent. At the time of notification, the employee will be asked to complete a written complaint noting the details of the alleged incident(s).
2. The Regional Superintendent and/or designee will investigate all harassment complaints. This may include, but is not limited to, interviewing the complaining party, supervisors and any other personnel, as required, to obtain sufficient, factual information upon which to make a determination.
3. If, at the conclusion of the investigation, it is found that harassment, in fact, has occurred, disciplinary action up to and including termination may be imposed.

## **AWARENESS AND PREVENTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND GROOMING BEHAVIORS**

Child sexual abuse and grooming behaviors harm students, their parents/guardians, the ROE's environment, its school communities, and the community at large, while diminishing a student's ability to learn. The ROE has a responsibility and obligation to increase awareness and



knowledge of: (1) issues regarding child sexual abuse, (2) likely warning signs that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse, (3) grooming behaviors related to child sexual abuse and grooming, (4) how to report child sexual abuse, (5) appropriate relationships between ROE employees and students based upon State law, and (6) how to prevent child sexual abuse.

To address the ROE's obligation to increase awareness and knowledge of these issues, prevent sexual abuse of children, and define prohibited grooming behaviors, the Regional Superintendent or designee shall implement an Awareness and Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Grooming Behaviors Program.

The Program will:

1. Educate students with:
  - a. An age-appropriate and evidence-informed health and safety education curriculum that includes methods for how to report child sexual abuse and grooming behaviors to authorities.
  - b. Provide information about: (i) ROE counseling options, assistance, and intervention for students who are victims of or affected by sexual abuse, and (ii) community-based Children's Advocacy Centers and sexual assault crisis centers and how to access those serving the ROE.
2. Train ROE employees about child sexual abuse and grooming behaviors by January 31 of each school year or within 90 days of employment with materials that include:
  - a. A definition of prohibited grooming behaviors and boundary violations.
  - b. Evidence-informed content on preventing, recognizing, reporting, and responding to child sexual abuse, grooming behaviors, and boundary violations and
  - c. How to report child sexual abuse, grooming behaviors, and/or boundary violations.
3. Provide information to parents/guardians in student handbooks about the warning signs of child sexual abuse, grooming behaviors, and boundary violations with evidence-informed educational information that also includes:
  - a. Assistance, referral, or resource information, including how to recognize grooming behaviors, appropriate relationships between ROE employees and students, and how to prevent child sexual abuse from happening;
  - b. Methods for how to report child sexual abuse, grooming behaviors, and/or boundary violations to authorities; and
  - c. Available counseling and resources for children who are affected by sexual abuse, including both emotional and educational support for students affected by sexual abuse, so that the student can continue to succeed.
  - d. Provide parents/guardians of students in any of grades K through 8 with not less than five days' written notice before commencing any class or course providing instruction in recognizing and avoiding sexual abuse, as well as the opportunity to object in writing.

## **CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

All employees are expected to maintain high standards in their job performance, demonstrate integrity and honesty, be considerate and cooperative, and maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students, parents/guardians, staff members, and others.

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### Professional and Appropriate Conduct

Professional and appropriate employee conduct are important goals that impact the quality of a safe learning environment and the school community, increasing students' ability to learn and the ROE's ability to educate. To protect students from sexual misconduct by employees, and employees from the appearance of impropriety, State law also recognizes the importance for ROE employees to constantly maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students by following established expectations and guidelines for employee-student boundaries. Many breaches of employee-student boundaries do not rise to the level of criminal behavior but do pose a potential risk to student safety and impact the quality of a safe learning environment. Repeated violations of employee-student boundaries may indicate the grooming of a student for sexual abuse. As bystanders, employees may know of concerning behaviors that no one else is aware of, so their training on: (1) preventing, recognizing, reporting, and responding to child sexual abuse and grooming behavior; (2) this policy; and (3) federal and state reporting requirements is essential to maintaining the goal of professional and appropriate conduct.

The Regional Superintendent or designee shall identify employee conduct standards that define appropriate employee-student boundaries, provide training about them, and monitor the employees for violations of employee-student boundaries. The employee conduct standards will require that, at a minimum:

1. Employees who are governed by the Code of Ethics for Illinois Educators, adopted by the Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE), will comply with its incorporation by reference into this policy.
2. Employees are trained on educator ethics, child abuse, grooming behaviors, and employee-student boundary violations as required by law and policies.
3. Employees maintain professional relationships with students, including maintaining employee-student boundaries based upon students' ages, grade levels, and developmental levels and following established guidelines for specific situations, including but not limited to:
  - a. Transporting a student;
  - b. Taking or possessing a photo or video of a student; and
  - c. Meeting with a student or contacting a student outside the employee's professional role.
4. Employees report prohibited behaviors and/or boundary violations pursuant to ROE policies.
5. Discipline up to and including dismissal will occur for any employee who violates an employee conduct standard or engages in any of the following:
  - a. Violates expectations and guidelines for employee-student boundaries.
  - b. Sexually harasses a student.
  - c. Willfully or negligently fails to follow reporting requirements of the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.), or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. §7926).
  - d. Engages in grooming as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-25.
  - e. Engages in grooming behaviors. Prohibited grooming behaviors include, at a minimum, sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct is any act, including but not limited to, any verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic communication or

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physical activity, by an employee with direct contact with a student, that is directed toward or with a student to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the student. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. A sexual or romantic invitation.
2. Dating or soliciting a date.
3. Engaging in sexualized or romantic dialog.
4. Making sexually suggestive comments that are directed toward or with a student.

## **TITLE IX COMPLAINT PROCEDURE (APPLICABLE TO K-12 STUDENTS)**

**ROE Employee Reporting Obligations:** Any District employee who witnesses or becomes aware of any sexual misconduct, sexual assault or sexual harassment, involving a K-12 student, have an affirmative obligation to report immediately to the District's Title IX Coordinator or to their building principal or immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action against the employee, up to and including termination of employment.

**Reporting to Law Enforcement:** Because sexual misconduct, sexual assault or sexual harassment may constitute both a violation of District policy and criminal activity, individuals who have been subject to criminal sexual misconduct, sexual assault or sexual harassment may wish to report their concerns to law enforcement. An individual may proceed under this Policy whether or not they elect to report to law enforcement.

**Reporting to the District:** Any individual who wishes to make a report or file a formal complaint of sexual misconduct, sexual assault or sexual harassment may contact the District's Title IX Coordinator. Any individual who is subject to, witnesses, or becomes aware of alleged sexual harassment may also submit an anonymous report to:

Melinda Whiteman  
Title IX Coordinator  
105 North E Street  
Monmouth, IL 61462  
309-715-7311  
mwhiteman@roe33.net

**Retaliation Prohibited:** Retaliation against a person who makes a report or complaint of sexual misconduct, sexual assault or sexual harassment, or who assists, or participates in any manner in an investigation or resolution of a sexual misconduct, sexual assault or sexual harassment report or complaint is strictly prohibited. Retaliation includes threats, coercion, discrimination, intimidation, reprisals, and/or adverse actions related to employment or education. Any individual who believes they have been retaliated against in violation of this Policy should immediately contact the District's Title IX Coordinator.

This Policy's anti-retaliation protections do not apply to any individual who makes a materially false statement in bad faith in the course of any complaint, investigation, hearing, or other proceeding under this Policy. However, a determination that an individual made a materially false statement in bad faith must be supported by some evidence other than the determination of

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whether the Respondent violated this Policy alone. An individual who makes a materially false statement in bad faith may be subject to discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion of a student or termination of an employee's employment.

### **Time Frames for Reporting and Response**

The District strongly encourages prompt reporting of complaints and information. While there is no time limit in invoking this Policy in responding to complaints of alleged sexual harassment, a complaint should be submitted as soon as possible after the event takes place in order to maximize the District's ability to respond promptly and equitably.

## **TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

This policy describes our ROE's guidelines with regard to Internet access, e-mail messages, artificial intelligence, network access, social media, removable storage, and remote access sent or received by ROE employees with use of Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33. computer system. The ROE respects the individual privacy of its employees; however, employee privacy does not extend to the employee's work-related conduct or to the use of ROE provided equipment or supplies. It is expected that all employees provide consideration and sound judgment when utilizing ROE computer software and hardware. Since technology is a powerful, technically complicated and expensive resource, we must seek to manage its utilization effectively.

### **Internet Access**

Providing Internet access to its employees requires Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 to place certain restrictions on workplace use of the Internet. The ROE encourages employee use of the Internet to:

- ◆ Communicate with fellow employees and clients regarding matters within an employee's assigned duties
- ◆ Acquire information related to, or designed to facilitate the performance of regular assigned duties.
- ◆ Facilitate performance of any task or project in a manner approved by an employee's supervisor.

Because the ROE provides the computer, internet, and e-mail systems to assist you in the performance of your job, please use it only for official ROE business. Occasional personal use of e-mail is permitted by the ROE; however, proper discretion is advised. Personal e-mail will be treated the same as all other messages noted in this policy. Any internet accounts and subscriptions setup for business use are not intended for personal use.

Our name is attached to all outgoing email communications and information, so any items being sent should reflect our ROE values and appropriate workplace conduct. Copyrighted materials may not be transmitted in the course of employment or on the ROE's network.

### **Compliance with Applicable Laws and Licenses**

Employees must comply with all software licenses, copyrights, and all other laws governing intellectual property and online activity. Please be advised that your use of Internet access, provided by the ROE, expressly prohibits the following:

- Game playing.
- Employees should not install or download any software or hardware on ROE equipment without notification/consent of Administration.
- Excessive accessing of information not related to one's assigned duties.
- Distribution of destructive programs (i.e., viruses and/or self-replicating code).
- Hateful, harassing, or other anti-social behavior.
- Intentional damage or interference with others (i.e. hacking).
- Making, viewing, or sending publicly accessible obscene files.
- Commercial usage for non-ROE business.
- Dissemination or printing of copyrighted materials (including articles and software) in violation of copyright laws.
- Sending, receiving, printing or otherwise disseminating proprietary data, trade secrets or other confidential information of Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33.
- Sending or soliciting offensive or harassing statements, sexually oriented material or images or language, including disparagement of others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious or political beliefs.
- Operating a business, soliciting money for personal gain, or searching for jobs outside the ROE.
- Sending chain letters, gambling or engaging in any other activity in violation of the law.

### **Physical Security and Usage**

Allowing anyone access to computers, printers, scanners, network equipment, and network access without prior authorization is prohibited.

No one is allowed to bring your own device onto/into the ROE network without prior approval. Only users and devices approved are allowed to access the ROE network, internet, or computers.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage**

All use of generative AI tools while performing work for the ROE require prior authorization. ROE email, credentials, and phone numbers are never to be used to create an account with any platforms or technologies relating to AI. Proprietary or confidential ROE information of any kind may not be submitted (whether copies, typed, etc.) into any of these platforms.

### **Password and Encryption Key Security and Integrity**

All passwords are to be treated as confidential information. Passwords should never be, stored online or shared with anyone without prior approval. If you suspect an account or password has been compromised, please report the incident and change all passwords immediately. Multi-factor authentication should be setup and used in all cases when

available and when accessing systems remotely.

Employees are prohibited from the unauthorized use of the passwords and encryption keys of other employees to gain access to another employee's email messages, computer, account logins, etc.

#### **Administration's Right to Access Information/Waiver of Privacy**

The e-mail system has been installed by Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 to facilitate ROE communication. Although each employee has an individual password to access this system, it belongs to the ROE and the contents of e mail communications are accessible at all times by administration for any ROE purpose. These systems may be subject to periodic unannounced inspections without regard to content, and should be treated like other shared filing systems. You should not use e-mail to transmit any messages you would not want read by a third party. All system passwords and encryption keys must be available to administration, and your passwords or encryption keys must be available to your supervisor.

The ROE has the right, but not the duty, to examine all aspects of its computer system, including, but not limited to: sites employees visit on the Internet; material downloaded or uploaded by employees; e-mail sent and received by employees. Employees waive any right to privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive on the computer or the Internet.

#### **Security Concerns and Violations**

All security concerns, including any potential illegal activity, must be turned into immediately.

#### **Removable Storage**

Removable storage is defined as USB connected drives, phones, tablets, SD cards, or any form of wireless communication where data is transferred to or from the computer system. Employees may only use approved removable storage in their work computers. Any other form of removable storage or media is prohibited without permission.

Sensitive information should only be stored on removable storage devices when required in the performance of your assigned duties or when providing information as required by a state or federal agency.

#### **Remote Access**

Employees who have remote access may only use it for approved ROE business. Remote access is subject to the same rules as internal office access. Employees must take all precautions necessary to secure privileged information and prevent unauthorized access in their alternate work location.

Employees accessing the ROE network remotely should never be connected to any kind of Public Wi-Fi.

### **Violation of Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

Employees are to report any violations or possible perceived violations immediately. Violation of this policy may include disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. The measure of discipline will correspond to the gravity of the offense as weighed by its potential effect on the ROE and fellow employees. Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 reserves the right to take legal action where necessary against employees who engage in prohibited or unlawful conduct.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY**

It is the right and duty of the company to protect itself from unauthorized disclosure of information. The ROE's social networking policy includes rules and guidelines for company-authorized social networking and personal social networking and applies to all employees.

### **General Provisions**

Blogging or other forms of social media or technology include but are not limited to video or wiki postings, sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, You Tube, chat rooms, personal blogs or other similar forms of online journals, diaries or personal newsletters.

Unless specifically instructed by management, employees are not authorized to speak on behalf of the ROE. Employees may not publicly discuss clients, products, employees or any work-related matters, whether confidential or not, outside company-authorized communications. Employees are expected to protect the privacy of the ROE and its employees and clients and are prohibited from disclosing personal employee and nonemployee information and any other proprietary and nonpublic information to which employees have access. Such information includes but is not limited to customer information, trade secrets, financial information and strategic business plans. Employees are held accountable to the highest standard even off the clock on social media platforms.

### **Reporting Violations**

The ROE requests and strongly urges employees to report any violations or possible or perceived violations to management. Violations include discussions of the ROE and its employees and clients, any discussion of proprietary information and any unlawful activity related to blogging or social networking.

### **Discipline for Violations**

The ROE investigates and responds to *all* reports of violations of the social networking policy and other related policies. Violation of the company's social networking policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Discipline or termination will be determined based on the nature and factors of any blog or social networking post. The ROE reserves the right to take legal action where necessary against employees who engage in behavior out of compliance with the handbook or unlawful conduct.

### **Employer Monitoring**

Employees are cautioned that they should have no expectation of privacy while using the Internet, provided by the company. The ROE reserves the right to monitor comments or discussions about the company, its employees, clients and the industry, including products and competitors, posted on the Internet by anyone, including employees and non-employees.

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The ROE reserves the right to use content management tools to monitor, review or block content that violate company rules and guidelines.

## **EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND SCREENING**

It is the policy of Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 to conduct pre-employment screening and credentials verification on applicants who are offered and accept an offer of employment. Employment background screens are conducted to ensure that individuals who join our ROE are qualified for the position as well as to ensure that our ROE maintains a safe and productive work environment free of any form of violence, harassment or misconduct.

An offer of employment is contingent upon the ROE's receipt of a pre-employment background screening investigation that is acceptable to our organization. Any applicant who refuses to sign the Authorization and Disclosure Form will not be eligible for employment.

All screenings are conducted in conformity with the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and state and federal anti-discrimination and privacy laws. All reports will be kept confidential and viewed only by individuals of our ROE who have direct responsibility in the hiring process. In accordance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act, all background screens are conducted only after the applicant has received and signed an Authorization and Disclosure Form and Summary of Rights.

Our ROE reserves the right to conduct a background screen any time after the employee has been hired to determine eligibility for promotion, re-assignment, or retention in the same manner as described above.

Background checks may include verification of information provided on the application for employment, the applicant's resume, or on other forms used in the hiring process. Information to be verified includes, but is not limited to, Social Security Number, previous addresses, education, and employment background. The background check may also include a criminal record check. A criminal conviction does not automatically bar an applicant from employment. If a conviction is discovered, Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 will review the conviction in accordance with the ROE's intent to provide a safe and profitable workplace. Before the employment decision is made, a determination will be made whether the conviction is related to the position for which the individual is applying, or would present safety or security risks, taking into account the nature and gravity of the act, the nature of the position, and age of the conviction.

In addition, a driving record and credit report check may be completed on applicants for particular job categories if appropriate and job-related.

Our ROE relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process and employment, including interviews. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in any of the information or data, no matter when discovered, may result in the firm's exclusion of the

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individual from further consideration for employment or, if the person has been hired, termination of employment.

Prior to hiring an applicant for a position involving direct contact with children or students, the Regional Superintendent shall ensure that an Employment History Review Check (EHR) is performed as required by state law.

## **SMOKING**

In keeping with Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment and in compliance with the Smoke-Free Illinois Act, smoking and vaping is ***prohibited*** in all buildings, parking lots, vehicles used for ROE purposes, and any ROE property. Further, the use of tobacco is prohibited on ROE property and in vehicles on ROE property by any employee when such property is being used for any ROE purposes. "ROE purposes" include but are not limited to all events or activities or other use of ROE property that the Board or officials authorize or permit on ROE property. "Tobacco" shall mean cigarette, cigar, electronic cigarette, or tobacco in any other form, including smokeless tobacco which is any loose, cut, shredded, ground, powdered, compressed or leaf tobacco that is intended to be placed in the mouth without being smoked.

*This policy applies equally to all employees, customers, and visitors.*

## **CUSTOMER RELATIONS AND TELEPHONE CALLS**

It is extremely important that our phones be kept clear for business calls. First impressions are very important and when answering the phone employees shall greet the caller. Expectation is to state your name and welcome them. Employees who answer the phone should do so promptly and in a businesslike manner.

## **CELLULAR PHONE POLICY**

This policy outlines the use of personal cell phones at work, the personal use of business cell phones and the safe use of cell phones by employees while driving. This policy applies to phone calls, text messaging, pictures, etc.

### **PERSONAL CELLULAR PHONES**

Excessive personal calls during the work day, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others. Employees are therefore asked to make any other personal calls on non-work time where possible and to ensure that friends and family members are aware of the ROE's policy. Flexibility will be provided in circumstances demanding immediate attention.

The ROE will not be liable for the loss of personal cellular phones brought into the workplace.

### **Safety Issues for Cellular Phone Use**

Employees whose job responsibilities include regular or occasional driving and who utilize a cell phone for ROE business or personal use are expected to abide by Illinois driving laws regarding cell phone while driving. Safety must come before all other

concerns. It is illegal for drivers of vehicles to use a hand-held mobile device to talk or text while driving. Texting means manually entering alphanumeric text into, or reading text from, an electronic device. This includes, but is not limited to, short message service, e-mailing, instant messaging, a command or request to access a Web page, or pressing more than a single button to initiate or terminate a voice communication using a mobile phone. If the employee chooses to access their cell phone using a voice-activated or one-button touch feature, special care should be taken in situations where there is traffic, inclement weather, or the employee is driving in an unfamiliar area.

Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their phone while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions. (Violations of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.)

## **APPEARANCE**

We are a professional organization. Therefore, our image should be reflected in dress and manner. The dress code requires that during working hours all employees **dress professionally, business attire**, and be presentable to meet the public as representatives of the ROE. Good grooming and tasteful attire is essential. Styles, appearance, habits or other practices that are distracting or offensive to others should be avoided. Pins, buttons and decals of political, lewd or inflammatory nature should not be worn. Shorts or athletic shoes should not be worn at any time. Jeans may only be worn on Fridays under social committee rules. Social committee allows for jeans on Fridays if the staff member pays \$1 to the social committee. Jean Friday must still meet the professional dress code.

## **GIFTS AND GRATUITIES**

While the intention should be warmly and gratefully acknowledged, acceptance of money, gifts, or similar tokens of thanks from vendors or customers for services rendered or merchandise purchased is prohibited by Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33. All samples, gifts, spiffs, purchases resulting in free goods or similar tokens received by or on behalf of Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 are the property of Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 and all items shall be turned into the Regional Superintendent.

## **MEAL PERIODS**

Employees scheduled to work seven and one-half hours in a day are provided with a meal period. Supervisors will schedule meal periods to accommodate operating requirements. Employees must take their 1-hour meal period \*unless program specifies differently. After 5 hours of consecutive work, employees are required to take a minimum 30-minute lunch break. Employees will be relieved of all active responsibilities and restrictions during meal periods and will not be compensated for that time. Meal periods should be alternated among staff in order to have no lapse in services.

## **OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT & EMPLOYEE PERSONAL PROJECTS**

The purpose of this policy is to protect the ROE and fellow employees. Employees shall not undertake other employment in the same trade, industry, or any business activity that would interfere with their regular work. While you may do as you please outside of normal working

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hours to augment your income, outside employment shall not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, or refusal to work overtime.

The ROE forbids an employee from performing any work of the same nature as ours in our market area for any other individual ROE or for themselves. Violation of this offense shall be a reason for immediate termination of employment.

It will not be considered outside employment if the employee is working for himself personally or his immediate family (employee or spouse's parent, sibling, or child) and is doing so with the knowledge and cooperation of administration.

### **VISITORS/ ADMISSION TO FACILITIES**

All visitors must enter through the main office, and must receive permission from office administration to enter premises.

Employees shall enter the office only when they are there on ROE business. At other times, they must obtain permission from Regional Superintendent (No other friends, visitors, or family shall be allowed without administration permission). Regional Superintendent reserves the right to inspect all packages and containers entering or leaving the facilities.

### **ACCIDENT REPORTING**

This policy shall apply to accidents and injuries. Employees must report to their supervisor immediately following any accident or injury. Employees must complete an injury report and maintain regular communication with the administration in regards to recovery from an accident including follow-up from doctor visits. Employees involved in a work-related, equipment or automobile accident shall be subject to alcohol/drug testing as specified in our ROE alcohol/drug testing program.

### **FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE POLICY**

#### **PURPOSE**

This policy applies to all Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 (hereto referred to as ROE #33) employees, and/or approved ROE #33 volunteers. This policy applies to any instance of fraud, waste, or abuse involving not only employees, but also external organizations doing business with ROE #33.

#### **GENERAL PURPOSE OF POLICY**

ROE #33 strictly prohibits the commission or concealment of acts of fraud, waste, or abuse. Any instance of such acts will be investigated and pursued to conclusion, including any employment or legal action where warranted. All board members, employees, and/or volunteers are responsible for reporting suspected instances of fraud, waste, and abuse in accordance with this Policy.

ROE #33 is responsible for the monitoring of its operations, including the protection of ROE #33 assets from fraud, waste, and abuse. ROE #33 Administration has the primary responsibility over the implementation of internal and external controls to identify and detect fraud.

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The ROE #33 Auditor provides independent comprehensive audits and investigations to improve ROE #33's operations and contracts. The ROE #33 Auditor is responsible for assisting in the deterrence and detection of fraud, waste, and abuse for ROE #33 by examining and evaluating the adequacy and the effectiveness of ROE #33's systems of internal control, commensurate with the extent of the potential risk in the various segments of ROE #33's organization. The ROE #33 Auditor's primary responsibility is investigating any allegation of fraud, waste, and abuse; compliance and other violations are investigated by the appropriate officers of ROE #33.

To provide employees and clients with a confidential and secure means of reporting suspected fraud, waste, and abuse by ROE #33 and the ROE #33 Auditor have established a Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Referral System. See the below definitions of "fraud", "waste", and "abuse." "Waste" and "abuse" are not necessarily fraudulent acts; however, each situation will be reviewed independently to assess the circumstances of the situation and occurrence of events.

After an investigation, if it is found that fraud, waste and/or abuse has occurred, disciplinary action up to, and including, termination (for employees) may be imposed on the individual that committed fraud, waste and/or abuse against ROE #33. If the act is completed by an ROE #33 volunteer, legal actions may be pursued.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY**

Through the ROE #33 Auditor, your anonymity is assured. When you report, please remember the following concerning confidentiality and anonymity:

- Even if you report anonymously, once the report has been filed and the investigation begins, your co-workers or others who are familiar with the situation you are reporting may still be able to guess your identity.
- Whether you report anonymously or not, the ROE #33 Auditor will treat your report with confidentiality.
- It is not possible to guarantee absolute confidentiality in all circumstances. Disclosure to others inside or outside of ROE #33 may be required by law in certain cases.

Please do not let these possibilities discourage you from reporting an incident.

### **WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION**

Retaliation against an employee who in good faith filed a report of alleged fraud, waste, or abuse, or who participated in an investigation, in violation of this Policy. Such "whistleblower protection" is granted via Illinois State Law, under 740 ILCS 174.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Waste**

"Waste" means the needless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use, or extravagant of resources owned or operated by ROE #33 to the disadvantage, or potential disadvantage, of ROE #33. Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs because of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls. Waste does not necessarily involve private use or personal gain, but almost always signifies poor management decisions, practices, or controls.

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## **Fraud**

Fraud consists of a dishonest, deliberate, and illegal act (the intentional wrongdoing) that results in an employee gaining money, property, or an advantage that they would not normally be entitled to.

Legally, fraud can lead to a variety of criminal charges, including theft, embezzlement, and larceny – each with its own specific legal definition and required criteria – each of which can result in severe penalties and a criminal record.

## **Abuse**

“Abuse” means the excessive, or improper, use of something, or the use of something in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules for its use; the intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment, or misuse of resources owned or operated by ROE #33; or extravagant or excessive use so as to abuse one’s position or authority. “Abuse” does not necessarily lead to an allegation of “fraud”, but it could.

Examples of fraud, waste, and abuse activities include, but are not limited to:

- Forgery or alteration of ROE #33 and/or employee records/documents
- Misrepresentation of information on documents
- Theft, unauthorized removal, or willful destruction of ROE #33 records, ROE #33 property, or the property of other persons (to include the property of employees, customers, or visitors).
- Purchase of unneeded supplies or equipment.
- Purchase of goods at inflated prices.
- Misappropriation of funds, equipment, supplies, or any other assets.
- Improprieties in the handling and reporting of financial transactions.
- Falsifying work hours reported, or excessive use of ROE #33 time for personal business.
- Authorizing or receiving payments for goods not received or services not performed.
- Soliciting or accepting a bribe or kickbacks.
- Authorizing or receiving payment for hours not worked.
- Falsifying payroll information.
- Misuse of authority for personal gain.
- Any computer-related activity involving the alteration, destruction, forgery, or manipulation of data for fraudulent purposes.
- Inappropriate use of ROE #33-provided electronic devices, such as computers, PDAs, cell phones, pagers, or e-mail.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Employees**

Any ROE #33 employee who has knowledge of fraud, waste, or abuse, or who has good reason to suspect that such conduct has occurred, shall abide to the procedures in this Policy.

When an employee is made aware of suspected fraudulent activity, waste, or abuse, the employee shall immediately report the activity to their direct supervisor. If the employee believes

that the supervisor is involved with the activity, they shall immediately report the activity to the supervisor's manager and the ROE #33 Board. If the employee believes that the supervisor's manager and/or a board member may be involved with the activity, the employee shall either contact the ROE #33 Auditor directly or file a report online.

The employee reporting an allegation shall not make any attempt to investigate the suspected activity prior to reporting it. The ROE #33 Auditor will be the one to manage the investigation of any fraud, waste, or abuse allegations.

An employee shall not destroy, or allow anyone else to destroy, any documents or records of any kind that the employee knows may be relevant to a past, present, or future investigation of fraud, waste, or abuse.

### **Administration's Responsibilities**

Once administration has been informed of suspected fraud, waste, or abuse (or if administration itself suspects fraud, waste, or abuse), administration shall either contact the ROE #33 Auditor directly or file a report online. See section of this Policy titled "How to File a Report."

### **ROE #33 Auditor's Responsibilities**

The ROE #33 Auditor will receive all reports. The ROE #33 Auditor will also start and direct all investigations. When the ROE #33 Auditor receives a report from ROE #33, the Office will review the report and determine if it has any follow-up questions for the person who filed the report. The person filing the report may follow up on the status of the report by contacting the ROE #33 Auditor.

To the extent allowed by law, the ROE #33 Auditor (and any assistants working for the ROE #33 Auditor) will review pertinent information in a confidential and professional manner and will conduct a preliminary investigation of the alleged activity. The preliminary investigation may include employee interviews and analyses of available records. A full investigation will follow if evidence points to possible fraud, waste, and/or abuse.

ROE #33 should allow the ROE #33 Auditor unlimited and unrestricted access to all books, records, property (including desks and computers), and personnel during such investigations. Once an investigation is started, the ROE #33 Auditor will take immediate action to prevent the theft, alteration, or destruction of relevant records. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, limiting access to the location where the records currently exist, preventing the individual(s) who is(are) the subject of the investigation from having access to the records, and/or taking actual possession of such records.

Once the ROE #33 Auditor has sufficient evidence that there is indeed an unauthorized, illegal, irregular practice that could or has affected ROE #33, the ROE #33 Auditor is required under State Statute to report the matter to the State's Attorney. If it appears that the matter is criminal in nature, the ROE #33 Auditor will immediately report it to State's Attorney in addition to those previously cited. The ROE #33 Auditor and ROE #33's State's Attorney will then advise other departments/agencies as necessary (e.g., Police Department, Human Resources).

## **FILING A REPORT**

### **General**

Please keep the following in mind when reporting via the hotline:

- If possible, report the issue to your supervisor or manager first.
- You must be able to provide adequate information to support an investigation. Mere speculation does not suffice.
- Your report must be made in good faith. An employee who knowingly makes a false or bad faith complaint will be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action.
- DO NOT USE THE HOTLINE TO FILE REPORTS FOR VIOLATION TYPES NOT LISTED IN THE BELOW SECTION OF WHAT SHOULD NOT BE REPORTED.

### **How to File a Report**

The hotline is designed to maintain your confidentiality and anonymity. The hotline is for reporting any suspected fraud, misconduct, or abuse by ROE #33 employees, contractors, and/or vendors related to ROE #33's departments or operations.

### **Phone**

If you observe any fraud, waste, abuse, or misuse of ROE #33 resources, or in the operations of ROE #33 assets, please call the Auditor's Office toll-free hotline at 312-240-9500. This hotline is answered by the ROE #33 Auditor (Monday through Friday) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

### **Voice Mail**

Call the Fraud, Waste & Abuse Hotline toll-free at 312-240-9500 after normal business hours and leave a detailed voice mail. If the Auditor is not available, you may leave a message for them to call you back if you would like to speak to him/her personally.

### **Mail**

Print out the Fraud, Waste & Abuse Form (Appendix A) and mail to:

Adelfia LLC Certified Public Accountants  
400 E. Randolph Street Suite 700  
Chicago, IL 60601

### **Email**

Send an email with detailed information to: [info@adelfiacpas.com](mailto:info@adelfiacpas.com)

### **In-Person**

Speak with an Adelfia auditor, in-person either at the Auditor's Office or at an alternate location.

Adelfia LLC Certified Public Accountants  
400 E. Randolph Street Suite 700  
Chicago, Illinois 60601

## **Fax**

Submit detailed information of the fraud, waste, or abuse of ROE #33 resources via fax to 312-240-0295.

### **What detail should be reported?**

What should you report? Whichever method you use to report (on the phone, online, in-person, etc.), it is important that you can provide as much detailed information as possible so that your reported issue can be properly investigated. Six basic elements should be included in your report:

**WHO** - Who are the individuals responsible for the reported violation of policy and who is aware of the improper activity?

**WHAT** - What is the improper activity? Is there documentation that substantiates the reported improper activity?

**WHERE** - Where did the improper activity occur; within a ROE #33 department or elsewhere? Where can the investigator locate the individual(s) involved or those who have information about the activity? Where can an investigator find documents or other evidence related to the activity?

**WHEN** - When did the activity occur? When did you discover it? Is it still occurring?

**WHY** - Why did the activity occur? Did the activity benefit those involved?

**HOW** - How was the activity able to occur? Were controls circumvented that allowed the activity to occur?

### **What should not be reported?**

The Fraud, Waste, & Abuse hotline is reserved for reporting instances of fraud, waste, and abuse within ROE #33 operations and its related departments. It is not intended for:

- complaints about your neighbors
- private businesses
- other non-governmental entities, unless related to ROE #33
- other local governments, such as municipalities or townships, unless related to ROE #33

If something reported is found not to be within the authority of the ROE #33 Auditor to investigate, it will be referred to the appropriate agency or authorities as necessary. **Most importantly, please make sure that the allegation of fraud, waste, or abuse of ROE #33 resources you report is as accurate and truthful as possible. Do not intentionally report false or misleading information. The intentional reporting of false or purposely misleading information can result in civil or criminal liability.**



## **Employment Status**

## **EMPLOYEE STATUS**

### **FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE**

An employee is classified as a full-time employee if hired to work 37.5 hours per week year round (12 months) and/or works 7.5 hours per day and at least 200 or more days per year. Full-time employees are eligible for certain organization benefits.

### **PART-TIME EMPLOYEE**

An employee is classified as a part-time employee if hired to work less than 7.5 hours per day and/or less than 200 days per year. Part-time employees are not eligible for organization benefits including health insurance. Part-time employees are eligible for paid time off at the rate of 1 hour for every 40 hours worked. Qualifying part-time employees are eligible.

### **TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE**

You are considered to be a temporary employee when you have been hired during periods of a heavy workload or for particular jobs. Temporary employees are not eligible for organization benefits.

## **WORK SCHEDULES**

Work schedules for employees vary throughout our ROE. Supervisors will advise employees of their individual work schedules. Staffing needs and operational demands necessitate variations in starting and ending times, variations in scheduled shifts, as well as variations in the work hours that may be scheduled each day and week. All employees are expected to work when necessary to meet organization needs.

The ROE is committed to helping employees face the demands of juggling work, family, and personal obligations by offering flexible work arrangements. These arrangements provide employees with increased flexibility with their work schedule while allowing the ROE to maintain a progressive and productive work environment. An employee wishing to change or cancel an alternative work arrangement must obtain written approval from the employee's supervisor prior to changing their work schedule.

## **REPORTING ABSENCES & ATTENDANCE**

To maintain a productive work environment, we expect employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on the ROE. In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being late to work or are unable to work as scheduled, they are required to notify their immediate supervisor at least one hour before they are scheduled to work, or earlier if possible.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Absence of three working days without reporting will be considered a voluntary resignation.

## **SNOW DAYS/INCLEMENT WEATHER**

The ROE office is open in inclement weather, employees must decide if travel conditions allow their safe travel to work. Employees who determine travel to be unsafe and take a "weather" day may use earned vacation time, sick time, or personal leave to make up the absence, provided

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such time is consistent with the ROE's operational needs. A per diem deduction of pay will take place if the employee does not have accumulated personal leave, sick time or vacation time remaining.

Should all 9 ROE school districts close due to poor road conditions, employees may work from home provided they have Supervisor approved remote work plan in place. In this event, the Regional Superintendent or designee will send a Remind notification.

#### **EMPLOYMENT RECORD/ EMPLOYEE STATUS CHANGES**

Any changes in name, address, phone numbers, marital status, and persons to be contacted in case of an emergency need to be turned into Human Resources as soon as possible in order to keep your records current.

## **COMPENSATION POLICIES**

# Compensation Policies

## **PAYROLL PERIOD/TIMESHEETS/PAY DAY**

All employees are paid semi-monthly on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of each month. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period. The work week is Monday through Sunday. If pay day falls on the weekend or a holiday, pay will be deposited on the workday prior to the weekend or holiday.

Employee's payroll earnings will be deposited directly into their checking or savings account as designated on the direct deposit form. Please note that the ROE deposits payroll earnings to our main bank, which is then deposited to employee's individual bank and then to the employee's account based on the schedule for posting at each local banking facility.

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every non-exempt employee (Exempt employees will complete time summaries for grant/audit purposes only). When time and events must be entered on timesheets, they are to be entered at the exact time the event occurs, and not entered at the end of the workday or the following morning. Time is calculated using fifteen-minute intervals for payroll purposes. Total time worked within a pay period must sum to quarter hours. If an adjustment needs to be made, this will be done within payroll, and the employee will be notified.

Employees are expected to arrive by the appointed time, constant tardiness will not be tolerated. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Both the supervisor and the employee can be held responsible for any of these dishonest actions and may result in criminal prosecution.

Employees are expected to work regular scheduled work hours unless approved by Supervisor. Should an employee's hours need to be adjusted, work hours should not exceed 37 1/2 hours per week. Therefore, work hours must be adjusted within the same work week (Monday through Sunday) **and** within the current payroll period. Any change in the regular work schedule requires preapproval by the Supervisor.

Employees shall review and submit their timesheets through SDS for payroll processing. Timesheets must be submitted by the deadline or pay will fall to the next pay period. If a employee needs to make corrections or modifications to the timesheet submitted, please notify your supervisor to verify the accuracy of the changes.

## **OVERTIME**

Employees are not to work any overtime unless pre-approved by the Regional Superintendent. Only when needs cannot be met during regular working hours, will the Regional Superintendent schedule additional hours. When possible, advance notification of overtime will be provided.

Overtime compensation is paid to all non-exempt employees in accordance with the following schedule:

- **One and one-half times regular pay for all hours worked over 40 in a workweek**

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As required by law, overtime pay is based only on actual hours worked. Time off with pay, vacation, personal time, and holidays will not be considered hours worked for purposes of determining overtime calculations.

### **PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

There are payroll deductions that are required by Federal & State regulation including Federal & State Income Tax, Social Security Tax, Medicare Taxes and Garnishments/Wage attachments. Also, in qualifying positions, IMRF and/or TRS must be withheld. Additionally, there may be withholdings authorized by each employee for specific employee benefits including medical insurance, retirement plan contributions, etc. These withholdings will be included on each employee's pay-stub.

### **BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPENSES**

Employees will not be compensated for travel time from home to work. The employee will be compensated for travel time from the office to the job site(s) and return. An employee must receive advance approval for any business travel.

Employees should contact their immediate supervisor for guidance and assistance on procedures related to travel arrangements, expense reports, reimbursement for specific expenses, or any other travel issues. Employees will only be reimbursed for expenses with a valid receipt. Employees are not allowed to purchase alcohol with ROE funds and will not be reimbursed for any alcohol purchases. Abuse of this policy, including falsifying expense reports to reflect costs not incurred by the employee, can be grounds for disciplinary action.

## **Benefits**

# Benefits

## HOLIDAYS

All full-time twelve (12) month employees will receive 18 paid holidays with the holiday schedule being determined annually by the Regional Superintendent. Other employees (including 200 day employees), do not receive paid holidays and shall work their regular scheduled days, with the holiday schedule being based on the school system that constitutes their primary assignment.

## VACATION

The vacation period is based on a fiscal year, July 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>. All full-time twelve (12) month employees shall receive vacation days based on years of service. The following schedule applies:

<u>Length of continuous service</u>	<u>Paid Vacation</u>
First (1) Fiscal Year	Five (5) working days
After Two (2) Fiscal Years	Ten (10) working days
After Six (6) Fiscal Years	Fifteen (15) working days
After Ten (10) Fiscal Years or more	Twenty (20) working days

The amount of vacation earned, prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>, will be the amount of available vacation days, which may be used the following year.

Vacation is not to be taken in more than two consecutive weeks, without approval. All vacation time must be pre-approved using the SDS System. An employee may not carry forward any vacation time. Employees will not be compensated for unused vacation days.

In the event an employee should leave the ROE's employment during the year, the ROE will payout any unused vacation days.

\*\* All vacation and personal time must be used prior to any time off without pay unless arrangements are made in advance and approved by the Regional Superintendent.. \*\*

## PERSONAL LEAVE

We provide full-time and part-time employees with personal leave benefits. The intent of this benefit is to provide personal time off for those unexpected events that may arise throughout the year.

Full-time employees are entitled to two (2) personal leave days per fiscal year. For employees who have worked 10 full fiscal years, they will earn one additional personal day and 1 additional for every five full fiscal years thereafter. Part-time employees will accrue one (1) hour of paid time for every forty (40) hours worked up to a maximum of sixteen (16) hours.

Personal days must be used during the fiscal year they are earned, as they will not be paid out or carried over to the next fiscal year. An employee can elect to use this time in half or full day increments. When an employee expects to miss work, they should notify their supervisor prior to

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the beginning of his/her normally scheduled day, explaining the reason for absence and expected day of return.

### **SICK LEAVE/BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

The ROE provides protection for all full-time employees against loss of income due to illness with a sick leave program. Full-time year-round employees are entitled to fourteen (14) sick days per fiscal year. Employees working 200 days or more per year shall earn pro-rated sick leave up to nine (9) sick days per fiscal year. Sick days can accumulate to 340 days total for TRS employees and 240 days for IMRF employees. Unused sick leave days can be applied to retirement credit for employees who are vested under the TRS or IMRF systems.

Upon resignation or dismissal, the ROE will not pay for unused sick time.

Guidelines for use of sick days are as follows:

- a. Benefits are paid only for approved absences and for times the employees would normally be scheduled to work.
- b. "Sick leave shall be interpreted to mean personal illness, mental or behavioral health complications, quarantine at home, serious illness or death in the immediate family or household, or birth, adoption, or placement for an adoption. Immediate family shall include parents, spouse, domestic partner, siblings, children, grandparents, grandchildren, parents-in-law, siblings-in-law, stepparent, and legal guardians." (105 ILCS 5/24-6 & 820 ILCS 191/10)
- c. To be eligible, an employee must notify the employee's immediate supervisor at the start of work for each day of absence. The employee must request leave through SDS for each absence. For more than three (3) consecutive days of absence, a physician's note will be required. Daily notification may be waived in the event of confinement, noted in a physician's statement.
- d. Permanent part-time employees do not receive paid sick leave but must still contact supervisor at start of work day.
- e. Sick leave shall be used in half day or full day increments.
- f. If an employee has used all of their sick days they may request a leave of absence without pay.
- g. Employees who are injured on the job do not receive sick leave payments after worker's compensation insurance payments begin.
- h. An employee may use their sick leave to recuperate from their own illness or to care for an immediate family member who is ill or death in the immediate family.
- i. In the event of extended illness for employees who purchase individual or family insurance, the employee may continue to pay premiums for up to 12 weeks or for the duration of paid leave, whichever is longer.

### **FAMILY BEREAVEMENT LEAVE ACT POLICY**

The Family Bereavement Leave Act (FBLA) states that employers with 50 or more employees must provide covered employees with up to 2 weeks (10 work days) of unpaid leave for the death of a "covered family member".

Covered family member, for the purpose of this policy, will mean an employee's child, stepchild, spouse, domestic partner, sibling, parent, parent-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, or stepparent.

### **Eligibility**

FBLA falls under the same standards as FMLA. Therefore, an employee must meet the same eligibility requirements listed in ROE's FMLA Policy in order to be eligible to take leave under the FBLA.

Family bereavement leave may not be taken in addition to unpaid leave permitted under FMLA and may not exceed unpaid leave time allowed under FMLA.

### **Type of the Leave Covered**

These 2 weeks (10 work days) of FBLA leave can be used for the following:

- Attend the funeral or alternative to a funeral of a "covered family member"
- Make arrangements necessitated by the death of the "covered family member"; or
- Grieve the death of a covered family member.
- Absence(s) due to (i) miscarriage; (ii) an unsuccessful round of intrauterine insemination or of an assisted reproductive technology procedure; (iii) a failed adoption match or adoption that is not finalized; (iv) a failed surrogacy agreement; (v) a diagnosis that negatively impacts pregnancy or fertility; or (vi) stillbirth.

### **Procedure for Requesting Leave**

Employees must provide 48-hour notice of their intention to take leave under FBLA, unless it is not reasonable and practicable. Leave under FBLA must be taken within 60 days after the employee receives notice of the death of a covered family member or from which a qualifying pregnancy/fertility event occurs. If an employee loses more than one covered family member in any 12-month period, they are entitled to take up to six weeks of unpaid bereavement leave in that 12-month period.

### **Certification of the Leave**

An employer may require reasonable documentation. Employers cannot require an employee to designate which category is the basis for leave for a qualifying pregnancy/fertility event.

### **Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave**

Employees can elect to substitute paid leave for unpaid leave under the FBLA. But, unlike under FMLA, ROE's may not require employees to do so.

## **HEALTH INSURANCE**

Group Health Insurance is provided for eligible full-time employees. Additionally, the ROE may pay a portion of health insurance premiums for each eligible employee. For health insurance purposes only, a full-time employee is classified as an employee who is regularly scheduled to work a minimum of thirty (30) hours per week and who is active on payroll. Employees may purchase dependent coverage. **See official plan documents or Insurance administrator for complete details.**

## **LIFE INSURANCE**

Group Life Insurance is provided for eligible full-time employees. **See official plan documents or Insurance administrator for complete details.**

## **RETIREMENT**

Retirement plans for all eligible employees are established based on position as determined by Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) for non-certified positions and the Illinois Teacher's Retirement System (TRS) for licensed positions. **Please see Summary Plan Description for details.**

## **COBRA INSURANCE**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their dependents (qualified beneficiaries) the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under our health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, or death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence; an employee's divorce or legal separation; or a dependent child who no longer meets eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage of the group rates (employee plus the employer portions) plus the administration fee.

Written notice describing rights granted under COBRA is provided to each eligible employee when the employee becomes eligible for coverage under the health insurance plan. The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations.

It is the employee's responsibility to inform the Plan Administrator of the following events for eligibility purposes:

- The participant becomes entitled to Medicare benefits
- The participant and spouse become divorced
- The participant and spouse become legally separated
- A participant's child ceases to be a depend under the plan

## **RETIREMENT**

Retirement plans for all eligible employees are established based on position as determined by Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) for non-certified positions and the Illinois Teacher's Retirement System (TRS) for licensed positions. Please see Summary Plan Description for details.

## **JURY DUTY**

We recognize and encourage civic participation by employees including serving when called for jury duty. You are expected to inform your supervisor when you receive your notice for jury duty. When an employee is required to serve, we will pay the difference between jury pay and the employee's scheduled hours up to 37.5 hours per week at regular rate of pay, limited to two weeks maximum per year. Employees on jury duty will be expected to turn in a voucher and work as much of their regularly scheduled shift and days as their jury duty schedule permits.

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## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Administration shall have discretion in deciding whether to approve all leaves of absence. A leave of absence shall be determined as any leave, which does not involve paid time off. You should give prompt, written notice of leave of absence, the dates, and expected date of return to administration for approval by submitting a "Request for Unpaid Leave of Absence" to HR. If medical related, it should additionally include a doctor's notice stating the nature of the leave. The amount of leave taken must be reduced by the amount of vacation and personal time accrued. To maintain insurance coverage, make arrangements with our Regional Superintendent prior to leaving.

During the period of any approved unpaid leave of absence under this policy, an employee must arrange to pay the premium contributions (the employee plus employer share) for continuation of his or her group health insurance coverage, if applicable.

When you are able to return to work, you should give at least one week's notice by presenting a written request to the Regional Superintendent and a doctor's medical release, if applicable. Failure to report back to work at the expiration of any leave granted shall be considered a voluntary resignation.

## **UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT (USERRA)**

Any employee, other than temporary and seasonal employees, who leaves active employment for the purpose of being inducted, entering, determining physical fitness to enter, or performing training duty in the Armed Forces or Coast Guard, either by enlistment, draft or recall, will be granted a leave of absence.

**Reemployment Rights:** You have the right to be reemployed in your civilian job if you leave that job to perform service in the uniformed service and:

- You ensure that your employer receives advance written or verbal notice of your service;
- You have five years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services while with that particular employer;
- You return to work or apply for reemployment in a timely manner after conclusion of service; and
- You have not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than honorable conditions.

Upon the expiration of such leave of absence, each employee will be restored to the employee's former job classification or to a position of like seniority, status and pay; unless, circumstances of the ROE have so changed as to make it impossible or unreasonable to do so.

## **MILITARY LEAVE**

Any employee, other than temporary and seasonal employees, who leaves active employment for the purpose of being inducted, entering, determining physical fitness to enter, or performing training duty in the Armed Forces or Coast Guard, either by enlistment, draft or recall, will be granted a leave of absence.

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Upon the expiration of such leave of absence, each employee will be restored to their former job classification or to a position of like seniority, status and pay; unless, circumstances of the ROE have so changed as to make it impossible or unreasonable to do so.

## **FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY**

### **General Provisions:**

It is the policy of this ROE to grant up to 12 weeks of family and medical leave during a 12 month rolling year to eligible employees, in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA).

### **Eligibility:**

In order to qualify to take family or medical leave under this policy, the employee must meet all of the following conditions:

1. The employee must have worked for the ROE for 12 months.
2. The employee must have worked at least 1,000 hours during the twelve-month period immediately before the date when the leave is requested to commence.
3. The employee must work in an office or worksite where 50 or more employees are employed by the ROE within 75 miles of that office or worksite.

### **Type of the Leave Covered:**

In order to qualify as FMLA leave under this policy, the employee must be taking the leave for one of the reasons listed below:

1. the birth of a child and in order to care for that child;
2. the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, and to care for the newly placed child;
3. to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;
4. the serious health condition of the employee.
5. A qualifying exigency arising out of a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or who has been notified of an impending call to active duty status, in support of a contingency operation
6. to care for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a servicemember who has incurred a serious injury or illness in the line of duty while on active duty

### **Certification of the Serious Health Condition:**

The ROE requires medical certification of serious health conditions. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request. Failure to provide certification will result in denial of leave. Medical certification is provided by using the Medical Certification Form if it is the employee's own serious health condition.

If leave is requested to care for a family member with a serious health condition, the medical certification must include an estimate of the amount of time the employee will be needed to care for the family member.

### **Procedure for Requesting Leave:**

When an employee plans to take leave under this policy which is foreseeable (such as the birth, adoption or placement of a child or a planned medical treatment), notice must be in writing to the

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employee's supervisor. If it is not possible to give 30 days notice, the employee must give as much notice as is practicable. An employee who is to undergo planned medical treatment is required to make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment in order to minimize disruptions to the ROE's operations.

**Employee Status After Leave:**

An employee who takes leave under this policy will normally be able to return to the same position, or an equivalent position if the previous position is no longer available.

The ROE may choose to exempt certain key employees from leave. If an employee falls within this "key employee" exception, they will be notified after requesting, and before taking leave.

**Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave:**

An employee must apply earned vacation time and personal time toward the 12-week period allowed for an approved leave of absence pursuant to this policy. There is no other compensation paid by the ROE other than the payment for earned vacation and personal time noted above during a leave of absence. During the period of any unpaid leave of absence under this policy, an employee must arrange to pay the employee premium contributions for continuation of his or her group health insurance coverage, if applicable.

**Service Member Family and Medical Leave:**

An eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered servicemember who is recovering from a serious injury or illness sustained in the line of duty is entitled to up to a combined total of 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember. This leave is available during a single 12-month period during which the employee is entitled to a combined total of 26 weeks of all qualifying FMLA leaves.

**VICTIMS' ECONOMIC SECURITY AND SAFETY ACT**

In accordance with the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, the ROE will provide to their employees, unpaid leave up to 12 weeks per rolling year for an employee who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence or has a family or household member who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence whose interests are not adverse to the employee as it relates to the domestic or sexual violence. Unpaid leave from work may be taken to address domestic, sexual, gender violence or any other crime of violence by:

1. Seeking medical attention for, or recovering from, physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic or sexual violence to the employee or the employee's family or household member;
2. Obtaining services from a victim services organization for the employee or the employee's family or household member;
3. Obtaining psychological or other counseling for the employee or the employee's family or household member;
4. Participating in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocating, or taking other actions to increase the safety of the employee or the employee's family or household member from future domestic or sexual violence or ensure economic security; or

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5. Seeking legal assistance or remedies to ensure the health and safety of the employee or the employee's family or household member, including preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or derived from domestic or sexual violence.

\* "Family or household member" is defined as a spouse, parent, son, daughter, and persons jointly residing in the same household.

This act does not create a right for an employee to take unpaid leave that exceeds the unpaid leave time allowed under, or is in addition to the unpaid leave time permitted by, the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.

#### Application for Leave/Notice by Employee

Any employee who desires a leave of absence pursuant to this policy must complete, sign, and submit an application for leave of absence to their immediate supervisor. The employee shall provide the employer with at least 48 hours notice in advance of the employee's intention to take the leave unless providing such notice is not practicable.

#### Certification Procedure

Every application for Leave of Absence pursuant to this policy must include certification that: (1) the employee or the employee's family or household member is a victim of domestic or sexual violence; and (2) the leave is for one of the purposes in the above paragraph. An employee may satisfy the certification requirement by providing: (1) documentation from an employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim services organization, an attorney, a member of the clergy, or a medical or other professional from whom the employee or the employee's family or household member has sought assistance in addressing domestic or sexual violence and the effects of the violence; (2) a police or court record; or (3) other corroborating evidence. The documentation must be submitted in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of the employee to submit the written documentation and it shall be attached to the application for leave of absence.

#### Conditions of Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act

The following conditions apply to a leave of absence pursuant to this policy:

1. In its discretion, the ROE may require an employee taking approved leave of absence to periodically report on their status and intention to return to work.
2. An employee taking leave of absence may not engage in other work or employment during the leave of absence. If an employee engages in other work or employment during the leave of absence, the employee will be considered to have violated the terms of the leave of absence, and to have voluntarily terminated their employment with the ROE.
3. If an employee is granted a leave of absence on an intermittent basis or on a reduced schedule basis, the ROE may require the employee to temporarily transfer to an alternative position that accommodates the employee's recurring absences or part-time schedule.
4. If at the time of applying for a leave of absence or during the leave of absence the employee intends not to return to work or decides not to return to work after the completion of the leave of absence, the employee will be liable and required to reimburse the ROE for the cost of payments made to maintain the employee's benefits during the leave of absence.

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#### Compensation and Benefits during VESSA

An employee may apply earned vacation time and personal time toward the 12-week period allowed for any approved leave of absence pursuant to this policy. There is no other compensation paid by the ROE other than the payment for earned vacation and personal time noted above during a leave of absence.

#### Bereavement Leave under VESSA

If a family or household member is killed in a crime of violence under VESSA, an employee may take up to two workweeks (10 days) of unpaid leave to: attend a funeral or alternative to a funeral or wake, make arrangements necessitated by the death of the victim, and/or grieve the death of the victim. This leave must be taken within sixty (60) days after the date on which the employee received notice of the victim's death. If an employee is also entitled to leave under the Family Bereavement Leave Act, the 10 days will run concurrently with each other.



## **General Rules of Conduct**

To assure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, we expect employees to follow rules of conduct, performance, and attendance. This will protect the interests of all employees and the ROE.

For the guidance of all employees, listed below are some Rules of Conduct, Performance and Attendance. Violation of any of these rules may result in disciplinary action, including discharge, at the ROE's discretion. This list is by way of illustration only and should not be deemed to limit the ROE's right to discipline or discharge for other reasons not specifically listed.

The following acts are prohibited and constitute violations of ROE Rules of Conduct.

1. Possession of any dangerous weapon or explosive while on ROE property.
2. Reporting to work under the influence of, or introducing, possessing, or using on ROE property, any intoxicating or controlled substance (including drug paraphernalia) not prescribed by a licensed physician. Employees with prescription drugs, which could impair motor function, must advise their supervisors when first reporting for work after receiving such a prescription.
3. Fighting with, threatening, intimidating, coercing, physically abusing or interfering with another employee or persons doing business with ROE.
4. Taking or receiving, without authorization, goods, materials, equipment or property belonging to the ROE, employees, or persons doing business with the ROE.
5. Practicing or promoting discrimination against or harassment of another employee or group of employees on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or handicap.
6. Willful destruction of property, including but not limited to falsification of report(s); employment application; tallies; data; time card(s); commission of deliberate error; concealment of such acts committed by employee or others.
7. Insubordination (refusal to carry out supervisor's instructions).
8. Using profane or abusive language or displaying the abusive conduct toward an employee or person.
9. Participation or instigation of horseplay, scuffling, pranks, and/or otherwise creating a disturbance in the workplace.
10. Committing any felony or misdemeanor crimes as prohibited by federal, state, or local laws or failure to report unlawful conduct.
11. Transaction of personal business, including telephone calls, during working hours (excluding breaks and lunch) without consent of a supervisor.
12. Use of seatbelt is required while riding in or operating a ROE vehicle on public roads.
13. Failure to perform job as expected and reviewed with administration.
14. Negligent work performance, concealment or failure to report errors, which may result in economic damage or adverse conditions.
15. Sleeping during working time.
16. Failure to report an accident or injury to the appropriate supervisor.
17. Excessive employee absenteeism or tardiness or failure to notify of absence or tardiness within an hour of the scheduled work time.
18. Leaving ROE premises during working hours without supervisor permission. Unauthorized entrance on ROE property during non-working hours.
19. Working in an unsafe manner or violating ROE safety policies and procedures.

Effective Date: July 1, 2025

## **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

At periodic intervals, performance reviews are conducted. Evaluation and discussion on feedback will not always be in written form as administration considers informal verbal feedback equally important as written feedback. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of each employee in their position in terms of the applicable job description.

Factors to be considered in such evaluations include dependability, reliability, flexibility, attendance, punctuality, problem solving, attitude, works without supervision, interpersonal relations, quality of work, communication skills, appearance/grooming., along with overall rating and recommendations for improvement. Additionally, as an ROE#33 employee, there is an expectation that the staff member be an active part of the whole organization, as well as active in their department. The results of performance reviews will be discussed with each employee in confidence.

## **CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

The definition of corrective action plan is “a process by which a supervisor works with an employee in order to recognize areas of poor performance and take appropriate steps to identify the root cause of the poor work performance and implement an action plan that corrects this behavior in order to prevent the recurrence of the poor performance.”

The purpose of a corrective plan for an employee is to provide a process for the Regional Office of Education #33 to formally address recurring issues with an employee’s performance, per the expectations of the employee’s job description and the requirements of ROE processes, as well as state and federal grant guidelines. The language used in the ROE#33 Employee Handbook and the duties set forth in the employee’s job description are used as a guide to uphold the integrity of the Regional Office of Education #33.

Non-compliance of these obligations have a negative impact on the organization as a whole and could result in reassignment of position or termination within the organization. Furthermore, violation of any policy in the ROE#33 Employee Handbook may result in disciplinary action, including discharge, at the ROE’s discretion. Documentation of non-compliance or violation of policy will be placed permanently in the employee’s personnel file.

The outcome of this plan is to provide a process to create corrective action plans for individual employees when an issue of poor performance continuously occurs. The corrective action plan is a preventative measure taken by both the employee and the supervisor to maintain a positive work environment where the employee is able to meet all expectations of the employee’s job description.

# Appendix A

Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education 33

## FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE REPORTING FORM

### Contact Information

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to remain anonymous. I understand that if I remain anonymous, the ROE may not be able to contact me and consequently may not be able to fully investigate my concern.

☐ I am a ROE Employee

### Complaint *(Please be as detailed as possible and include dates and times, if you can):*

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### ROE Employee(s) Involved *(Please list names, positions and work addresses, if known):*

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### Please provide the name and telephone number of anyone else who may have first-hand knowledge of this situation:

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### Please list any law enforcement or other government agency this has been reported to, including names and phone numbers:

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☐ I would like to be contacted about the determination of this concern (not available for anonymous reporters).

Once completed, please return the form by one of the following options:

E-mail:

Fax:

Mail:

## **Acknowledgment, Agreement, and Receipt of Employee Handbook**

The undersigned hereby acknowledges receipt of a copy of the Henderson, Knox, Mercer, Warren Regional Office of Education #33 Employee Handbook. The undersigned hereby acknowledges and agrees that nothing contained in the employees' handbook including policies, practices, and benefits stated herein are intended to create any contractual right, express or implied, to employment or to any particular term or condition of employment. We retain the right to revise, amend this handbook, or terminate any policy unilaterally without notice at any time, and the employee's continued employment will be deemed acceptance of such revisions and modifications.

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Employee Signature

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Witness Signature

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Date

(This acknowledgement and agreement will be retained in the employee's personnel file).