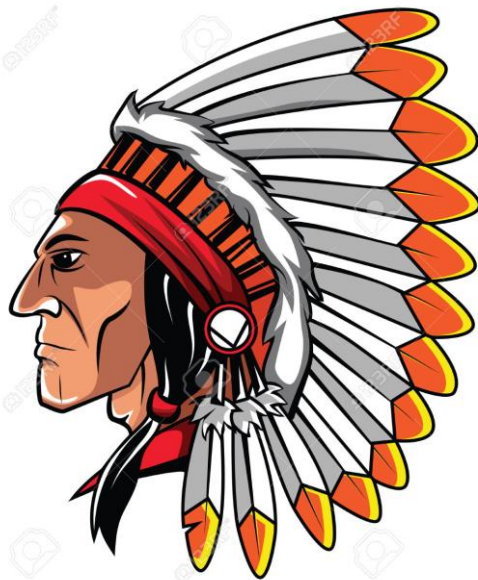


# ONEIDA SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Established 1915



## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2018-2019

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# MISSION STATEMENT

TO PRODUCE GRADUATES WHO ARE CAPABLE OF  
MASTERING ANY LIFE GIVEN CHALLENGE.

## GOALS

1. The Oneida Special School District (OSSD) curriculum will include challenging subject matter and be delivered through a variety of instructional methods so that all students will have the opportunity to develop their minds, be prepared for responsible citizenship, and become lifelong learners.
2. All buildings will be maintained in “like new” condition, with expansion planned to accommodate increased enrollment, future technological advancements, and compliance with state and federal regulations and guidelines.
3. All students in the Oneida Schools will be educated in a safe and drug-free learning environment.
4. We will provide a pre-school experience for all four year olds.

## BELIEFS

1. Public education is a responsibility shared by schools, families, and members of the community.
2. Learning is a lifelong process.
3. There is a positive correlation between learning and school attendance.
4. Students are more likely to learn if their family is involved and supporting the schools.
5. Decisions should be made as close to the point of implementation as possible.
6. Schools belong to the community.

## District Contact Information

### Board of Education

Dr. Nancy Williamson	Chairman
Dr. Danny Cross	Vice Chairman
Mrs. Dorothy Watson	Secretary/Treasurer
Mrs. Sandy Martin	Member
Mr. Jason Perry	Member

### Office of the Director of Schools

Dr. Jeanny Hatfield	Director of Schools	(423) 569-8912
Mr. Zacch Brown	Assistant Director of Schools	(423) 569-8912 x 237

### District Supervisors

Mrs. Amanda Terry	District Math Coordinator	(423) 569-8340
Mrs. Kim Burress	Supervisor of Special Education	(423) 569-8912 x 236
Ms. Melinda McCartt	Coordinated School Health & Family Resource Center	(423) 569-3303
Mr. Jason Terry	Attendance & Maintenance Supervisor	(423) 569-8912 x 230

### School Administration

Mr. Rick Harper	Principal - Oneida Elementary School	(423) 569-8340
Mrs. Jordan Sims	Assistant Principal – Oneida Elementary School	(423) 569-8340
Ms. Kelly Posey	Principal - Oneida Middle School	(423) 569-2468
Mr. Kevin Byrd	Principal - Oneida High School	(423) 569-8818
Ms. Leigh Culver	Lead Teacher – Oneida High School	(423) 569-3595
Mr. Heath Sexton	Indian Academy Coordinator	(423) 569-8818

### Guidance Counselors

Dr. Eva Thomas	Oneida Elementary School	(423) 569-5119
Mrs. Brenda Smith	Oneida Middle School	(423) 569-2475
Mrs. Brittany Martin	Oneida High School	(423) 569-4041

### Central Office Personnel

Mrs. Allison Mays	Finance Director	(423) 569-8912 x 225
Mrs. Sandra Cornelius	Payroll/School Finance	(423) 569-8912 x 222
Mrs. Lori Marcum	Technology Director	(423) 569-8711
Mrs. Debbi Pressnell	Financial Management Specialist	(423) 569-8912 x 240
Mrs. Jackie Carson	Special Education Administrative Assistant	(423) 569-8912 x 235
Mrs. Debby Anderson	CSH / FRC Administrative Assistant	(423) 569-3303
Ms. Cheryl Butler	Testing & Teacher Evaluations	(423) 569-8912 x 231
Ms. Vicki Payne	Teacher Evaluations	(423) 569-8912 x 232

### Food Services

Mrs. Cathy Buttram	Food Services Supervisor	(423) 569-8912 x 229
Mrs. Kim Davis	Elementary School Cafeteria Manager	(423) 569-2522
Mrs. Velva Phillips	Food Service Administrative Assistant	(423) 569-8912 x 221
Mrs. Joan Terry	Middle/High School Cafeteria Manager	(423) 569-8854

### Transportation

Mr. Joe Slaven	Lead Bus Driver	
Mr. Zacch Brown	Transportation Director	(423) 569-8912 x 237

# Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Those that are, have been summarized. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the Oneida Special School District, Central Office, Dr. Jeanny Hatfield, 195 North Bank Street, Oneida, TN 37841, (423) 569-8912.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of non-certified employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures. District policies and procedures can change at any time. These changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. Policy manuals are located in all school offices and are available for employee review during normal working hours. Board Policies are available on the district website at [www.oneidaschools.org](http://www.oneidaschools.org).

## Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for proper use of school property, ensuing safety, and representing the school system positively. Equipment and supplies must be used carefully and responsibly. Remember, your taxes help pay for all the material you use. Whether a pencil or a school vehicle, misuse of school equipment and materials may be cause for dismissal. If you fail to use care in the protection of school property, you may be held financially responsible for its loss or damage.

## Code of Ethics

Policy 5.611 on Ethics:

An effective educational program requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essentials, all employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships.' These standards include the following:

1. The maintenance of just and courteous professional relationships with student, parent(s), staff members and others;
2. The maintenance of their own efficiency and knowledge of the developments in their fields of work;
3. The transaction of all official business with the properly designated authorities of the school system;
4. The establishment of friendly and intelligent cooperation between the community and the school system;

5. The representation of the school system on all occasions that the contributions of the school system to the community are recognized;
6. The welfare of children as the first concern of the school system when placing professional personnel. The use of pressure on school officials for appointments or transfers is unethical;
7. Restraint from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views or selfish propaganda of any kind;
8. The responsibility to make any criticism of other staff members or of the school system directly to the particular school administrator who has the administrative responsibility for improving the situation and then to the director of schools, if necessary; and
9. The proper use and protection of all school properties, equipment and materials.

Legal Reference:

1. TCA 49-5-501(3XD); TEA Code of Ethics of the Education Profession

## **Working Safety**

Safety is important for all of us. Help prevent injury to yourself and others by observing general safety rules, removing hazards in your workspace, and immediately reporting unsafe conditions to your supervisor. The Oneida Special School District wishes to maintain a safe working environment. If you are involved in or witness an accident while at work, report it to your supervisor immediately and complete an accident report within 24 hours.

## **Representing Our District**

As a school employee, you are a community relations agent. You represent the school system. The impression you give and the statements you make influence people's perception of our schools. Because the primary function of the School system is the education of children, all employees become role models for those children. Each employee should strive to positively represent their individual school, the school system, and community. If an employee's conduct causes undue embarrassment or discredit to the Oneida Special School District, all necessary steps will be taken to preserve the System's reputation and good will.

An employee's personal religious or political beliefs, philosophies, and opinions shall not be imposed upon the students. Employees may not use the schools, the classroom, or their position with the system as a personal, political, or religious forum; and they may not engage in any political promotions or solicitation during school hours.

Employees should use good judgment in their relationships with students and shall avoid excessive informal and social involvement with individual students. Any appearance of impropriety should be avoided. Sexual relationships between employees and students are strictly prohibited. A violation of these guidelines will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Employees are prohibited from engaging in any activity that raises a reasonable question of conflict of interest with their responsibilities and duties as a school system employee.

Employees may not engage in any type of work that uses information or property owned or obtained through the school system.

## **Professional Dress Code**

The purpose of a professional dress code in the Oneida Special School District is to ensure that employees present themselves to parents and the general public in a manner which enhances their professional position. It is also the intent of the School Board that employee's model, for students, attire appropriate for success.

### ***Acceptable apparel for Monday-Thursday for all administrative and instructional personnel:***

- No jeans on these days except for a field trip or some event that is approved by your principal. Shorts are not acceptable except for field days and other related activities on any day. Exception to this will be physical education teachers and coaches who have games during or right after school. Slacks and capris are acceptable. (Refer to student dress code for leggings, skirts and other forms of apparel.)
- T-shirts are acceptable, as long as they are related to our schools and/or some project or cause we are endorsing. T-shirts with college logos are also acceptable on casual days. T-shirts that endorse other events or businesses are not professional. Also, refer to student dress code on other regulations for upper apparel.
- Beach or shower shoes are not professional footwear for work. The question will be about flip flops and other forms of backless sandals. These are acceptable as long as they are "dressy" or appropriate for outdoor wear. Tennis shoes are acceptable.

FRIDAYS are casual days or jean days. Athletic jogging suits are also acceptable on these days. However, on these days, jeans and other casual wear should comply with the student dress code. Jeans should be of good quality.

NOTE: Schools can conduct fund raisers similar to "hat day" at elementary where students wear hats for a donation. This could involve teachers paying a certain amount for wearing jeans on a day other than Friday.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

It is our policy to provide equal employment opportunity to all qualified employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, handicap, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status. It is our intent and objective that equal employment opportunities are provided in employee recruitment, selection, compensation, benefits, promotion, demotion, layoff, termination, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

## **Open Door Policy**

The administration's door is always open to you. If you have a problem you need to discuss with us, please first discuss the matter with your immediate supervisor. If the matter remains



unresolved, we maintain an “open door policy” for you to discuss your problem with anyone in administration.

## **Fingerprinting and Background Checks**

All new employees will be subjected to fingerprinting and a criminal history/background check. Current employees will be required to have a new background check / fingerprints completed every 5 years. The charge for processing the fingerprinting and criminal history check will be borne by the employee. As part of the application process each employee signs a statement certifying that he/she has not been convicted of either a misdemeanor or a felony and that he/she has not been dismissed from any previous employment for improper or unprofessional conduct, insubordination, incompetence, inefficiency, or neglect of duty. Misrepresentation constitutes grounds for termination of employment and may also constitute a Class A Misdemeanor.

## **Attendance and Tardiness**

The regular and prompt attendance of each employee is vital to the successful operation of the school system. The absence or tardiness of an employee can result in other employees having excessive amounts of work. Employees should note that attendance records are a permanent part of personnel files.

Note that the following guidelines apply to attendance and tardiness:

1. If you must be absent from work, you are required to notify your principal or supervisor as soon as practical. If there is an emergency and you are not able to notify your principal or supervisor, you should have someone make notification on your behalf or you should do so at the first opportunity after the emergency has ended.
2. If you must be tardy to work, you must notify your principal or supervisor as soon as possible.
3. An absence or tardiness for any reason other than illness or emergency should have prior approval of your principal, supervisor, or Director of Schools.
4. The failure to timely contact your principal or supervisor in regards to an absence will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
5. An unexcused absence occurs when an employee fails to notify his/her principal or supervisor of an absence or when an absence has not been approved.
6. Excessive or unreasonable absences or tardiness will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

The Oneida Special School District does recognize and understand that illness and emergencies can affect each of us. For this reason, the school system provides sick leave and (2) personal leave days per year to eligible school employees.

## **Personnel Records**

The School system maintains a personnel record/file on all employees. Information contained in such files will be limited to job related material. Employees must be granted an opportunity to respond in writing to material placed in their records. Pursuant to certain state and federal laws, employee records, except those that are otherwise exempt, are open for inspection by any citizen of the State of Tennessee.

## **Employment Information**

All **Non-Certified** employees are considered At-Will and will work under one-year contracts which coincide with the school calendar. No Non-Certified employee has any guarantee of employment beyond this contract period. The Director of Schools may elect to non-renew the contract of any non-certified employee at the end of the contract period.

## **Suspensions and Terminations**

The Director of Schools is authorized to suspend an employee immediately, either with or without pay, and to terminate employees during the contract period for cause. "Cause" is defined to include the following (this list is not exclusive):

1. Willful violation of school rules and regulations.
2. Misconduct causing adverse reflection on the employee or the system.
3. Incompetence.
4. Excessive or unreasonable absences or tardiness.
5. Failure to obey a legitimate system directive or order of a supervisor.
6. Willfully falsifying a report.
7. Willfully making a false statement, written or oral.
8. Breach of contract.

Before any employee is suspended or dismissed, he/she shall be given a written notice of the suspension or termination, which fully explains the circumstances that make the action necessary and will be given an opportunity to respond in accordance with applicable law.

## **Right of Appeal**

A terminated/suspended employee has the right to request a hearing with the Director of Schools concerning the termination or suspension. The request must be in writing and must be made within five (5) days from the date of the written notice of the termination/suspension. The hearing shall be held within 10 calendar days of the Director's receipt of the request for the hearing. The Director shall make a written decision in regard to the employment action within 5 (five) working days of the hearing.

## **Resignations**

If an employee desires to leave employment with the school system, he/she shall give at least four (4) weeks notice (certified) OR two (2) weeks notice (non-certified). This notice period may be reduced or waived by the Director of Schools or by the employee's immediate supervisor.

## **Reductions in Force**

When it becomes necessary to reduce the number of Non-Certified staff positions, the Director of Schools shall give the effected employee(s) written notice of the termination, explaining the circumstances or conditions which make the termination necessary.

## **Evaluation Period – New Employees**

Newly hired Non-Certified employees are subject to an evaluation period of ninety (90) days. This period is established to allow the employee an opportunity to learn the requirements of his/her job and the work place rules. At the end of the 90 days, if the principal/supervisor determines that continued employment is appropriate, the employee will be so advised; but, also be advised of any expected improvements in job performance. If it is determined that an employee is not adequately meeting the requirements of the position during the 90 day period, that employee may be terminated at any time. **Please note that the successful completion of the 90-day period does not guarantee continued employment.**

## **Confidentiality**

Information obtained about students, including grades and performance, must be kept confidential. It is against the law to disclose a student's grades, information contained in a student's personal folder, or the fact that a student has a special need or disability, except to appropriate individuals within the school system. In other words, **an employee should assume and act as if any information learned about a student is completely confidential.** In addition, personal information regarding other employees should not be publicly released. Only those employees authorized to release student or employee information may do so.

## **Harassment Prohibited**

The school system will not tolerate harassment or intimidation of our employees or students on any basis, including race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, handicap, disability, or marital status.

It is our policy that any harassment, including acts creating a hostile work environment or any other discriminatory acts directed against our employees or students, will result in discipline, up to and including dismissal.

If you become aware of any discriminatory behavior or any activity that might be considered to be harassment in violation of this policy, it is your responsibility to immediately report such conduct to your supervisor or to the Oneida Special School District, Central Office, Mr. Zach Brown, Assistant Director of Schools, 195 N. Bank Street, Oneida, TN 37841, (423) 569-8912.

Any employee who retaliates against another employee or student who has reported workplace harassment or discrimination will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## **Sexual Harassment Prohibited**

The school system prohibits any form of sexual harassment of its employees or students. Because sexual harassment may interfere with work or educational performance, create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment, influences or tends to affect the productivity, salary, working conditions, responsibilities, duties or other aspects of development of an employee or prospective employee or student, or may create an explicit or implicit term or condition of an individual's employment, **it will not be tolerated.** This type of behavior will lead to progressive discipline or may result in a decision to terminate employment.

## What is Harassment?

Sexually harassing conduct includes, but not limited to:

1. Repeated, offensive, sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions
2. Continual or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature
3. Graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body
4. Sexually degrading words used to describe an individual
5. Any display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures
6. Any other unwelcome physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with an individual's work or educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual Harassment is a violation of both state and federal law, and will not be tolerated by the school system. It is our policy that all personnel have the opportunity to work in an environment free from sexual harassment. We will actively investigate any allegation of sexual harassment, and if it is determined that sexual harassment has occurred, we will take appropriate disciplinary action, which may include dismissal of the offending school system employee. In cases involving outside individuals, the school system will take appropriate action with the offending individual, or their employer.

## Reporting Complaints

If you believe that you or another employee or student have been subjected to sexual harassment at work by anyone, including managers, co-workers, clients, or any outside party dealing with the school system, you should first bring the problem to the attention of your manager or supervisor. If you are uncomfortable raising your complaint with someone to whom you report, or if your complaint involves one of these individuals, then you are urged to bring it to the attention of the Oneida Special School District, Central Office, Mr. Zacch Brown, Assistant Director of Schools, 195 N. Bank Street, Oneida, TN 37841, (423) 569-8912. **Board Policy GAE 5.501** (*Complaints and Grievances*) can be found by visiting the school's web page, [oneidaschools.org](http://oneidaschools.org), following the Board of Education link, clicking on the "Policy On-Line" link, then click on "5-Personnel".

## Investigation

All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. The school system cannot promise complete privacy, as total and complete privacy are often impossible; however, we will make every effort to keep the investigation as confidential as possible under the circumstances. No adverse employment action will be taken against any employee making a good faith report of sexual harassment.

## Substance Abuse/Drug-Free Workplace Policy

Illegal and excessive use of drugs has become an epidemic in our nation. Any abuse and use at the workplace are subjects of immediate concern in our society. From a safety perspective, the use of drugs may impair the well-being of all employees or students, the public at large, and result in damage to public property. Drug use may also seriously impair an employee's ability to perform his or her job; therefore, it is the policy of the Board of Education that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance in the

workplace is prohibited. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The specifics of this policy are as follows:

1. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in or on the workplace. Such manufacture, distribution, possession, or use while on the job or state property will subject the violator to discipline up to and including termination of employment.
2. The term “controlled substance” means any drug listed in 21.U.S.C. 812 and other federal regulations. Generally, these are the drugs that have a high potential for abuse. “*Such drugs include but are not limited to Heroin, Marijuana, Cocaine, PCP, Crack, and Meth*”. They also include “legal drugs” which are not prescribed by a licensed physician to an alleged violator.
3. Each employee is required by law to inform the Director of Schools within five (5) days after he or she is convicted for violation of any federal or state criminal drug statute where such violation occurred on state property. A conviction means a finding of guilt by a judge or a jury in any federal or state court.
4. If an employee is convicted of violating any criminal drug statute while on the workplace, he or she will be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. Alternatively, the Board may require the employee to successfully finish a drug abuse program sponsored by an approved private or governmental institution.
5. As a condition of employment or continued employment on any federal government grant, this law requires all employees to abide by this policy.
6. It is a violation of school policy for any employee to report to work under the influence of or while possessing in his or her body, blood, or urine, illegal drugs in any detectable amount.
7. It is a violation of school policy for any employee to report to work under the influence of or impaired by alcohol.
8. It is a violation of the school policy for any employee to use prescription drugs illegally, i.e. to use prescription drugs that have not been legally obtained or to use them in a manner for a purpose other than as prescribed. However, nothing in this policy precludes the appropriate use of a legally prescribed medication.
9. The Oneida Special School District reserves the right to conduct drug testing on:
  - (1) An applicant for employment as a bus driver
  - (2) Any employee who is involved in an accident on the job
  - (3) Bus drivers on a random basis
  - (4) Any employee of the OSSD when warranted by reasonable suspicion

## **Drug and Alcohol Testing**

### **Substance Use / Abuse and S.T.A.N.D.**

#### **Alcohol and Drugs**

Any possession, consumption, use, distribution or sale of drugs or alcoholic beverages on school grounds or in school buildings, at school-sponsored functions or activities where on or off school grounds, or on school buses is prohibited at all times. This also includes abuse of inhalants

and/or prescriptions drugs. Local law enforcement will be involved, and disciplinary sanctions will be imposed on persons who violate standards of conduct required by this policy. Such sanctions will be consistent with local, state and federal laws, up to and including suspension/expulsion as well as referral for prosecution. Completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program may also be recommended. Information about drug and alcohol counseling and rehabilitation programs will be made available through the system offices.

## **Tobacco**

Persons shall not use or have in their possession tobacco products in any form on school premises, on school buses, or at any school activity. This includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, and electronic cigarettes. Tobacco and/or tobacco products in the possession of any person will be confiscated and will count as tobacco use. Violators of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to school and community service, juvenile detention and a court appearance with a fee of \$164.00

## **S.T.A.N.D.**

The OSSD board partners with the S.T.A.N.D. (Schools Together Allowing No Drugs) program. This approach employs the drug testing of students and employees, which the Board views as one of several essential tools necessary to detect and deter substance use and enable early identification, assistance, education and counsel to persons who are experimenting with or regularly using tobacco, drugs, or alcohol. This policy was established to be an anti-tobacco, anti-alcohol program that encourages, recruits and coordinates the involvement of parents, teachers, school administration, counselors, and the community as a whole, with its focus being on providing support, education and counseling for persons confidentially identified with drug use. This policy will include and address the more serious gravamen of violations including drug use and possession on school property, in vehicles, and at school activities; “zero tolerance” sanctions; and the health and welfare of persons demanding it. For more information about the S.T.A.N.D. Drug Program, contact the S.T.A.N.D. office at (423) 286-9925.

## **S.T.A.N.D. CONSENT FORM**

The S.T.A.N.D. form will be provided to students at the beginning of the school year and must be signed and returned. Additionally, persons who wish to park on school campus or participate in any extracurricular activities (including sports, band, prom, etc.) must participate in drug testing. Students and employees who are randomly selected from the database must provide a urine specimen by the end of the school day. If a student or employee cannot, he/she must either go to a physician’s office on the same day and take a drug test or attend the counseling program which is administered by the Children’s Center of the Cumberland’s.

## **Reasonable Suspicion Drug Testing**

Any employee may be required to submit to a periodic substance screening if the following conditions exist (this list is not inclusive):

1. Observed use; possession or sale of illegal drugs and/or use; possession, sale, or abuse of alcohol and/or prescription drugs.
2. Apparent physical state of impairment of motor functions.

3. Marked changes in personal behavior not clearly attributed to other factors.
4. Employee involvement in, or contribution to, an accident where the use of alcohol or drugs is reasonably suspected OR employee involvement in a pattern of repetitive accidents, whether or not they involve actual or potential injury.
5. Violation of criminal statutes involving the use of illegal drugs, alcohol, or prescription drugs, and/or violations of drug statutes.

## **Pre-Employment Drug Screening**

Prior to employment, as a condition of any job offer, substance screens are required for individuals applying for all positions.

Transportation employee applicants will sign an acknowledgement prior to substance screening, permitting the summary result to be sent to the Director of Schools/designee. Refusal to sign the acknowledgement or to submit to substance screening will be considered as withdrawal of the individual's application for employment. The applicant will not be permitted to reapply for employment for at least twelve (12) months.

If substance screening shows a confirmed positive result for which there is not a current physician's prescription, any job offer will be revoked. The applicant will not be permitted to reapply for employment for at least twelve (12) months.

## **Pre-Employment Medical Screening**

Before beginning employment, all new employees must have a complete medical screening and TB skin test performed by their personal physician.

## **Drug Disclosure**

All transportation employees are required to report to the Director of Schools/designee the use of any prescription drug that could affect the central nervous system to impair reaction time. Further, all transportation employees must give notice of nonprescription (over-the-counter) drugs that they use on a regular basis. The notice must include information about how long the employee will be taking the medication and any possible side effects.

## **Prohibitions**

The use, possession, sale, purchase, or transfer of any controlled substance, except medically prescribed drugs, while conducting school business, on school property, or while operating school equipment is prohibited. Transportation employees are prohibited from:

- (1) Drinking alcoholic beverages during work hours
- (2) Drinking alcoholic beverages within four (4) hours of reporting for work
- (3) Having any measurable amount of alcohol in his/her system during work hours, whether on or off school property

The off-duty use of drugs and/or alcohol is prohibited to the extent that it affects a transportation employee's attendance or performance and his/her ability to pass any required controlled substance tests. A violation of these guidelines is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and legal prosecution.

## **Random, Post Accident, Reasonable Suspicion, and Return to Duty Testing**

All transportation employees are subject to testing for drugs and alcohol during their period of employment. These employees are required to submit to drug tests conducted on a random, unannounced basis: after accidents when the employee's performance could have contributed to the accident; upon the reasonable suspicion of a supervisor; and upon return to duty after a violation of these provisions.

### **Use of Private Vehicles**

An employee is required to have proof of vehicle liability insurance coverage in the following amounts: \$100,000/\$300,000/\$50,000 **and** the written permission of the Director of Schools/designee prior to using a private vehicle in the performing or conducting of system business.

Reimbursement of mileage will be made at the rate set by the system in effect at the time of use upon submission of the properly executed reimbursement forms.

No employee shall send a student on an errand, either personal or school related, in a vehicle owned by the student, the employee, or the school system.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

The use of personal cellular telephones in schools shall be limited to times and locations where students are not present. Personal cellular telephones may be used by employees only during time unencumbered by official duties. Cellular telephones shall be turned off during the school day to avoid interruptions during instruction and other school activities. Conducting routine school business, either with the Central Office or non-district contacts, is not a valid reason to violate the above criteria. The use of personal cellular phones outside of the parameters as described above is authorized only in cases of emergencies. Principals may authorize the use of personal cellular telephones in an emergency or serious situation.

### **Internet Use**

All computer hardware and software belongs to the school system. All computer data, including e-mail communications stored or transmitted on school system computers is subject to monitoring. Employees should have no expectation of privacy with regard to computer data.

### **E-Mail**

Users with network access shall not utilize school system resources to establish electronic mail accounts through third-party providers or any other nonstandard electronic mail system. E-mail correspondence may be a public record under the public record's law and may be subject to public inspection.

### **Network Rules**

Internet access and use is considered a privilege, not a right. Employee use is governed by applicable Board of Education policies, which prohibit, among other uses, the following:

- Sending or displaying offensive or obscene messages, language, or pictures
- Using obscene language



- Harassing, insulting, defaming, or attacking others
- Hacking or attempting unauthorized access to any computer or server
- Violation of copyright laws
- Trespassing in anyone's folders, work, or files
- Using another employee's password and/or other identification
- Using the network for commercial purposes
- Accessing sexually explicit materials
- Using the network for illegal purposes

School officials will apply the same criterion of education suitability to use of the internet, computers, and the network as they use to review other educational resources. Misuse of the internet, computers, and the network will result in disciplinary action.

### **Faculty and Staff Use of Social Media**

Social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, blogs, etc.) bridge both the work and personal life of employees – and thus, some cross-over and conflict of responsibilities may occur. Oneida Special School District's (OSSD) interest lies in defining the educational and work-related contexts of social media for the protection of our employees, students, and the school community as a whole.

#### **Key Principles**

Interacting online with colleagues, students, parents and alumni, carries the same expectations as interacting with these parties face-to-face. The OSSD faculty and staff must maintain the principles of respect, dignity, prudence, professionalism, and concern for the safety and protection of children and young people in all interactions.

With specific regard to social media, all OSSD employees must:

- Understand that they are accountable for their postings and other electronic communications that are job-related – particularly online activities conducted with a school e-mail address, or while using school property, networks, or resources, or while discussing school-related activities or topics.
- Recognize that adult behavior is used as a model by our students. Social media activities may be visible to current, past, or prospective students, parents, colleagues, and community members. Serving as a role model is a critical aspect of their work at the school; and thus, must exercise appropriate discretion when using social networks (even for personal communications) when those communications can reflect on their role at the school.
- Keep in mind the uneven power dynamics of the school. Adults have both actual authority over current students and implied authority over former students. Employees must never exploit the power inherent in student/teacher relationships.
- Balance their right of individual expression with the valid interests of Oneida Schools in promoting and presenting its mission, culture, and values to the community at large as reflected by the public actions and statements of its employees.
- Remember that material posted on social media sites is viewed to be public information.

Electronic information has a permanent lifespan and may be broadcast well beyond the intended audience of the posting party.

*Please be aware that the Oneida Special School District considers discretion and prudent judgment in social networking activities to be a serious matter with regard to protecting the school, its students, and the employees themselves. All information posted on the internet by Oneida School employees will be viewed as public postings, regardless of whether the same are made through a school sponsored site or a personal account.*

***VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY MAY LEAD TO CORRECTIVE ACTION, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT.***

## **Guidelines**

### **1. “Friending” Students, Alumni, and Parents**

With regard to “friending” employees:

- Are discouraged from initiating or accepting social media relationship requests (also known as “friend” or “contact” requests) from current students of any age or former students under the age of 18.
- Should use professional discretion when “friending” alumni 18 and over. Please recognize that many former students have online connections with current students (including younger siblings and underclassmen friends) and that information shared between recent alumni is likely to be seen by current students as well.
- Are discouraged from “friending” parents of current or prospective students, due to the inherent conflicts of interest that this may raise (e.g., perceptions of favoritism, influencing admission, grading, student treatment, etc.). If an employee is contacted about a school related matter on a social networking website, the employee should redirect that person(s) to contact the employee via the employee’s school email account. The employee should not delete the interaction.
- Are professionally obligated to respond to inappropriate behavior on a social media site, just as with such behavior in the school hallway. An employee who visits a student's page and finds photos or language suggesting drug or alcohol use, cheating on schoolwork, harassing of another student or other behavior inconsistent with school policy is professionally obligated to respond appropriately.

### **2. School-Related Friends (co-workers, supervisors, and subordinates)**

Employees are asked to use good judgment when making and/or accepting “friend” (or “connection”) requests to or from school colleagues.

All employees are particularly encouraged to use caution when making “friend” requests of supervisors or subordinates due to the potential for a party to feel pressured to accept the request, potentially having an impact on the work relationship (as well as raising concerns of conflict of interest, unequal treatment, discrimination, or similar issues).

### **3. Non-School Related Friends**

Employees should remind all other members of their networks of their position as educators

whose profile may be accessed by students and other members of the school community and ask them to monitor their posts to the employee's network accordingly. This includes being "tagged" in photos on the sites of friends or others, especially where the photos may imply activities not appropriate for viewing by students and other OSSD community members.

#### **4. Posted Content**

Employees should exercise care with personal profile data and posted content to ensure that this information does not reflect poorly on the employee's ability to serve as a role model or otherwise create a conflict of interest. Content should be placed thoughtfully and periodically reviewed.

#### **5. Privacy Settings**

On most sites, privacy settings can be changed at any time to limit access to profiles and search ability. Employees must be prudent in limiting access to their personal content, in line with these guidelines.

#### **6. Time on Social Sites**

Employees must refrain from using social media or blogging sites for personal use during work hours. Use of social media may in no way interfere or impede the employee's completion of job duties and responsibilities to the school and its students.

#### **7. Online Identity and Posting to Blogs**

OSSD encourages active engagement in a range of activities, intellectual pursuits, causes, and the like; including social, political, religious, and civic-oriented groups, blogs, etc. At the same time, an individual's right to participate in these groups must be balanced with the school's right to manage public communications issued *in its name* or on its behalf.

When posting messages to social, political, religious, and civic-oriented forums and blogs, employees should not state or imply their connection to the school in any way without the prior consent of the Director of Schools.

#### **8. Protecting Confidential Information**

All confidential school information must be protected and disclosed only pursuant to school policy or as otherwise required by law. No social media or blog posts may communicate any confidential information.

#### **9. Use of Logos, Trademarks, and Intellectual Property**

Employees should not use the school's logo, trademarks, official photographs, or any other intellectual property or proprietary materials in any postings without consent.

#### **10. Acceptable Use and Monitoring of Electronic Activities**

Employees are prohibited from engaging in illegal activities or accessing websites that contain illegal or otherwise prohibited content at any time when using school networks, equipment or other means of school-provided access on or off school property or while directly or indirectly representing the school in any way. Further, discovery of illicit activity by an employee on any site, even if through a personal means of access, will be considered a violation of this policy.

To protect the school, its students, employees, and other community members from potential harm, liability or other risk, OSSD reserves the right to monitor employee electronic communications and activities transmitted through school networks or using school-provided equipment.

## **Hepatitis B (HBV), HIV/AIDS and Bloodborne Pathogens**

All employees are required to receive annual in-service training and education regarding Hepatitis B (HBV), HIV/AIDS, and Bloodborne Pathogens standards. School personnel are to be advised of routine procedures to follow in the handling of body fluids.

- Employees must respect an individual's right to privacy and must treat knowledge of any medical diagnosis as confidential information. Information identifying employees and/or students with a bloodborne pathogen may not be released to the public. Any employee that violates confidentially shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- All medical information about or regarding employees or students is confidential. It is school policy and applicable law that no medical information regarding employees or students may be disclosed to anyone without proper authorization. Any employee that violates confidentially shall be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Communicable Diseases**

No employee with a communicable disease may perform his/her duties in any location that might endanger the health of students. Employees may be required to submit to an examination by a physician whenever there is a reason to believe that an employee has a communicable disease that may threaten the health of students.

## **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

The district, in accordance with state law TCA 50-6-101, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or injury on the job. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the Central Office. An injured employee must give notice (report) of an employment-related injury as soon as it happens, or as soon as reasonable or practicable to their supervisor (not a fellow employee). No compensation shall be payable if notice is not given within 30 days from the date of the accident unless there is reasonable excuse for the failure to report the injury.

Under the Tennessee Worker's Compensation Act, employers are required to file the Employer's First Report of Work Injury (Form C-20). Form C-20 must be filed for each and every work related accident. The C-20 must be submitted to the State as soon as possible; but, no later than fourteen (14) days after the injury. Questions concerning workers' compensation should be directed to the Central Office at (423) 569-8912.

## **Unemployment Compensation Insurance**

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation under Tennessee Unemployment Compensation Act.

Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months, if they have reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the Central Office at (423) 569-8912.

## **In-service and Staff Development**

- Certified Personnel are required as part of their contract to complete five (5) in-service days of training. Accountability forms will be required by the central office to verify each staff member's participation in staff development training. The accountability forms and staff development requirements can be found on the district's web page – [www.oneidaschools.org](http://www.oneidaschools.org).
- In-service credit shall not be given while performing duties which are required as part of regular teaching assignments.
- To receive credit for in-service, the training must be received between July 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> of that school year.

***New teachers are required to obtain fifteen (15) hours of in-service training their first year of employment and an additional ten (10) hours for their second and third years of employment. These additional hours are above and beyond the regular in-service days required by the teacher contract and are required by board policy.***

## **Time Schedules and Extra Duty**

### **Daily Schedules**

Certified personnel shall be on duty from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., including a duty-free lunch period and additional time, as the administrative organization requires. Additional time is interpreted to include faculty meetings, in-service programs, committee meetings, general meetings, conferences, school sponsored activities, and other extra duties before and after school. Teachers shall be at school at least fifteen (15) minutes before the beginning of the school day and at least fifteen (15) minutes after the closing of the school day.

### **Staff Meetings**

All staff members are expected to attend all meetings called by the administration and all in-service programs designed to improve the total school, unless excused by the person calling the meeting.

Coaches have the same responsibility to attend faculty meetings, in-service meetings, assemblies, and other school activities, as do other certified teachers. However, during the season of the sport to which the coach is assigned, he/she may be excused by the principal from meetings held after the close of the school day. It shall be the responsibility of the coach to inquire of other teachers as to the content of meetings missed and to keep informed of activities going on in the school.

## Extra Duties

Certified personnel shall perform extra duties, including before and after school, as assigned by the administration.

Bus duty will begin at 7:45 a.m. and continue until the last bus leaves.

## Time Records Required

Each Non-Certified employee covered by the Wage and Hour Law shall keep a time record of *actual hours worked*. Time records are kept via a time clock which non-certified employees must use to clock in. There is one located in the main office of each building.

## Lunch Period

All Non Certified employees covered by the Wage and Hour Law have at least a thirty (30) minute lunch period without pay. During this scheduled lunch period, the employee shall be relieved from all duties of any nature.

## Paydays

All employees are paid on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the 20<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or holiday, your deposit will be made on the workday immediately preceding. Payroll will be distributed by direct deposit. Employees must provide the business office with a deposit slip. All employees will receive 12 checks in the school year (August – July), in normal circumstances. The employees on Career Ladder will receive their checks semi-annually. The first check will be paid in December and the second check will be paid in May.

**Supplement checks** will be paid during the school year. Fall sports checks will be processed prior to Christmas break. Spring sports will be processed in May. All other Supplement checks will be processed either in December or May depending on when the contract has concluded. **Employees will be notified when checks are ready to be distributed.**

## Overtime Pay – Non-Certified

The Board expects that employees will work in excess of standard hours when requested. When work in excess of standard hours is required, employees will be compensated for the unscheduled hours worked.

**However, no excess or overtime hours shall be performed without prior approval of the building level principal and the payroll office.**

Overtime is defined as hours physically worked *in excess of forty (40) hours* per week. When an employee is requested to work over regularly scheduled hours, the following shall apply:

- **Compensation for Unscheduled Hours**

1. Hours worked over the employees scheduled hours must be approved by the building level principal and the central office prior to the work being performed.
2. Whenever possible, compensatory time off shall be used in performance of over time pay.
3. All payments for overtime shall be processed through the payroll office.
4. The building principal is responsible for reporting the overtime authorization to the payroll department along with documentation.

- **Non-Certified Personnel – Overtime Provisions**

1. Employees who have been assigned to work overtime, whether voluntary or mandatory, shall be expected to report to work as scheduled.
2. Employees will not perform excess or overtime work without prior approval from the building level principal and the central office.
3. Failure to abide by these measures shall subject the employee to disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal.
4. Employees shall be released from mandatory overtime, without fear of discipline, when they can provide a reasonable excuse. If there is doubt concerning the employee's sincerity in offering such excuse, the burden of proof will rest with the employee.

## **Paid Holidays**

To be eligible to receive a paid holiday, non-certified employees must be scheduled to work twelve (12) months.

The following are the holidays currently recognized:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- July 4<sup>th</sup>
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Memorial Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Veterans' Day

## **Vacations**

All **certified** employees who work on the school calendar are paid two (2) weeks vacation as part of their contract.

All full-time **non-certified** employees earn vacation on the following schedule:

- First year employment – one (1) week
- Second and subsequent years – two (2) weeks

**Non-certified** employees must have advance approval from their principal or supervisor for the use of vacation leave. Vacation leave must be used in increments of not less than one-half (1/2) day. Vacation leave may not be advanced before it is earned. If a non-certified employee leaves the system, he/she will be paid for vacation days earned and unused up to that point.

## LEAVES

The Oneida Special School District provides ample leave time for its employees. It is expected that employees will use their leave for the purpose for which it is provided. Leave which does not fall within one of the following leave categories is not generally available to employees and anyone who is absent without approved leave will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

An employee who must be absent from work because of an illness or accident is responsible for notifying his/her principal or supervisor at least one hour before the start of his/her workday. If there is an emergency and the employee is not able to immediately notify the principal or supervisor, someone should make notification on the employee's behalf as soon as possible.

An employee must promptly submit a signed sick leave form (which lists the cause of absence) to his/her principal or supervisor in support of all claims for sick leave pay. In addition, a statement from a healthcare provider may be required in support of a claim for sick leave pay. If a physician's statement has been requested and is not supplied, the absence will be treated as leave without pay.

Sick leave must be taken in increments of not less than ½ day. Sick leave will not be advanced prior to being earned unless approved by the Director of Schools.

Employees are urged not to abuse the use of sick leave. Employees on authorized sick leave are not eligible for other leave benefits in addition to their sick leave.

### **Sick Leave**

Sick Leave is defined as: the illness of an employee from natural causes, accident, or quarantine OR illness or death of a member of the immediate family of an employee (including the employee's spouse, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, and in-laws).

- Full time **Certified** employees earn one (1) full day of sick leave for each full calendar month worked. Part-time **certified** employees (those who work at least 3 hours per day) earn sick leave on a pro-rated basis. Retired 120 days teachers are not eligible for sick leave. Upon termination of employment, a certified employee may be able to transfer accumulated sick leave to another system or may be able to use accumulated days as credit for retirement purposes.
- **Non-Certified** (29 hour) employees do not earn sick leave.

### **Personal Leave**

Certified and full-time Non-Certified personnel are able to earn up to two (2) days of personal leave each year. One personal day is earned the first half of the work year. The second personal



day is earned the last half of the work year. Part-time certified personnel (those who work at least 3 hours per day) earn personal leave on a pro-rated basis.

Personal leave days are provided for employees when they need to be away from work for professional appointments (attorneys, accountants, meetings with children's teachers, etc.) They are also for emergencies that may not fall into any other category. Personal leave days may not be taken prior to being earned. These days may be taken in increments of ½ day or 1 full day.

### **Long-Term Leave of Absence**

Any employee who is absent for five (5) consecutive days must apply for a Long-Term Leave of Absence. The form must be completed along with approval of the principal/supervisor and forwarded to the Director of Schools. If the leave is health related, a healthcare provider statement must accompany the request for leave. A healthcare provider statement must be submitted to release an employee to return to work.

### **Legal Leave**

When an employee is called for jury duty he/she must present his/her principal or immediate supervisor evidence that he/she has been summoned. Employees on leave for jury duty shall be entitled to their usual compensation, less the amount paid by the court.

### **Military Leave**

Employees are entitled to leave, with pay, for up to fifteen (15) working days per calendar year, for active military duty or training. When possible, military leave should be scheduled during non-instructional time, or when it is the least disruptive to the employee's work requirements. Employees who anticipate military duty during the school year must complete and submit a leave request form to the Director of Schools within thirty (30) days of the commencement of the anticipated military duty or within thirty (30) days of the beginning of the school year. The employee must also submit a copy of the orders for duty, including the date of departure with the leave request form.

### **Family Medical Leave Act**

The Family Medical Leave Act was enacted to allow employees to take up to twelve (12) weeks of leave time for medical reasons (the birth or adoption of a child, or for the care of a child, spouse or parent who has a serious health condition). Any full time female employee requesting leave due to pregnancy and childbirth shall be granted at least four (4) months leave pursuant to Tennessee's Maternity Leave Statute.

- **Eligibility:** In order to be entitled to FMLA leave, an employee must have been employed by the School system for twelve (12) months, working at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) month period immediately preceding the FMLA leave. Hours used for leave, even FMLA leave, will not be credited to service for purposes of FMLA eligibility.
- **Restrictions:** For foreseeable leave, an employee shall provide the Director of Schools with written notice, on the applicable leave request form, at least thirty (30) days before the beginning of the anticipated FMLA leave.

The Director of Schools may require that a request for FMLA leave be supported by certification issued by a health care provider.

If there is any reason to doubt the validity of the certification provided, the Director of Schools may require, at the expense of the school system, an opinion of a second health care provider.

Any leave taken pursuant to state leave or other leave policies (personal leave, sick leave, or worker's compensation) may run concurrently with FMLA leave if the employee is given adequate notice. The notice may be given orally or in writing. If notice is oral, it shall be confirmed in writing no later than the following payday.

- **Requirements:** After return from FMLA, the employee shall be restored to the same position or employment or an equivalent position with no loss of benefits, pay, or other terms of employment.

An employee on FMLA leave is entitled to keep his/her group health insurance on the same terms as all other employees for the duration of the leave. However, the school system may recover its share of the health insurance premium paid if the employee fails to return from leave after the period of leave has expired for a reason other than the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition or other circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

## **Payroll Deductions**

Deductions will automatically be made from your pay for FICA (Social Security and Medicare) and federal income taxes. If you are covered under the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System, an additional deduction will be made for this purpose.

You may also have additional **elected**, payroll deductions made for several reasons including:

- The portion that you must pay for health insurance benefits
- Your decision to carry additional supplementary life insurance
- Your decision to carry disability insurance
- Contributions you choose to make to a tax-deferred investment plan
- Union dues (if you join) OEA, TEA, NEA

## ***Benefits as an Oneida Special School District Employee***

### **IMPORTANT EMPLOYEE BENEFIT COVERAGE INFORMATION**

You must contact the payroll and benefits office if you have any changes that will affect your benefits coverage, beneficiaries, or personnel records. Contact the office with details for any of the following changes:

- Address
- Telephone number
- Marital status
- Birth or adoption of a child
- Death of a dependent

- Change in employment status of your spouse

**\*Note** – There are important deadlines that must be met for coverage changes and it is your responsibility to inform the payroll office in a timely manner. Failure to do so will result in denial of coverage.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF COVERAGE**

If any statement or information contained in this handbook conflicts with the terms of any employee benefit plan, the terms and conditions of such employee benefit plan will control. All descriptions of employee benefit programs contained in this handbook are provided solely for the purpose of giving you a convenient overview of programs presently maintained. The actual terms and conditions of any benefit program can only be determined by reference to the appropriate employee benefit plan documentation and related written materials including any relevant insurance policies or other formal documentation.

### **Insurance**

The Oneida Special School District provides the employee with a comprehensive benefits package. This package includes major medical insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, and disability income insurance. The employee may be responsible for all or a portion of the premium of each benefit – depending on the benefit. You are eligible to participate in most benefits if you are a full-time employee working at least 30 hours per week. Your non-contributory benefits are effective on the first day of the month following your first pay period. Contributory benefits are effective on the first day of the month following the first payroll for the benefit. Part-time employees are not eligible for benefits.

- \* *Eligible new hires must complete and return an enrollment form within 30 days of their date of hire – although eligibility for health and welfare benefits is the first of the month following your first pay period.*

For more information about benefits, health insurance, life insurance, or retirement, contact **the Benefits Administrator** at the Central Office at (423) 569-8912.

## **Major Medical Insurance**

The major medical insurance is provided through the State of Tennessee. There are several options available through Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Tennessee and Cigna. Also available are dental plans as well, as a Basic / Expanded Vision plan. Please check with the central office for an updated list of premium costs.

As health insurance guidelines may change from one contract year to the next, please refer to the Partners for Health Eligibility and Enrollment Guide which was provided at your New Hire Orientation. Further information may also be obtained on the following websites:

[www.partnersforhealthtn.gov](http://www.partnersforhealthtn.gov)

[www.bcbst.com/tools/findadoctor](http://www.bcbst.com/tools/findadoctor) (Look for Network S)

[www.cigna.com](http://www.cigna.com) (Open Access Plus Network)

The Oneida Special School District offers an exciting benefit available to all employees. A Full Flex Section 125 Plan (Cafeteria Plan) will be implemented as one of your employee benefits at **NO COST** to you. The plan will create valuable tax savings for many employees of our school district who have eligible expenses by allowing them to be paid for with PRE-TAX Dollars. The Plan has three parts. The first deals with insurance premiums, the second with out of pocket medical expenses, and the third with dependent care expenses. Participating in any part of this plan will decrease your taxable income, therefore increasing your take home pay.

### **Part 1 – WHAT IS PREMIUM CONVERSION?**

Premium Conversion allows you to pay for certain employer-sponsored insurance premiums with pre-tax dollars. For example: Health, Dental, Cancer, Hospital Indemnity, Accident, Cardiac, Intensive Care, and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance premiums can all be deducted from your paycheck before taxes if the policies meet certain criteria.

### **Part 2 – WHAT IS A MEDICAL FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT?**

Medical Flexible Spending Accounts allow you to pay for qualifying medical expenses on a pre-tax basis. Expenses can come from the following areas: family medical deductibles or co-pays, eye care expenses, prescription drugs, certain over the counter drugs, and family dental expenses. It is allowable to exempt medical expenses for yourself, your spouse and all dependents you list on your federal tax return. There is a \$5,000 annual maximum for these expenses.



### **Part 3 – HOW DOES DEPENDENT CARE REIMBURSEMENT WORK?**



Expenses for: 1) Children under age 13; 2) A disabled spouse; 3) Or a person of any age who is unable (mentally or physically) to take care of him or herself, and who spends at least eight hours a day in your home are eligible to be deducted from your check through Dependent Care Reimbursement. The maximum dollar amount allowable under IRS regulations is \$5,000 dollars (\$2,500 if married and filing separately) per plan year.

The Cafeteria Plan is an excellent way to generate tax savings. Elections will be for a 12-month period, **May 1st of the current year to April 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year**, and cannot be altered unless you have a change in family status. Examples of a status change include death, marriage, divorce, adoption, birth, or a spouse employment change.

**Oneida Special School District**, will make available, through your Cafeteria Plan, a menu of voluntary supplemental insurance plans. Plans that will be available are:

- Long and Short Term Disability
- Cardiac Care
- Accident Elite
- Critical Illness
- Cancer Care Elite
- Intensive Care
- Universal and Term Life
- Hospital Indemnity

For more information on the plans offered, visit their web site at [www.usablelife.com](http://www.usablelife.com).

## **COBRA NOTICE**

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) requires employer-sponsored group health plans to allow covered employees and dependents to elect to have their current coverage continued, at group rates, following a qualifying loss of coverage. This notice

is intended to apprise employees and their eligible dependents of their rights and obligations under the law.

## **Eligibility for Continuation of Benefits**

An employee is eligible to continue his/her group medical and/or dental insurance when such insurance would otherwise terminate due to a reduction of work hours or termination of employment, other than termination due to gross misconduct. An employee's spouse and dependent children will also be permitted to continue coverage when they lose eligibility under the group plan as a result of:

- The employee's death, entitlement to Medicare, termination of employment, or reduction in work hours
- Divorce or legal separation
- Loss of dependent child status due to age or marriage

Continuation coverage is also available to dependents born or adopted during the period of COBRA coverage. Continuation is not available to anyone who: (1) is entitled to Medicare or (2) becomes covered under another group plan which does not contain an exclusion or limitation with respect to a preexisting condition of that person.

## **Length of Continued Benefits**

An employee or eligible dependents may continue coverage for up to 18 months when group insurance terminates due to a reduction of work hours or termination of employment, other than termination due to gross misconduct.

An individual determined to be disabled under Title II (OASDI) or Title XVI (SSI) of the Social Security Act within the 60-day period beginning on the date of a reduction in work hours (or termination of employment) may have their continuation of coverage extended from 18 to 29 months, if the determination is provided before the end of the 18 month period. When it is determined under the Social Security Act that the individual is no longer disabled, continuation of coverage beyond 18 months will end in the month that begins the 30 days after the determination. This 29-month coverage is also available to the Qualified Beneficiary (dependent) of the employee if the disability existed at any time during the first 60 days of continuation coverage.

Continuation of coverage for a spouse and/or dependent children is available for up to 36 months in all other cases. If a spouse or child is receiving 18 months of continued coverage because of an employee's termination of employment or reduction of work hours, and a second qualifying event occurs, continuation may be extended to 36 months from the date of the first qualifying loss of coverage.

***\*It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Payroll Office of the qualifying event.***

## **LIFE INSURANCE**

### **Basic Life Insurance**

The school system offers a \$35,000 Life and Accidental Death benefits through US Able Life. If such a loss is a result of an accidental injury, an additional \$35,000 will be paid. Family life coverage is also available at \$5,000 spouse and \$2,000 child 6 months to age 14 years.

### Short Term Disability

Short term disability, at the rate of \$100 per week, payable after missing 8 days of work due to an illness and on the first day due to an accident are payable for up to 26 weeks. The illness or accident must be considered a qualifying disability, as per policy and coverage, is available to all employees. There are certain restrictions that apply; such as, the disability cannot coincide with Worker’s Comp or Sick Leave pay.

***Employees should note that in order to take advantage of the disability coverage, they must also be enrolled in the life insurance benefit. However, you may take the life insurance benefit without taking the disability benefit.***

Complete guidelines can be obtained from the Central Office.

<b>Monthly Premiums – Employees Pay</b>		
	<b>Life</b>	<b>Disability</b>
Single.....	\$2.80	+ \$7.40
Family.....	\$3.64	+ \$7.40

### Retirement

One of the most valuable benefits of your employment is coverage under the State of Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS). This plan provides a benefit based upon length of service and average salary prior to retirement. The employee contributes 5% of salary to the retirement system and contributions are made on a tax-deferred basis. The OSSD contributes the amount that makes the plan actuarially sound. Employees are vested in the plan after five (5) years of service. For more information, see the TCRS web site at [www.treasury.state.tn.us/tcrs/](http://www.treasury.state.tn.us/tcrs/).

### Retirement Planning with 403(b) Funding

All employees are eligible to establish their individual retirement plan using tax-deferred annuities (TDAs). TDAs are flexible in the investments available. The retirement fund may be structured based on the employee’s investment temperament, with available options from the very conservative to the most aggressive. The retirement income received from the TDA is based on the performance of the investment vehicles chosen. Listed on the following page are eligible providers who are eligible to market TDA’s in the OSSD:

- Ameriprise Financial.....(423) 569-5055
- Horace Mann IRA.....(800) 999-1030
- Horace Mann TSA.....(800) 999-1030

***\*Employees must contact the companies independently to enroll in the available plans offered through payroll deductions. Additional questions can be directed to the Oneida Special School District Central Office (423) 569-8912 x 221.***

## **Professional Dues**

- **Authorization**

Any employee who is a member of the Association or who has applied for membership may authorize payroll deduction of professional dues by completing a payroll deduction form.

- **Regular Deduction**

Pursuant to the deduction authorization, the Payroll Office shall deduct one-tenth (1/10) of total dues from the regular salary checks of the certified employees and affiliates who wish to join the Association. Deductions will be made each month for ten (10) months, beginning with the August check. *Employees may elect to have all dues deducted from their August check.*

- **Pro-rate Deductions**

Deductions for certified employees who authorize dues deduction after the commencement date of September will be appropriately pro-rated to complete payment in May.

- **Duration**

Any Certified employee who wishes to have dues deducted from their payroll checks must renew their authorization each year. This authorization must be delivered to the Payroll Office at the beginning of the school year. Once such authorization is presented to the Payroll Office, the entire dues deduction will be taken from the Certified employee's payroll checks (September-June).

The Association will present an alphabetical list of all members of the Oneida Education Association to the Payroll Office by August 10<sup>th</sup>. The OEA will notify the Payroll Office in writing of all changes in membership within the Association when those changes occur.