



2016-2017 HANDBOOK

**GENERAL HANDBOOK
FOR ALL EMPLOYEES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LPVEC OVERVIEW	2
PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK	2
MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES	2
ABOUT THE LPVEC	2
COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS	3
INTRODUCTORY PERIOD	3
New Employee Orientation	3
FEDERAL AND STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT LAWS AND RULES	3
Equal Opportunity	3
Americans with disabilities act (ADA)	3
Religious Accommodations	4
Restrictions on Political Activities	4
Criminal Background Checks	4
Conflict of Interest/State Ethics	4
Reporting of Illegal Activities / WHISTLEBLOWER Policy	5
Employment of Relatives	5
Non-Discrimination and Prohibition OF Harassment including sexual harassment	5
Drugs, Alcohol and Weapons	6
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE	6
Smoking PROHIBITED	7
Anti-Violence Policy	7
Non-Discrimination Against Students	7
Workers' Compensation	7
Unemployment Compensation	8
EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES	8
PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS	8
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT	8
MEETING JOB EXPECTATIONS	9
Confidentiality	9
DRESS CODE	9
Performance Evaluation	9
Employment Documentation	9
Personal Information	10
Work Schedules	10
Unpaid meal breaks	10
Paid rest breaks	10
nursing mothers	10
FITNESS FOR DUTY	10
Attendance and Absences	11
MANDATED REPORTER OBLIGATION	11
DISCIPLINARY Actions for Unacceptable Activities	12
Violations Which May Result in Dismissal	12
Complaint Resolution Procedure	13
Transfer	13
Resignation or Retirement	14
GENERAL WORKPLACE POLICIES	15
CALENDAR	15
School Cancellations	15
JOB DESCRIPTIONS	15

PERSONNEL RECORDS	15
EMPLOYEE IMMUNIZATION & WORK EXCLUSION.....	15
ASBESTOS HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE (AHER).....	16
PRIVATE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES	16
MILEAGE ALLOWANCE AND TRAVEL PERMISSION.....	16
SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY REPLACEMENT/RESTITUTION	16
REHIRE POLICY.....	16
COMPENSATION	17
Starting Salary & Salary Increases.....	17
Pay Schedule	17
Time Sheets/Attendance Records.....	17
Direct Deposit Option	18
Payroll Deductions	18
EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS & CATEGORIES.....	18
PRORATED SALARIES.....	19
SAFE HARBOR POLICY	19
SALARY BASIS POLICY	19
Circumstances in Which the Employer May Make Deductions from Pay:	19
What To Do If An Improper Deduction Occurs:	20
BENEFITS	20
Employee Benefits	20
BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY.....	20
ACCRUED LEAVE WITH PAY.....	21
Vacation	22
Health Plan Enrollment.....	22
FITNESS CLUB REFUND.....	23
PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM	23
Continuation of Health Insurance (COBRA).....	23
Dental Coverage	24
Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA).....	24
DEPENDENT CARE FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT	24
HEALTH BENEFITS FOR RETIREES	24
HEALTH BENEFITS FOR SURVIVING SPOUSE/FAMILY	24
Retirement Plans.....	24
Social Security & Medicare	25
Employee Assistance Program	25
HOLIDAYS	25
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TUITION REIMBURSEMENT	25
TAX-SHELTERED ANNUITY PLANS	26
credit unions.....	26
LIFE & DISABILITY INSURANCE	26
Autotomobile and home discount insurance	26
Horace Mann Educators Corp.	26
WORKPLACE ADVANTAGE	26
other lpmec employee discounts.....	26
LEAVE OF ABSENCE	27
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)	27
MEDICAL LEAVE.....	28
Parental Leave	29
Employee Leave for Family Obligations (Small Necessities Leave)	29
COMPASSIONATE CARE LEAVE	29
BEREAVEMENT LEAVE.....	30

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE.....	30
Military Leave	31
Jury Duty	31
Unpaid Personal Leaves of Absence	31
Acknowledgement of Receipt of Employee Handbook and Understanding of At-Will Employment Status	34



July 2016

Dear Faculty and Staff:

Welcome! We are honored you have chosen the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative as your desired place of employment. Students are at the center of our member districts' collaborative vision and mission, and we feel our students are best served by an informed and educated faculty and staff. In this spirit, we are providing you with this handbook, which addresses the business and personnel features of our organization.

Employees should understand that we are governed by both federal and state laws on many issues and by state and LPVEC policy in others. It is each employee's responsibility to be aware that these laws exist along with the policies, guidelines, and procedures established in the member district agreements, school procedures, and other relevant sources.

The guidelines in this handbook are established to provide compliance with legal issues and to ensure consistency in our efforts throughout the Collaborative. With this common understanding in place, we can devote the majority of our time to helping our educators, staff and students succeed. In all cases, if you are not sure how to proceed in a particular situation, please seek advice from the Office of Human Resources.

Please acknowledge your receipt of this handbook, and your intention to read and comply with its contents, by signing and returning the last page of the manual to the Office of Human Resources. If you are an employee whose contract is being renewed for FY17, you are required to sign and return a salary notification that includes a statement about your requirement to follow the provisions within the handbooks provided to you.

Thank you for your service to our member districts and all our students. I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Andrew M. Churchill

Andrew M. Churchill
Executive Director

LPVEC OVERVIEW

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative (LPVEC) is to increase the capacity of school districts through economies of scale, providing high-quality shared programs and services that supplement district offerings in a cost-effective manner. The primary purpose of LPVEC is to accomplish this mission in the member districts: Agawam, East Longmeadow, Hampden-Wilbraham, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Southwick-Tolland-Granville, and West Springfield.

PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

Whether you have just joined our staff or have been at LPVEC for a while, we are confident that at LPVEC you will find a dynamic and rewarding place to work. We consider the employees of LPVEC to be one of its most valuable resources.

A complete listing of all LPVEC Policies can be found on the LPVEC website at www.lpvec.org. The purpose of this guide is to acquaint employees with the standard operating procedures of the LPVEC. It applies to all LPVEC employees. Its content represents a summary of the principles that the LPVEC promotes, the benefits it provides, and the obligations individuals are expected to fulfill as employees. While it should provide the answers to many questions, it is by no means exclusive.

The LPVEC's policies, benefits, and rules, as explained in this manual, may be changed from time to time as circumstances, employment legislation, and economic conditions dictate. If and when provisions are changed, you will be notified. No statement or promise by a supervisor, manager, or department head may be interpreted as a change in policy nor will it constitute an agreement with an employee. This guide is not a contract. Unless you have a written contract of employment with LPVEC for a specific period of time, your employment is at-will meaning either you or LPVEC may terminate your employment at any time for any lawful reason. Also, the guide makes no guarantees of employment, compensation, or benefits. Additional policies and more detailed policies can be found on our website at www.LPVEC.org. You are responsible to review and abide by the policies and procedures of this handbook and those online. Violation of LPVEC policies, both in this handbook and those online, may result in corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

Read through the guide carefully. We recognize that employees are bound to have many questions relating to their specific position or responsibilities. You are encouraged to direct any specific inquiries you may have to your immediate supervisor or to contact the Office of Human Resources, 174 Brush Hill Avenue, West Springfield, MA, at 413-735-2200 for additional information or assistance.

MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The LPVEC Office of Human Resources is committed to providing YOU with excellent employee service. Each member of the Office of Human Resources is individually and collectively accountable for adding value to the LPVEC by providing workplace solutions, and treating those they serve fairly, with dignity, respect and professionalism. We welcome your questions about policies, procedures, and benefits. We are here to assist you as best we can and encourage you to call or email. You can reach your Office of Human Resources at 413-735-2200 or by email at HR@LPVEC.ORG.

ABOUT THE LPVEC

Organized in 1974, the LPVEC is a group of seven school districts legally bound in a collaborative governance structure under the provisions of Chapter 40, Section 4E, and Chapter 797 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The LPVEC is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of one representative from each of the member school committees.

The LPVEC's current budget is approximately \$20 million and it employs approximately 400 staff. The LPVEC, while the second largest of the Massachusetts educational collaboratives, is the most multi-purpose. It conducts a greater variety of education related programs and services than do other collaboratives. While the foundation of the LPVEC remains the special educational and career/vocational technical education programs, the LPVEC is dedicated to assisting its member school districts in the development and operation of both efficient and cost-effective education-related services.

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

All communications or reports to the LPVEC Board of Directors or any of its subcommittees from directors, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Executive Director. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Board for administrative decisions on important matters, except those that are outside the Board's legal authority, provided that the Executive Director has been notified on the forth-coming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Board's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Board meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe firsthand the Board's deliberations on issues of staff concern.

INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

All newly-hired staff and all current staff assigned to a new position within the LPVEC are required to successfully complete a period of introductory employment in order that the employee and the LPVEC may evaluate the suitability of the employee for his/her new position. This policy applies to all regular full-time and part-time positions, except the position of Executive Director.

The Introductory Period will consist of the first 90-days from date of hire for all new employees or from the date of transfer for any existing employee who changes jobs. During the Introductory Period, the LPVEC may dismiss a newly hired employee without advance notice or obligation. Newly-hired employees who are separated during the Introductory Period have no appeal rights under the LPVEC's grievance procedure.

If during the Introductory Period for existing employees who have been transferred to a new position, the employee's supervisor feels the newly-assigned employee is not successfully filling the requirements of the new position or the employee is dissatisfied with the new position, the employee may be returned to his or her former position, if available, offered another position within the LPVEC, or subject to any other appropriate action under LPVEC personnel policies.

Completion of the Introductory Period does not confer any additional rights on either newly-hired or newly-assigned employees. All employees of the LPVEC are at-will, regardless of their status, unless they are subject to an employment contract.

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Department administrators and supervisors want new employees to be successful in their jobs and are prepared to answer questions employees may have about specific responsibilities, work hours and general policies and procedures relating to employment with the LPVEC. You may also contact the Office of Human Resources (413-735-2200) with general questions.

FEDERAL AND STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT LAWS AND RULES

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The LPVEC is an Equal Opportunity employer. The LPVEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, age, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or expression, marital status, or any other class protected by state, federal, or local laws.

Equal Opportunity applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, transfer, termination, layoff, compensation, benefits and all other conditions and privileges of employment in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws. The LPVEC's Executive Director or Director of Human Resources are available at 413-735-2200 to answer any questions or concerns an employee may have regarding these or related matters.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The LPVEC does not discriminate in admission, treatment or access to its programs or activities or in employment in its programs or activities. The LPVEC also does not discriminate against an individual with a disability with

regard to job application procedures, hiring, advancement or discharge, compensation, job training or other conditions of employment. There is also a state law protecting disabled employees from discrimination on the basis of their disability, Massachusetts General Laws, Ch151B, Sec 4 (16). If an individual with a disability wishes to request reasonable accommodations pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act, the Office of Human Resources should be contacted at 174 Brush Hill Avenue, West Springfield, MA 01089 or by calling 413-735-2200.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

In accordance with federal and state law, LPVEC will provide reasonable accommodations to an employee's religious beliefs or practices, unless doing so would cause an undue hardship as that term is defined under federal and/or state law. Depending on the circumstance, such accommodations may include reasonable adjustments to the work environment that will allow an employee to practice his or her religion. This policy not only gives consideration to requests for schedule changes or leave for religious observances, but may also give consideration to such things as dress or grooming practices that an employee has for religious reasons.

When an employee or applicant needs an accommodation for religious reasons, he/she should notify Human Resources or his/her supervisor that he/she needs such an accommodation for religious reasons.

RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

While public employees have the same fundamental civic responsibilities and privileges as other citizens, including campaigning for an elective public office and holding an elective or appointive public office, LPVEC employees are prohibited in connection with campaigning from using LPVEC and school district facilities, equipment or supplies and shall not discuss any such campaign with LPVEC or school personnel or students during the working day nor shall an employee use any time during the working day for campaigning purposes and students may not be pressured into campaigning for any staff member.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

The LPVEC employment verification process includes criminal record (CORI) checks and National Criminal Background Fingerprint (SAFIS) check in addition to personal and professional references, educational and employment background checks. All offers of employment are contingent upon satisfactory results of these employment screening processes as well as any others that may be required. The LPVEC reserves the right to periodically update CORI records for individual employees, employees in specific job categories or the LPVEC staff as a whole. An unsatisfactory CORI or SAFIS report may result in termination of employment. CORI information must be obtained at least every three (3) years during an employee's term of employment with the LPVEC. Employees who are involved in criminal proceedings that may affect employment should assure notification to the Executive Director or Director of Human Resources and take prompt action to allow update of employment records. Please see LPVEC's CORI policy for more information.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST/STATE ETHICS

All employees of LPVEC are subject to Massachusetts Conflict of Interest law (M.G.L. c. 268A) as municipal employees. It is essential that public employees avoid official actions which are influenced by potential gain or benefit, or may be perceived as such. As per the Conflict of Interest Law, it is illegal under state law for a public employee to accept work related gifts in excess of \$50.00 in value. All employees receive on an annual basis a summary of the state ethics law that has been prepared by the State Ethics Commission and employees are required by law to sign and return an acknowledgement of receipt to the Office of Human Resources. Additionally, all employees are required to complete an online ethics training program found on the State Ethics Commission website within 30 days of hire and every two years thereafter and to provide a certification of completion to the Office of Human Resources.

The Ethics Commission recently created an exemption to permit class gifts to teachers. A teacher may accept a gift or several gifts during the school year, from public school students and/or their parents and guardians, with an aggregated value up to \$150, if the gift is identified only as being from the class and the identity of the givers and the individual amounts given are not identified to the recipient. A teacher may accept a class gift and also individual gifts from persons who did not contribute to the class gift. Individual gifts must be disclosed if, based on

the specific circumstances, a reasonable person might think that the teacher's actions would be influenced by the gift.

Questions concerning conflict of interest should be directed to the State Ethics Commission at One Ashburton Place, Room 619, Boston, MA 02108 or at 617-371-9500 or fax to 617-723-5851 or on the website at www.mass.gov/ethics.

REPORTING OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES / WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Pursuant to the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws chapter 149, section 185, the LPVEC does not retaliate against any employee who (i) discloses, or threatens to disclose to a supervisor or to a public body an activity, policy or practice of the employer, or of another employer with whom the employee's employer has a business relationship, that the employee reasonably believes to be in violation of a law, or a rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to law, or which the employee reasonably believes poses a risk to public health, safety or the environment; (ii) provides information to, or testifies before, any public body conducting an investigation, hearing or inquiry into any violation of law, or a rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to law, or activity, policy or practice which the employee reasonably believes poses a risk to public health, safety or the environment by the employer, or by another employer with whom the employee's employer has a business relationship; or (iii) objects to, or refuses to participate in any activity, policy or practice which the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, or a rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to law, or which the employee reasonably believes poses a risk to public health safety or the environment. Employees who have such concerns may file a written disclosure with either the Executive Director or the Director of Human Resources.

EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

If you and members of your immediate family are employed by the LPVEC, this relationship must be disclosed to LPVEC as one may not supervise the other. If the employees and the department head are unable to develop a workable solution, the Executive Director will decide which employee may be transferred in such situations. For purposes of this section, your immediate family includes your spouse or domestic partner, your children, your siblings, your parents, your grandparents, and your spouse's or domestic partner's children, siblings, parents and grandparents. Should two current employees, one of whom supervises the other, enter into a personal, non-work related relationship, one or both employees may have to be transferred.

The definition of employment includes permanent, temporary and intermittent employment of any kind, service agreements and consultant agreements, or any other financial arrangement compensating an individual for services, including compensation from external organizations providing services supervised by an employee.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND PROHIBITION OF HARASSMENT INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The LPVEC seeks to promote a workplace and educational environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, whether based on race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or disability. The LPVEC will not tolerate harassing or discriminatory conduct, whether verbal, physical, or in any other form, that affects employment or educational conditions, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or school environment. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about harassment, discrimination or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of such a complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

To achieve our goal of providing a workplace free from such harassment, the conduct that is described in this policy will not be tolerated and a procedure is in place by which inappropriate conduct will be dealt with, if encountered by employees.

Please note that while this policy sets forth the LPVEC's goals of promoting a workplace that is free of harassment, the policy is not designed or intended to limit LPVEC's authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace conduct which LPVEC deems unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of harassment.

Harassment and discrimination consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal or physical, that is based on a characteristic protected by law. Harassment and discrimination includes, but is not limited to, display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are degrading to a person or group described above; or verbal abuse or insults about, directed at, or made in the presence of an individual or group described above. Sexual harassment means sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct are made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment, academic standing, school-related opportunities or as a basis for employment decisions or such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment.

An individual who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination, sexual or otherwise, has a right to file a complaint, either in writing or orally, with the LPVEC. The complaint may be filed with the individual's immediate supervisor or the Office of Human Resources, who is located at 174 Brush Hill Avenue, West Springfield, Massachusetts 01089 (413-735-2200). Additionally employees who observe incidents of harassment or discrimination should immediately report such incidents to their immediate supervisor or the Office of Human Resources.

All reports of harassment or discrimination, sexual or otherwise, will be investigated promptly in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Our investigation will typically include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. We will typically also interview the person alleged to have committed the harassment. When we have completed our investigation, we will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation. If determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate, which may include up to termination from employment or other related discipline.

In addition to filing a complaint with the LPVEC, employees who believe that they have been subjected to harassment or discrimination, sexual or otherwise, may file a formal complaint with either the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, which is located at One Ashburton Place, Room 601, Boston, Massachusetts (617-994-6000), or the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center Boston, Massachusetts 02203 (1-800-669-4000). Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (300 days). For a complete copy of the LPVEC Non-Discrimination and Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment Policy, contact the Office of Human Resources. A copy also can be found on the LPVEC's website (www.LPVEC.org).

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND WEAPONS

The LPVEC recognizes that it has an obligation to maintain a healthy and safe working environment by promoting a safe working environment. In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance by its employees is prohibited. The use or possession of any controlled substance (except for legal medications prescribed by a physician) in any quantity, the sale of any controlled substance in any quantity or the unauthorized possession of dangerous weapons, firearms or explosives while at work or on LPVEC or School property, or being intoxicated or under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on duty is strictly prohibited and is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination. Any employee convicted or found guilty of a criminal offense involving a controlled substance is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, regardless of whether the offense was on school property or during working hours. Management and employees may be subject to administration of drug and/or alcohol screening processes to test for unauthorized use of a controlled substance and/or alcohol.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE

The LPVEC computer networks are connected to the Internet and other on-line services in order to allow the LPVEC to serve the public more efficiently and effectively. Accordingly, various on-line capabilities are made available to designated LPVEC employees for legitimate, work-related purposes. Employees should have no expectation of privacy when using LPVEC resources including but not limited to phones, computers, tablets, and wireless internet.

Use of these capabilities is subject to the same management oversight and supervision as any other employee activity. For more specific information about what is permitted and what is prohibited, see your supervisor and read the Acceptable Use Policy, which is available on the LPVEC website (www.LPVEC.org).

All users are expected to exercise good judgment and professionalism in the content and tone of their email messages and in the accessing of Internet sites. Email messages sent through the LPVEC are public documents and should not be used to convey confidential information.

The following are guidelines for effective "Email etiquette":

- Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation
- Try to be concise and to the point
- Avoid using all capital letters (it gives the impression you are shouting)
- Do not forward chain letters or unsolicited information
- Only send email to those individuals directly concerned with the subject
- Avoid using email to communicate regarding private or confidential matters. If used, take precautionary steps to assure appropriate dissemination.

Additionally, the LPVEC has a policy governing how web pages are created and the purposes for which such pages made be created. For more information, consult a copy of the policy which is posted on the LPVEC's website (www.LPVEC.org).

SMOKING PROHIBITED

Smoking or the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds, on school buses or within twenty (20) feet of any School Department building by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited by law (M.G.L., Chapter 71, Section 37H) and by City ordinance and is strictly enforced. For the purpose of this policy, electronic cigarettes or vaping are prohibited.

ANTI-VIOLENCE POLICY

All employees of the LPVEC are expected to treat each other with respect and conduct themselves in a manner that promotes a safe, healthy workplace and educational environment. The LPVEC is committed to working with its employees to maintain a work and educational environment free from violence, threats of violence, harassment or intimidation. All reports of incidents are taken seriously and are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Furthermore, the LPVEC expects its employees to report any instances of violent, intimidating, threatening or other disruptive behavior to their supervisor, building administrator and/or the Office of Human Resources as soon as possible. If an employee's safety is threatened, the employee should contact the police immediately.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AGAINST STUDENTS

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Law chapter 76, section 5 "[no] person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation." LPVEC is committed to providing an atmosphere in which all students can learn and participate in all activities pertaining to their education. Corporal punishment in any form is expressly forbidden.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Workers' Compensation is designed to provide benefits in the event that an individual is injured in connection with his or her employment. At LPVEC, Workers' Compensation costs for LPVEC employees are paid entirely by the LPVEC. If an employee is injured, he/she should immediately notify his/her supervisor and report the accident, no matter how minor it may seem. An Accident Report form, available from the LPVEC website (www.lpvec.org) or the Office of Human Resources, should be completed by the employee's supervisor and submitted immediately to the Office of Human Resources by fax at 413-735-2209 or by email at HR@lpvec.org. A.I.M. Mutual Insurance manages the Workers' Compensation program for all LPVEC departments. Questions concerning Workers' Compensation may be referred to Office of Human Resources at 413-735-2200.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Unemployment Compensation provides temporary income for those who have lost their jobs under certain conditions. For more information about Unemployment Compensation, or to apply for benefits, contact the local office of the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training or the Office of Human Resources. All eligibility and payment decisions are made solely by the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

All employees are expected to demonstrate a professional, cooperative, knowledgeable and courteous demeanor in all interactions with students, parents/guardians, colleagues and members of the community. Work attire should reflect the professional responsibilities of an employee's position, exhibiting concern for safety, hygiene, neatness, cleanliness and projecting positive role models for students. The use of profane language is prohibited and may be cause for disciplinary action.

It is expected that all employees will follow general and specific work and employment guidelines, carry out instructions and directions appropriately issued by supervisors or administrators and perform job duties in a satisfactory manner.

Employees are expected to be regular in attendance, arriving on time and adhering to designated starting and ending times for work, breaks, lunch, prep periods, etc. Employees are advised that LPVEC telephones, supplies, equipment and services (including Internet access and fax machines) are for professional use. Excessive personal calls, or use of supplies, services or equipment for personal reasons are not allowed.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Some rules of conduct are needed in any workplace in order to help everyone work together efficiently, effectively, and harmoniously. Because our mission is to serve the public and because we are empowered with substantial governmental authority to achieve that mission, we must hold ourselves to high standards of quality service and ethical conduct.

By accepting employment with us, you have a responsibility to the public, to the LPVEC and to your fellow employees to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that you understand what conduct is expected and necessary to fulfill our mission, responsibilities, and duty to the public. When each person is aware that he or she can fully depend upon fellow workers to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization will be a better place to work and a more effective servant of the people.

In order to provide a bias-free atmosphere, employees must refrain from making comments pertaining to racial slurs, ethnic jokes, religious bigotry, and detrimental statements or comments concerning race, sexual orientation, color, gender, ancestry, age, religion, national origin, gender identity, or disability. Even comments made in jest may be an insult to others.

Employees are expected to conduct himself or herself in a professional and respectful manner in the workplace. Conduct that discredits the organization, interferes with operations, or is offensive to students, parents, or colleagues will not be tolerated. No employee will engage in or have a financial interest in, directly or indirectly, any activity that conflicts or raises a reasonable question of conflict with the duties and responsibilities of LPVEC.

Contact with students or parents, outside of the scope of business, is discouraged. Exchange of personal information between LPVEC employees and students is prohibited. Personal information includes personal email or cell phone number.

MEETING JOB EXPECTATIONS

In addition to maintaining appropriate standards of conduct, it is the responsibility of employees to fulfill the essential functions of their positions in an acceptable manner. Depending on the position, these measures may be both qualitative and quantitative. Job requirements and qualifications are listed on job postings/descriptions. Your supervisor will discuss and clarify the expectations and standards of your position. Employees who are having difficulty meeting job standards should discuss the issue with their supervisor. In turn, it is the supervisor's responsibility to monitor employee performance and provide counseling, support, and assistance to employees in helping them meet job expectations.

Ultimately, if employees are unable to meet job requirements, corrective action may include reassignment, transfer, demotion or other disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

CONFIDENTIALITY

As an employee of the LPVEC, you may have access to confidential, protected or privileged information. It is expected that employees will protect others' rights to privacy by not releasing such information to unauthorized individuals. Employees should consult their supervisors with any questions regarding confidentiality.

This provision is not intended, and should not be construed, to limit or prevent an employee from exercising rights under the National Labor Relations Act or M.G.L. Ch.150E.

DRESS CODE

Appropriate and professional personal attire is expected of all staff. At all times, staff must remain mindful of the impression their appearance may have on those around them and in particular, the student body we serve. Clothing must be appropriate and should not have the potential of offending others (i.e. graphics, offensive language). Jeans, T-shirts, and hats may not be considered appropriate attire in classroom settings. Transportation employees (bus drivers and bus monitors) may wear jeans, t-shirts and hats. Any questions regarding appropriate attire should be addressed with your supervisor.

On occasion, some schools allow their staff to "dress down" on particular days for charity. LPVEC staff working in these schools may be allowed to dress down with a contribution to the charity. Dress down for LPVEC employees may include jeans (without rips or tears) and well-kept athletic shoes. Transportation employees (bus drivers and bus monitors) may wear jeans, t-shirts and hats. Any questions regarding appropriate attire should be addressed with your supervisor.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Periodically, a supervisor will formally evaluate an employee's job performance and assess how satisfactorily he/she is performing the responsibilities of his/her position.

Performance evaluation is an important factor in continued employment. If an employee does not agree with a performance evaluation, he/she may submit a written response addressing any relevant issues to the supervisor or to the Director for Human Resources. The performance evaluation and any written response an employee may submit will be included in the employee's permanent personnel record.

EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTATION

Teacher and Administrator Licensure/Certification – Teachers and educational administrators are required to possess Massachusetts licensure from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) appropriate to their position and to provide a copy of licensure to the Office of Human Resources at the time of employment, updating throughout employment as necessary. Lack of appropriate licensure may be grounds for termination. Applications for licensure must be made directly to the Massachusetts DESE, as the granting authority.

School Bus Driver License – School Bus Drivers are required to possess appropriate certification for either CDL or 7D licensure appropriate to their position and to provide a copy of valid documents to the Office of Human

Resources at the time of employment, updating throughout employment as necessary. Lack of appropriate licensure may be grounds for termination.

Please see the Personnel Records policy for more information.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Employees are responsible for notifying the Office of Human Resources of changes in name, address, telephone number, and/or family status (births, deaths, divorce, legal separation, etc.), as income tax status and group insurance may be affected by these changes. This responsibility also pertains to employees on lay-off status and leaves of absence.

WORK SCHEDULES

The LPVEC has a need for a variety of work schedules to satisfy the demands of the educational, transportation and business aspects of the LPVEC. The work year may be based on a 10-month, 11-month, 12-month or other schedule, and regular work hours may range from less than 10 to 40 hours or more per week depending upon the nature of the position. One's supervisor or department administrator will explain the work hours associated with a position in accordance with LPVEC policies and answer any pertinent questions.

Employees are expected to be present at their workstations prior to the opening of their assigned departments.

UNPAID MEAL BREAKS

All employees scheduled to work six (6) or more hours will be scheduled for an unpaid meal break of at least 30 minutes. The supervisor will determine the lunch-break schedule.

PAID REST BREAKS

Paid rest breaks of shorter durations (generally 15 minutes) may be scheduled by the supervisor and are not required by Massachusetts law. In cases of customer demand, rest breaks may not be scheduled.

NURSING MOTHERS

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act section 29 USC §207(r) as amended in March 2010, LPVEC will provide nursing mothers with unpaid "reasonable" break time "each time an employee has need" to express breast milk for the first twelve (12) months following the birth of a child. Further, LPVEC will work with the mother to identify a suitable location for the purpose of expressing breast milk.

FITNESS FOR DUTY

The LPVEC is committed to providing a safe working environment and to protect the health and safety of students, faculty and staff, visitors and LPVEC property. This policy provides a mechanism for identifying and intervening in the event that LPVEC has reason to believe that an employee's physical or mental condition could pose a threat of serious, imminent harm to the safety of others and property. **Managers and supervisors should work closely with Human Resources in applying this policy and evaluating employees fitness for duty.**

Employees are required to: 1) report to work fit for duty, 2) notify the manager/supervisor when not fit for duty, 3) notify the manager/supervisor when observing a co-worker who may not be fit for duty, 4) cooperate with a manager/supervisor's directive and/or referral for a medical evaluation.

Managers and Supervisors are required to: 1) observe the attendance, performance and behavior of employees they supervise, 2) interview an employee who appears to be unfit for duty and refer an employee for a medical evaluation when appropriate, 3) record the reasons/observations that triggered the fitness for duty medical evaluation referral, 4) utilize this policy in a fair and consistent manner, respecting the employee's privacy and the confidentiality of medical information, 5) coordinate with Human Resources to obtain Medical Certification when employee returns to work after absence for medical reasons longer than five days.

Procedures:

A triggering event occurs when a manager/supervisor observes or receives a reliable report of an employee's possible lack of fitness for duty. Observations may include, but are not limited to an employee's self-reports, manual dexterity, coordination, alertness, speech, vision acuity, concentration, response to criticism, interactions with parents, children, co-workers, and supervisors, suicidal or threatening statements, change in personal hygiene, and memory.

1. Manager/Supervisor interviews employee, when possible.
2. Manager/Supervisor assesses magnitude of safety risk. Contact Human Resources for assistance.
 - A. **No Risk or Minor Risk:** Keep detailed notes of events, including dates, time, circumstances.
 - B. **Significant Risk:**
 - i. Place employee on paid leave of absence pending Medical Evaluation (sick leave or paid administrative leave, depending on the situation).
 - ii. Refer employee for Medical Evaluation.
 - iii. Arrange for employee's safe transportation home if situation warrants.
 - C. **Severe Risk:**
 - i. Contact police if necessary.
 - ii. Place employee on paid leave of absence pending Medical Evaluation (sick leave or paid administrative leave, depending on the situation).
 - iii. Refer employee for Medical Evaluation.
 - iv. Arrange for employee's safe transportation home.

If, after the Medical Evaluation, the employee is determined not to be fit for duty, the employee may be offered a leave of absence if required under state or federal law or by LPVEC policy. Employees who are not fit for duty at the end of a leave of absence may be separated from employment. Employees whose physical or mental condition qualifies as a disability will be offered reasonable accommodations if those accommodations will permit the employee to safely perform the essential functions of his/her position without substantial risk of serious harm to self or others.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

All employees are responsible to be regular in attendance and to be punctual each work day. If illness, injury or other situation prevents an employee from coming to work or delay an employee from arriving on time, he/she must notify his/her supervisor of the absence as far in advance as possible so that appropriate coverage may be arranged. Also, the employee must notify the LPVEC Central Office of the absence at 413-735-2200. If an employee is absent for 5 or more days, he/she is *required* to provide written medical documentation to the Office of Human Resources to justify the absence. An employee may also be required to provide medical documentation to support absence at any time. In the event of a school bus driver's absence, accurate information must be reported on the route sheet and submitted to the site manager.

Additionally, in the event of a teacher's absence, it is expected that lesson plans and other pertinent materials relating to curriculum and schedules can be easily accessed by the building administrator and the substitute teacher.

Failure to follow this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination.

MANDATED REPORTER OBLIGATION

Pursuant to Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 119, §51A, **any** person that is paid to work with or for children and who in his/her professional capacity reasonably believes that a child under the age of eighteen is suffering from abuse and/or from neglect, is required to immediately report such condition. As an employee of the LPVEC, you are a Mandated Reporter under this law.

LPVEC requires that Mandated Reporters notify their Supervisor or the Office of Human Resources on the day s/he first suspects that abuse or neglect has occurred. After the Supervisor and/or the Office of Human Resources confer with the Executive Director, LPVEC will make a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) if sufficient suspicion of abuse is found. In addition to notifying their Supervisor or the Office of Human Resources, Mandated Reporters may, but are not required to, submit a §51A report to DCF or local law enforcement.

Mandated Reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of filing a report of abuse or neglect, provided that they immediately report, as required by the statute. This provision is designed to encourage Mandated Reporters to file a report whenever they suspect that a child has been abused or is at risk of harm. Also, the law strictly forbids employers from penalizing any employee who reports actual or suspected child abuse or neglect. No LPVEC employee will be discharged, discriminated against, or have any negative action against his or her employment for a report made in good faith and the reporter did not cause the abuse or neglect. "A *Mandated Reporter's Guide*," published by the Department of Children and Families, is available as a reference to assist you in understanding your obligations as a Mandated Reporter. The guide is available by contact the Office of Human Resources or at: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dcf/can-mandated-reporters-guide.pdf>. If you have any questions about these obligations, contact your Supervisor or the Office of Human Resources.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS FOR UNACCEPTABLE ACTIVITIES

Generally speaking, we expect each person to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. However, to avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable activities are noted below. Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as the benefit of the LPVEC. If you have any questions concerning any work or safety rule, or any of the unacceptable activities listed, please see your supervisor for an explanation.

All disciplinary action will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The corrective action imposed will depend upon the seriousness of the misconduct and its impact on the LPVEC, member districts, and their students. Accordingly, the LPVEC generally uses the following five-step, progressive corrective action process, which include: 1) verbal warning, 2) letter of concern, 3) letter of reprimand, 4) suspension without pay, 5) termination. LPVEC reserves the right to skip or omit steps as deem reasonable and appropriate based on the severity and frequency of the infraction under consideration, including opting for termination without prior corrective action where appropriate. If suspended, exempt employees' pay may be docked for full day absences where permitted by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employees may provide a written rebuttal to any corrective action placed in their personnel file. All rebuttals are attached to the corresponding corrective letter and filed in their personnel file.

We list these standards for the guidance of all employees and supervisors. We do not expect anyone to engage in these activities, but we believe everyone is served by our being clear as to what is not acceptable.

VIOLATIONS WHICH MAY RESULT IN DISMISSAL

Occurrences of any of the following violations, because of their seriousness, may result in dismissal without prior disciplinary action. This list is not exhaustive and LPVEC reserves the right to terminate employees for offenses not contained on this list:

1. Violation of any LPVEC rule; any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to the LPVEC's efforts to provide services effectively and efficiently.
2. Negligence or any careless action which endangers the life or safety of another person or student.
3. Violation of security or safety rules or failure to observe safety rules or LPVEC safety practices; failure to wear required safety equipment; tampering with LPVEC equipment or safety equipment.
4. Being intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substance drugs while at work; use, possession or sale of any controlled substance, in any quantity while on LPVEC or School property except for medications prescribed by a physician which do not impair work performance.
5. Unauthorized possession of dangerous weapons, firearms, or explosives on LPVEC or School property or while on duty.
6. Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence; making threats of violence toward anyone on LPVEC or School premises or when representing the LPVEC; fighting, horseplay, provoking a fight on LPVEC or School property; or negligent damage of property. The LPVEC regards fighting as a very serious offense. If confronted by another employee or member of the public, we expect you to retreat, and not escalate the situation or retaliate. You should only take defensive action.
7. Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your supervisor pertaining to your work; refusal to help out on a special assignment.
8. Engaging in an act of sabotage; willfully or with gross negligence causing the destruction or damage of LPVEC or School property, or the property of fellow employees, members of the public, vendors, or visitors in any manner.

9. Theft of LPVEC or School property or the property of fellow employees; unauthorized possession or removal of any LPVEC or School property, (including documents), from the premises without prior permission from management; unauthorized use of LPVEC or School equipment or property for personal reasons; using LPVEC or School equipment for profit.
10. Dishonesty; willful falsification or misrepresentation on your application for employment or other work records; lying about sick or personal leave; falsifying the reason for a leave of absence or other data requested by the LPVEC; failing to tell the truth at any time during the course of your employment with the LPVEC; intentionally and willfully misrepresenting information about the LPVEC or its employees to members of the media; failing to tell the truth during the course of a LPVEC investigation; alteration of LPVEC records or other LPVEC documents.
11. Violating the privacy of others by releasing confidential or protected information to outside individuals, organizations, or to unauthorized LPVEC employees; breach of confidentiality of personnel or personal information.
12. Malicious comments about others and/or spreading rumors harmful to individuals or the LPVEC's interests; engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony; interfering with another employee on the job; willfully restricting work output or encouraging others to do the same.
13. Actions in violation of your public trust, including abuse of the authority vested in you as a public official, to seek unwarranted gain or exemptions for yourself or others.
14. Threatening, intimidating, harassing or coercing fellow employees, customers, or members of the public; interfering with another employee on the job; using obscene or abusive language towards another employee, customer, or member of the public; threatening or employing physical violence towards another employee, customer, or member of the public. Such conduct is prohibited at all times, whether the employee or employees concerned are off-duty or on-duty, and whether the conduct occurs on or off the LPVEC or School premises.

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

The LPVEC investigates all complaints received regarding its policies and practices and seeks to resolve differences that may arise among employees in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation generally will be conducted in such a way to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. If it is determined inappropriate conduct has been committed, appropriate action will be taken. Employees and students are encouraged to attempt resolution within their school and administrative office and may seek advice from appropriate individuals or the Office of Human Resources without being required to file a formal complaint.

LPVEC provides a communication channel for all employee complaints and grievances as follow:

- Step One:** Discuss the issue with your Supervisor. If you don't reasonably believe a discussion with your Supervisor is appropriate, you may proceed directly with Step Two.
- Step Two:** Request a meeting with the Director of Human Resources, who will consider the facts, conduct an investigation, and review the matter with the Executive Director. You will normally receive a response regarding your concern within ten (10) working days of meeting with the Director of Human Resources.
- Step Three:** Employees may prepare a written summary of your concerns and request that the matter be reviewed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director, after a full examination of the facts (which may include a review of the written summary of your statement, discussions with all individuals concerned, and a further investigation if necessary), will normally render a decision within fifteen (15) working days.
- Step Four:** Employees may pursue the complaint further by preparing a written summary of concerns and submitting it within 10 days from the Executive Director's decision to: LPVEC Board of Directors, 174 Brush Hill Avenue, West Springfield, MA 01089. The summary will be presented to the Board of Directors at their next scheduled meeting. You may attend the meeting to appeal your case. Decisions by the Board of Directors are final.

TRANSFER

Employees may apply for or be considered for transfer to different positions or between programs and departments when opportunities arise. In most instances, once approved, a transfer should become effective

within 2-4 weeks' time unless unusual circumstances exist. LPVEC reserves the right to transfer staff between programs and departments in the best interest of our students.

RESIGNATION OR RETIREMENT

In the event that an employee resigns employment, he/she is expected to provide a minimum of two weeks written notice to his/her supervisor and to the Director for Human Resources. Certain administrative employees have a greater notice requirement under individual contracts. Employees are encouraged to arrange an exit interview with the Director of Human Resources.

If an employee plans to retire, he/she should send written advance notification to his/her supervisor and the Office of Human Resources, and also directly contact the Board of the Retirement Plan in which he or she is enrolled well in advance of the anticipated date of retirement to assure that any pension payments and insurance benefits due will be coordinated to avoid gaps in income or insurance coverage.

The Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System (MTRS) administers the retirement system for teachers and educational administrators. The Massachusetts State Retirement Board administers the retirement system for other LPVEC staff. (Please refer to later sections of the Handbook for additional information about Retirement Plans and procedures.)

GENERAL WORKPLACE POLICIES

CALENDAR

The LPVEC fiscal year is from July 1st through June 30th. A calendar for the current year will be distributed to all staff at the start of the fiscal or school year. The Board of Directors must approve any arrangements, changes, or exceptions to the calendar.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS

Periodically, weather or other emergency conditions may necessitate that schools be closed. Such closings due to inclement weather or other emergencies are announced on radio and local television stations. Certain employees may be required to report to work under severe weather or other emergency conditions. Your supervisor will advise you if your position falls within this category.

Central Office and other administrative offices will remain open unless specifically closed by the Executive Director. If an employee is unable to report to work, the absence will be treated as personal or vacation time. Each employee should follow the absence notification procedure if the employee cannot report to work due to the weather.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Each job classification in the LPVEC has a job description that is on file in the LPVEC office. Employees are required to review and sign their job description at the time of appointment and/or reappointment. Job descriptions may be changed from time to time, at which time an employee will be required to review and sign the altered job description.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

All personnel files are maintained by the Office of Human Resources in accordance with state and federal requirements and are considered confidential. Personnel files are the property of LPVEC and may not be removed from the HR department.

Authorized administrators may examine active and separated employee files on a "need to know" basis. Personnel files may be reviewed on LPVEC premises, but no information may be removed or reproduced without consent of the Executive Director or appointed designee. Upon request an employee may review his or her personnel file. Contact the Office of Human Resources to make an appointment to review the file.

If you do not agree with any of the information in the file, then you may submit a written statement explaining your position, which will be included in the file. It is LPVEC's policy not to release any information about you, other than the dates of employment and job title, to external sources without your prior written consent, except where such release is authorized or required by law.

EMPLOYEE IMMUNIZATION & WORK EXCLUSION

LPVEC does not require documentation of employee immunization; however, if an employee is exposed to a communicable infectious disease (i.e., Chicken Pox, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Hep B, Shingles, etc.), the employee may be required to provide proof of immunity for the disease. If proof of immunity is not provided, the employee may be excluded from school/work for the recommended time period recommended by the Department of Public Health.

An employee diagnosed with a communicable disease must inform their Primary Care Provider (MD, PA-C, CNP) that he/she works in a school system. The employee must adhere to the doctor's orders and guidelines for prescription and school exclusion set by his/her Primary Care Provider. If exclusion from the workplace is necessary, the employee must provide a written note from the Primary Care Provider with the exact dates for exclusion from work. The written note from the licensed professional must be provided to the Office of Human Resources in order to be paid out of available Accrued Time for the exclusion period. Otherwise, the absences will be considered Not Approved and unpaid.

ASBESTOS HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE (AHER)

The Federal government has developed several laws and regulations designed to govern the use of asbestos and better protect the public. Pursuant to Federal Law 40 C.F.R. §763.84, the AHER management plan for the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative is available for review in the school office during normal working hours. The LPVEC has assigned the Building and Grounds Work Foreman as the designated person to assure that its responsibilities pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §763.84 have been or will be met. Please contact LPVEC at 413-735-2200 with any questions.

PRIVATE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Employees are prohibited from conducting private business during their regular working hours or using the LPVEC facilities or property in any way to transact private business without prior approval. Violation of this policy will be grounds for corrective action up to and including termination.

MILEAGE ALLOWANCE AND TRAVEL PERMISSION

Staff using personal cars in the course of their duties shall be reimbursed at the rate determined by the Internal Revenue Service rate for business mileage. The starting and ending point of calculating mileage is from and to the employee's assigned work location. Any reimbursement for travel outside of the member towns must be approved in advance on an individual basis on the *Travel Authorization/Professional Meeting Approval Form*. The forms are available in the office or on the LPVEC website.

Daily mileage records must be maintained and must accompany original parking receipts, toll receipts, and other travel-related receipts when submitting for reimbursement. Expense reimbursement should be submitted to the LPVEC business office, after obtaining supervisor approval, no later than 60 days after the date of travel. Where there are extenuating circumstances, the Director of Finance may approve reimbursement requests subsequent to the deadline.

SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY REPLACEMENT/RESTITUTION

The LPVEC Board of Directors will authorize payment of the cost of replacing or repairing property of an employee such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, watches, or articles of clothing necessarily worn or carried by the employee, or vehicles when such items are damaged or stolen in the line of duty. Other personal property of employees or personal teaching aids belonging to the employee is not included.

The maximum payment anyone can claim is \$1,000 or actual cost, whichever is less in the case of vehicles, and \$500 or actual cost, whichever is less, for other property. An employee is limited to a maximum annual claim of \$1,000. Loss or damage must be reported to the Executive Director or Program Supervisor and, if appropriate, to the police as soon as the employee becomes aware of such loss or damage.

Claim reports are available from the Director of Finance and should be forwarded through the Executive Director or Program Supervisor to the Director of Finance. Employee must seek reimbursement, and show proof of replacement or repair in the form of receipts. Employees will not be compensated for losses or damage for which compensation, wholly or partially, can be paid under the employee's private insurance policy.

This policy does not extend to student property.

REHIRE POLICY

The purpose of this rehire policy is to outline rehire eligibility of former employees who leave the LPVEC voluntarily and in good standing. For the purpose of this policy, "good standing" includes 2 weeks' notice for resignation.

Rehire means employing an individual who has left the LPVEC voluntarily and in good standing. The individual may be rehired in the same previously held position or in a different position as best meets the needs of the LPVEC and its member districts.

- All individuals rehired after voluntary resignation are considered new hires.

- The new appointment will commence on the first day the employee returns to work.
- Benefits, including medical insurance and retirement will be restored as soon as is practicable based on the rehire date.
- Vacation time (if applicable) and accrued time will be the same as for a new employee. The balance available on the termination date will not be restored and no time is accrued for the period of absence.

A rehired employee, who voluntarily terminates less than two (2) years after the date of rehire, is ineligible for rehire in most circumstances. Subsequent employment of this individual will require full approval of the Board of Directors.

COMPENSATION

STARTING SALARY & SALARY INCREASES

Salary is based on the salary range established for each position. Previous experience and level of education may be factors in determining salary. Salary schedules for are available in the Office of Human Resources. Some positions are based on an hourly wage, not an annual salary.

Employees may be granted cost-of-living increases at the discretion of the LPVEC Board of Directors and may be granted an annual step increase based on satisfactory performance if hired, subject to salary range maximum.

For each year of LPVEC employment, if hired on or before January 1, an employee may advance one salary step depending upon evaluation in the succeeding year.

The LPVEC workweek begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday. The number of actual hours worked in each position is based on the specific job held by the employee. While actual work and program schedules may vary, the calculation of pay for classroom staff is based on the program schedule determined by the assigned school schedule.

PAY SCHEDULE

Regular employees of the LPVEC are paid bi-weekly (on Fridays). If the normal payday falls on a LPVEC recognized holiday, paychecks will be distributed one workday prior to the aforementioned schedule. Under no circumstances will the LPVEC release any paychecks prior to the announced schedule.

Checks are delivered by one of two options:

1. Delivered to the LPVEC interoffice mailbox located in the LPVEC Central Office (NOTE: Paychecks for transportation staff will be available at the employee's assigned Transportation Office.) OR
2. Direct deposit to the employee's personal checking or savings account.

TIME SHEETS/ATTENDANCE RECORDS

The LPVEC Payroll and Office of Human Resources are in the process of training on a new time and attendance system to be implemented in January 2017. Employees will be notified of changes in reporting upon implementation.

Times sheets are considered a legal document and must be completely accurate before submitting. All employees are required to accurately account for their attendance. For some positions, hourly time sheets will be submitted each week to the employee's supervisor. Other positions require a monthly time sheet, which are to be submitted to the employee supervisor. The employee supervisor will then submit the weekly time sheets to Payroll for processing and the monthly time sheets to the Office of Human Resources.

If time sheets are not submitted on schedule, an employee may experience a delay in receiving pay and may result in disciplinary action. The timesheet must provide an accurate accounting of hours worked and absences.

DIRECT DEPOSIT OPTION

Employees are strongly encouraged to have his/her salary directly deposited to his/her bank account by obtaining a Direct Deposit authorization form from the Office of Human Resources for submission to the Payroll Department. This option may eliminate delays in receiving compensation, for example, when weather or other emergencies cause the offices to close.

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

All payroll deductions are itemized on paycheck stubs or Advice of Deposit forms. To ensure that an employee is paid accurately, he/she should promptly report any change in name, address, marital status or number of exemptions to the Office of Human Resources. Questions concerning pay may be referred to the Payroll Department at 413-735-2200.

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS & CATEGORIES

The LPVEC has established various employment categories and levels of employment that affect compensation for its employees. The LPVEC will make an effort to inform employees of ways in which employment category affects such aspects of the employment relationship. The LPVEC classifies employees' eligibility for overtime in accordance with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act:

- **Exempt employees** are paid on a salaried basis and receive a pre-determined compensation regardless of the number of hours worked per week. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay.
- **Salaried Non-Exempt Employees** may be regular full-time, regular part-time, part-time or temporary. Salaried non-exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis, regardless of hours worked. All hours worked over 40 per week will be paid overtime in accordance with federal and state law.
- **Hourly Non-Exempt Employees** may be regular full-time, regular part-time, part-time or temporary. Non-exempt employees are paid on an hourly basis, and will be paid overtime for all hours worked over 40 in a workweek, in accordance with federal and state law.

Employees will be informed of their initial employment classification, level and status of exempt or non-exempt at the time of their job offer and/or during their orientation session.

Non-Exempt employees are prohibited from working prior to scheduled hours, after scheduled hours and during lunch breaks. Also, non-exempt employees are prohibited from working at home without pre-approval by the supervisor.

If the employee changes positions during employment as a result of a promotion, transfer or otherwise, the Human Resources Department will inform the employee of any change in their classification, level and/or exemption status. Any employee having questions about the employment category for their position should contact the Office of Human Resources.

Teacher Substitutes – Teacher Substitutes will receive \$65.00 per day until 21 consecutive days, at which time the substitute is moved to the first step of the Bachelors pro-rated salary on a per diem basis. This applies only if the substitute possesses a Bachelor's degree or holds qualifications for certification regarding education and employment experience under 603 CMR 4.00. The Executive Director, at his or her discretion and for good reason, may decide to move a substitute to the Bachelor – Step 1 pay rate before the 21 days have expired or decide to pay a substitute at the Bachelor – Step 1 pay rate retroactive to the start of his/her substitute assignment if the assignment is long term, hard to fill, or for any other reason deemed advantageous to the quality of education provided to the students.

Classroom or technical assistants who serve as a substitute teacher will receive an additional \$20.00 per day for each day they substitute. This stipend pay will be prorated to \$10.00 if the classroom or technical assistant is subbing for a half day.

Driver and Monitor Substitutes – Substitute school bus drivers and school bus monitors who have worked a minimum of 540 hours (3 hours per day on average) in the previous school year will be entitled to the step

increase upon reappointment. In order to remain on the substitute school bus driver or school bus monitor list each year, a minimum of 30 hours must be worked in the previous school year.

Non-Exempt employees who work more than 40 hours in a work week will be paid time and a half for each hour over 40. All overtime must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor and scheduled according to the business needs of the LPVEC. Exempt staff may not accrue and are exempt from overtime.

Overtime is owed only if the non-exempt employee actually works more than 40 hours in a workweek. Absences from the workplace, whether because of leave, holidays, sick time, etc., are not considered hours worked for the purposes of calculating overtime, even when the employee has time off benefits to cover such absence for compensation purposes.

PRORATED SALARIES

School-Year Staff – For the purpose of determining prorated (per diem) salaries and salary deductions resulting from absence, salaries will be calculated at the following rate: $1/183^{\text{rd}}$ of the annual salary unless otherwise mutually agreed to at the time of employment.

Twelve-Month Staff – For the purpose of determining prorated salaries and salary deductions resulting from absence, salaries will be calculated at the following rate: $1/260^{\text{th}}$ of the annual salary unless otherwise mutually agreed to at the time of employment.

Other Salaries – All other salaries including administrative salaries and any persons not classified in any of the above listed categories will be set by the Board of Directors on an individual basis.

SAFE HARBOR POLICY

It is the LPVEC's policy and practice to accurately compensate employees and to do so in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. **Review Your Pay Stub.** The LPVEC makes every effort to ensure our employees are paid correctly. Occasionally, however, inadvertent mistakes can happen. When mistakes do happen and are called to our attention, we will promptly make any corrections necessary. If you believe a mistake has occurred or you have any questions contact the Office of Human Resources. If you have not received a satisfactory response within five business days after reporting the incident, please immediately contact the Executive Director.

Every report will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. In addition, the LPVEC will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report alleged violations of this policy or who cooperate in the LPVEC's investigation of such reports.

SALARY BASIS POLICY

It is our policy to comply with the "salary basis" requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Therefore, we prohibit all company managers from making any improper deductions from the salaries of Exempt employees. We want employees to be aware of this policy and that LPVEC does not allow deductions that violate the FLSA.

"Salary Basis Payment" defined: Being paid on a "salary basis" means an employee regularly receives a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period on a weekly, or less frequent, basis. The predetermined amount cannot be reduced because of variations in the quality or quantity of the employee's work. Subject to exceptions listed below, an Exempt employee must receive the full salary for any workweek in which the employee performs any work, regardless of the number of days or hours worked. If an employer makes deductions from an employee's predetermined salary, i.e., because of the operating requirements of the business, that employee is not paid on a "salary basis." If the employee is ready, willing and able to work, deductions may not be made for time when work is not available.

Circumstances in Which the Employer May Make Deductions from Pay:

Deductions from pay are permissible when an Exempt employee: is absent from work for one or more full days for personal reasons other than sickness or disability; for absences of one or more full days due to sickness or

disability if the deduction is made in accordance with a bona fide plan, policy, or practice of providing compensation for salary lost due to illness; to offset amounts employees receive as jury or witness fees, or for military pay; or for unpaid disciplinary suspensions of one or more full days imposed in good faith for workplace conduct rule infractions (see Bank Policy on penalties for workplace conduct rule infractions). Also, an employer is not required to pay the full salary in the initial or terminal week of employment; for penalties imposed in good faith for infractions of safety rules of major significance, or for weeks in which an Exempt employee takes unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. In these circumstances, either partial day or full day deductions may be made.

What To Do If An Improper Deduction Occurs:

If you believe that an improper deduction has been made to your salary, you should immediately report this information to your direct supervisor, or to the Office of Human Resources. Reports of improper deductions will be promptly investigated. If it is determined that an improper deduction has occurred, you will be promptly reimbursed for any improper deduction made.

BENEFITS

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The following Section addresses employee benefits, such as health, retirement and other benefits. Please read this section carefully, noting stated deadlines and eligibility. Additionally, many of the below listed benefits have documentation from the benefit provider outlining the benefit, eligibility requirements, etc. Where there is a conflict between these policies and the benefit program documentation, the benefit program documentation controls. This documentation can be obtained from the Office of Human Resources upon request. Questions regarding employee benefits should be referred to the Office of Human Resources at 413-735-2200.

BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY

The LPVEC has a need for a variety of work schedules to satisfy the demands of the educational, transportation and business aspects of the LPVEC. In order to determine benefit eligibility, the following is a description of the array of schedules that exist:

Full-Time – Eligible for Benefits – A Full-Time employee is hired for regularly established hours for a period of time in excess of nine months. The regularly scheduled work week hours for full-time employees are:

- Educational Staff – daily schedule of assigned program for 183 days per school year
- Administrative Office Staff – 37.5 hours to up to 40 hours per week, up to 260 days per year
- Transportation Office Staff & Mechanics – 8 hours per day, 260 days per year
- Transportation Drivers & Monitors – Hours assigned by the assigned transportation run schedule with a minimum of 20 hours per week (4 hours per day, 180 days per school year)
-

Part-Time Qualified – A Part-Time Qualified employee is regularly scheduled to work 20 hours or more but less than full-time hours each week. Employees working 20 hours or more are generally eligible for most benefits offered by LPVEC.

Part-Time Non-Qualified – A Part-Time Non-Qualified employee is regularly scheduled to work less than 20 hours each week. Part-time non-qualified employees are not eligible to receive health and dental benefits, COBRA, retiree health coverage, health benefits for surviving spouse/family, tuition reimbursement, or enrollment in State or Teachers' Retirement.

Temporary – A Temporary employee holds a position, either full-time or part-time, for a limited and specific time period, such as summer positions or casual labor. Temporary employees are not eligible for any benefits offered by LPVEC, except those mandated by state or federal law.

Substitutes – A Substitute is any person not assigned to a regular work schedule and is called to work on an “as needed” basis. Substitutes are not eligible for any benefits offered by LPVEC, except those mandated by state or

federal law. Substitutes have no obligation to LPVEC to accept the work offered and LPVEC is under no obligation to offer any minimal number of hours or work assignments for any specified period of time.

An existing assistant or aide resigning his/her position to be appointed as a long-term substitute will be granted continuation of health insurance benefits throughout the duration of that substitute appointment.

NOTE: Some grant-funded positions may be offered a separate benefits package based on funding from the applicable grant. Those employees will be notified of the benefit program offered to them.

ACCRUED LEAVE WITH PAY

A limited amount of "Leave with Pay" time is provided for employees on an accrued monthly basis. School Bus Drivers and Monitors are eligible for the Paid Time Off (PTO) policy outlined in the Transportation Employee Handbook; the policy detailed below does not apply to hourly employees. Leave with Pay shall be used for the following purposes and no other: Sickness, Family Illness, Personal (up to 2 days for school-year employees; up to 3 days for full-year employees) and Religious. Having provided for these situations, it is important to remember that excessive absenteeism, tardiness and/or leaving early causes other employees within the organization to have to bear the burden of filling in for the absent employee.

Full-time employees shall be entitled to accrue 1.5 days of Leave with Pay per month of employment. Full-time, school year employees will accrue a maximum of fifteen (15) days per year. Full-time, full-year employees will accrue a maximum of eighteen (18) days per year.

Part-time employees accrue Leave with Pay at the rate of 1.5 days per month multiplied by the percentage of the full-time schedule worked.

Using accrued time for a purpose other than that intended constitutes abuse. Abuse of accrued time is a considered a violation of LPVEC policy. Unused Leave with Pay may be carried over each year to a maximum of 212 days (pro-rated for part-time employees). Employees will not be paid for absences exceeding the available Leave with Pay accrual amount.

School-year employees employed during the summer will not accrue Leave with Pay during the months of July and August. Any Accrued Leave with Pay on account will not be paid to school-year employees for absences during the summer, except for Jury Duty.

Employees may request to use Accrued Leave in advance by submitting a "Request for Leave" form to the employee's supervisor as far in advance as possible except in extraordinary, unanticipated, or emergency situations. The supervisor's signature on the form indicates receipt of the form, not for approval of requested time. Any hours of work that are missed for these reasons will be deducted from your accrued Leave with Pay account: Sickness, Family Illness, Personal Leave, Religious Holidays, and Bereavement. Absences that WILL NOT be deducted from your accrued Leave with Pay account include Military Leave, Jury Duty, approved Professional Development, and LPVEC Court Leave.

Requests for time off will be either "Approved" or "Not Approved", by the Executive Director or Director of Human Resources, based on company policy, accrued time earned, and the company's ability to replace an absent worker. LPVEC reserves the right to "Not Approve" absences when it is in the best interest of the organization to do so, i.e., ample coverage not available, ample notice not given, etc. When an absence is "Not Approved", employees are expected to be at work. Failure to be present at work for a "Not Approved" absence will result in corrective action up to and including termination.

Should an employee leave work during the school day (due to illness, doctor's appointments, etc.), they need to call their Supervisor and notify the LPVEC Central Office at the time of departure and at their return (if applicable).

Unauthorized absences before/after holidays, school vacations, and leaves of absence will result in corrective action up to and including termination or may be deemed as a voluntary resignation (job abandonment) if three or more consecutive days are incurred. Personal time without pay will not be approved when accrued personal time is available.

If you do not take time that you have requested, you must submit written notice to the Office of Human Resources indicating so. Failure to do so could result in loss of pay or loss of pay or loss of earned days. Falsifying an Employee Request for Leave Form is considered a violation of policy.

Absences due to illness of five (5) consecutive workdays will require medical documentation received by your supervisor prior to the employee's return to work. Medical documentation will also be requested if the employee asks for a reasonable accommodation because of a physical or mental impairment that could meet the definition of disability under state or federal law, if the disability is not obvious.

Absences due to illness or doctor's appointment before or after holidays or school vacations will require a physician's certificate submitted to the Human Resources Office in order to use accrued time. The LPVEC reserves the right to request a physician's note to substantiate the reason for any absence. Failure to submit physician certificates as outlined above are considered Not Approved absences and will subject the employee to loss of pay and/or corrective action, up to and including termination.

VACATION

Many LPVEC employees work a 10-month or 11-month schedule which includes time off during school vacation weeks and during the summer. Generally, additional vacation time is not associated with these work schedules. Other employees may be eligible for annual vacation leave based on the nature of their position, length of service, and other factors. Such employees will be notified at the start of their employment about their eligibility to accrue and use vacation time.

Administrative employees with individual employment contracts should consult such contracts for vacation entitlements, if any. Other staff are subject to a standard vacation entitlement schedule which is available in the Office of Human Resources.

Although every effort will be made to grant vacation requests at the time an employee desires, adequate coverage must be maintained to ensure effective and safe operations. Therefore, vacation requests must be approved by the supervisor in advance and vacation preference is not guaranteed. For purposes of earning and using vacation time, the work year is July 1 through June 30. Generally, vacation time is not credited in advance and is accrued and credited to the employee's vacation monthly.

Vacations are meant to be taken in the year they are earned. Employees with un-used vacation time may carry over ten days per year to a maximum accumulation of no more than 25 days into the following fiscal year unless otherwise stated in the employee's employment agreement. Vacation time unused at the end of the fiscal year that are over the carry over limits will be forfeited. When an employee leaves the employ of the LPVEC or is terminated, the LPVEC will pay the employee for any accrued unused vacation days.

Your Supervisor must sign off on all requests for vacation carry-over, subject to approval by the LPVEC Board of Directors. Questions concerning vacation eligibility may be referred to the Office of Human Resources.

HEALTH PLAN ENROLLMENT

The LPVEC currently pays 70% of the cost of medical insurance premiums for eligible employees enrolled in LPVEC health care plans. Employees contribute 30% of the cost of the premium through a payroll deduction. Employee contributions towards health insurance premiums are made on a pre-tax basis in accordance with IRS regulations and therefore are not considered in calculating taxable income.

New employees who are eligible for health insurance, the health insurance waiver payment option, and/or life insurance benefits and wish to enroll in one or more of these benefit options must do so *within thirty (30) calendar days* of the date of appointment. Those who do not enroll within this specified time frame will not be eligible to enroll for health insurance coverage or health insurance waiver option until the next annual open enrollment period or upon a qualifying event. Health plan coverage will be in effect on the First of the Month following the hire date. Additional information about available health care plan options and other benefits is provided in the "Benefits" section of this Handbook. For full details, visit the Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust website at www.ScanticHealth.org or contact the Office of Human Resources at 413-735-2200.

The LPVEC offers several health plans through the Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust (SVRHT). Plans include Blue Cross/Blue Shield Network Blue, Health New England, and Tufts Health Plan. The SVRHT periodically reviews health care plan offerings and these may change from time to time. To obtain detailed information about available health insurance options, contact the Office of Human Resources at 413-735-2200 or visit the SVRHT website at www.ScanticHealth.org. Eligible employees who have coverage elsewhere and do not elect health insurance coverage through the LPVEC must sign a health insurance waiver form to verify that the employee has coverage elsewhere.

Eligible employees may elect either individual or family coverage. Family coverage provides for spouses and/or dependents that are under age 26 or dependents of any age that fit the insurance plan's definition of disabled. An employee may change from individual to family coverage, or add additional members to the plan within thirty days of a birth or adoption of a child or marriage. The Office of Human Resources must be notified within 30 days of such an event to effect a change in coverage outside of the open enrollment period. Changes must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation (e.g., marriage license, birth certificate.)

Once an employee has elected a health insurance option, he/she cannot elect to change plans until the next annual LPVEC open enrollment period which typically occurs in June or in the event of a major defined change in personal circumstance, e.g., marriage, divorce, birth of a child. During the open enrollment period he/she may decide to change plans, change coverage or enroll in a plan if he/she is eligible.

If an employee is eligible for health insurance coverage through the LPVEC, but has alternative medical coverage (through a spouse's coverage or other plan) which is *not* paid or sponsored by the LPVEC, he/she must sign a waiver of participation in a LPVEC plan. If alternative coverage is subsequently lost through no fault of the employee's, he/she may elect to join one of the LPVEC's plans without waiting for the open enrollment period. He/she must do this within thirty (30) days of the loss of coverage.

FITNESS CLUB REFUND

The LPVEC health insurance plans offer a refund up to \$150 if you are actively enrolled in a fitness club for a minimum of three months. Forms are available from the Human Resources Department or by contacting the Customer Service telephone number on your health insurance card.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

Employees and their family members enrolled in a LPVEC group health insurance plan are eligible to save money on prescription medications by enrolling in *myMedicationAdvisor* or *Good Health Gateway*. The programs have been designed to support employee health. The medications offered through these programs have **zero co-pay – FREE!**

The ***Good Health Gateway*** is designed to support diabetic employees and their family members with incentive programs designed around health improvement objectives. By helping individuals to follow recommended, evidence-based guidelines, and supporting those behaviors, the goal is for each participant to achieve desired health improvement outcomes. To learn more, call 800-643-8028 or visit www.goodhealthgateway.com.

The ***myMedicationAdvisor*** promotes the safe and effective use of medication by improving communication between patients and their doctors, nurses, and pharmacists. In addition, the ***myMedicationAdvisor*** program offers participants with **FREE** prescription medications to enrolled participants. To learn more, call toll-free at 877-467-3113 or log-on to myMedicationAdvisor.com.

CONTINUATION OF HEALTH INSURANCE (COBRA)

If employment should terminate or an employee or his/her dependent otherwise becomes ineligible to participate in group health insurance plan, he/she and/or his/her dependents have the right to continued participation in the LPVEC's group health insurance plan for eighteen months or up to thirty-six months (under certain circumstances) under federal COBRA legislation. The employee will be required to pay the full cost of the premium plus an administrative fee. Under COBRA continuation, the LPVEC will no longer contribute to the cost of health insurance premiums. For additional information on this option, contact the Office of Human Resources.

DENTAL COVERAGE

Regular employees working 20 or more hours per week may be eligible for participation in the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Dental Blue benefit plan. Employee contributions towards dental insurance premiums are made on a pre-tax basis in accordance with IRS regulations and therefore are not considered in calculating taxable income. For more information, contact the Office of Human Resources.

FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS (FSA)

Employees may be eligible to participate in a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) program that allows an employee to voluntarily set aside up to \$2,500 pre-tax dollars to pay for unreimbursed out-of-pocket medical expenses (including co-payments, vision care and dental care, such as orthodontia) and up to \$5,000 for dependent care expenses (expenses incurred in providing day care for children or elderly parents) and/or adoption fees.

DEPENDENT CARE FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT

You may be eligible for the Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account if you have a child, a disabled parent, or a spouse who needs daily care while you work. The advantage of pre-tax flexible spending account is that you pay no federal, state, or FICA taxes on the money you contribute to it. You can contribute from \$100 to \$5,000 per household annually to this account, automatically deducted in equal installments from your paychecks before taxes are calculated. The taxes you save and the effect on your paycheck will depend on your personal situation, including household income, tax bracket, and the amount you contribute to the account. More information and enrollment forms are available from the Office of Human Resources. Under the current tax laws, the tax savings may be greater if an employee either pays for day care directly and to claim a credit on their tax return or use pre-tax dollars for day care payments. Check with a tax or financial advisor before making any tax decision.

HEALTH BENEFITS FOR RETIREES

Health benefits may be extended to eligible LPVEC retirees as adopted by the Board of Directors. Eligible retirees shall be defined as individuals who both are eligible for and in fact receive a retirement allowance in accordance with G.L.C. 32 who retire from service with LPVEC with a minimum of 10 years of continuous service meeting the 20-hour minimum requirement, with the LPVEC and/or any of its member school districts. Further, retirees must have participated in a LPVEC offered health plan for a minimum of one year immediately prior to retirement. The LPVEC shall contribute 50% of the health plan. A complete copy of this policy is available in the Office of Human Resources.

HEALTH BENEFITS FOR SURVIVING SPOUSE/FAMILY

Health benefits may be extended to eligible surviving spouse and/or family of LPVEC staff who die while in active LPVEC employment as adopted by the Board of Directors. For the purpose of this policy, surviving spouse/family shall be defined as those persons who are covered by the employee's LPVEC health insurance plan at the time of the employee's death. The surviving spouse will then be responsible for the premium as defined by the Active Employee contribution or Retiree policy. A complete copy of this policy is available in the Office of Human Resources.

RETIREMENT PLANS

Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System – Eligible teachers and administrators (employees appointed to Department of Elementary and Secondary Education certified/licensed positions) participate in the Massachusetts Teachers Retirement System (MTRS) pension plan, a State-administered plan. If an employee is eligible for this plan, after completing and submitting the application, he/she will be enrolled at the time he/she completes his or her online enrollment requirements. Information on the provisions of this Plan may be obtained from the MTRS at www.mass.gov/mtrs. Employees may contact the MTRS at 617-679-6877.

Massachusetts State Retirement Board – Other regular full-time and part-time employees who work a minimum of 20 hours per week may participate in the Massachusetts State Retirement System (SRB). Participation in this Plan begins on the first day of qualified employment. New employees will be enrolled in the Plan through the Office of Human Resources. The SRB Plan provides a monthly pension benefit to eligible employees who have completed sufficient service upon retirement. This Plan provides provisions for vested minimum retirement as early as age 55 with ten (10) years of creditable service. The amount of pension benefit increases as age and

amount of creditable service increases. Disability Retirement benefits are also available for permanently disabled employees who meet certain other qualifications. Detailed information regarding employee contributions, vesting, plan administration, etc., is available through the SRB website at www.mass.gov/retirement. Employees may contact the SRB at 617-367-7770.

Mandatory Deferred Compensation Plan (DCP) – Federal law requires that LPVEC employees who are *not* eligible for benefits under the SRB or the MTRS (e.g., substitute teachers, temporary employees, etc.) must participate in a mandatory deferred compensation plan in lieu of Social Security. Under this requirement, 7.5% of wages are invested on a tax-deferred basis in the Massachusetts Deferred Compensation SMART Plan – Mandatory OBRA one of two investment options provided by investment firms selected by the City of Cambridge. These mandatory contributions continue as long as the employee is employed by the LPVEC and is not a member of the retirement system. If employment by the LPVEC terminates, the participant may elect to leave the funds in the plan and earn tax-deferred interest or withdraw the funds and pay taxes on the income.

Voluntary OBRA – The LPVEC's Voluntary OBRA allows employees to invest a portion of their wages on a tax-deferred basis to a supplemental retirement savings account through payroll deduction. Contributions to the Voluntary OBRA are invested in a variety of investment vehicles such as stock and bond funds, guaranteed accumulation accounts and money market funds. Employees may generally enroll or change their level of contribution at any time, on line via the district's Third Party Administrator, Empower Retirement at www.empower-retirement.com or at 800-701-8255.

SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE

The LPVEC does not participate in the federal Social Security system for any Social Security benefits except for Medicare. Medicare deductions are made for employees hired on or after April 1, 1986.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The EAP provides confidential assessment and referral services and short-term counseling to help you and your family members work through life's challenges. Just as health insurance is designed to address your physical well-being, your EAP program is designed to address your emotional and mental well-being, as well as to help you and your family members manage work/life problems and achieve a healthy work/life balance. It's a comprehensive and confidential program in your benefit package that is fully paid by your employer.

ESI Employee Assistance Group, an outside vendor, is contracted to provide confidential and voluntary assistance to all employees and their family members who may be faced with the personal challenges of financial concerns, legal issues, addiction problems, marital concerns, and more. The EAP is paid for by LPVEC and is **completely free and confidential** to you and your family.

Employees and family members can refer themselves to the EAP. The program may be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call Employee Services at 800-666-5327 or 800-252-4555. You can visit the website at www.EducatorsEAP.com. Employees who need to visit the EAP during regular work hours must use sick, vacation, or personal time. If illness is involved, sick, vacation and/or personal time may be used for treatment or rehabilitation on the same basis that it is granted for other health problems.

HOLIDAYS

Administrative employees who are employed on a twelve-month, year-round basis will be paid for all legal and LPVEC recognized holidays occurring within the months that they work. Any additional paid holidays will be established annually. Where a holiday falls on a weekend, it will be observed on either the preceding Friday or following Monday. Part-time administrative staff will be entitled to holiday pay based on a *pro rata* basis.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

All employees are encouraged to engage in continued professional development. Continued education at institutes of higher education or in certain approved organizations may contribute to an employee achieving a higher rate of pay and his/her eligibility for promotion. Workshops and seminars are periodically offered by the LPVEC at no or low cost during designated professional development days or after normal school hours. College courses directly related to the employee's employment with the LPVEC are eligible for reimbursement of the cost of tuition up to \$300 once each year. Employee Reimbursement Form with a copy of the paid tuition bill and a

copy of the transcript or a copy of an official document from the school showing a minimum grade of 3.0 and successful completion of the course. Funds for tuition reimbursement are included in the LPVEC's professional development budget along with funding for conferences, workshops, etc. Reimbursements are subject to the availability of funds specifically budgeted for that purpose. To be eligible for reimbursement, the course must be completed during the same fiscal year as the budget. Should funding be available at the end of the fiscal year, a second course reimbursement may be considered. To be eligible for reimbursement, the worker must be an active employee of the LPVEC at the time that the completed Employee Reimbursement Form Is submitted. Additional information regarding professional development opportunities may be obtained from an employee's supervisor or by contacting the Office of Human Resources.

TAX-SHELTERED ANNUITY PLANS

LPVEC employees are eligible for enrollment in Board approved tax-sheltered annuity plans within set federal guidelines. Please contact Human Resources for further information regarding approved companies.

CREDIT UNIONS

LPVEC employees are eligible for membership in two credit unions:

Premier Source Credit Union – Member benefits include loans, ATMs, holiday and vacation clubs, etc. To sign up, contact Premier Source Credit Union at located at 232 North Main Street, East Longmeadow or at 254 Cottage Street, Springfield. Contact Premier Source Credit Union at 413-525-2002 for more information or visit their website at www.premier-sourcecu.com.

Holyoke Credit Union – They have 3 convenient locations in Holyoke, West Springfield, and Agawam. To sign up, contact Holyoke Credit Union at 490 Westfield Road, Holyoke. For more information call 413-532-7007 or visit www.holyokecu.com.

LIFE & DISABILITY INSURANCE

Voluntary self-pay life, disability, dental, accident, or cancer insurance coverage is available through payroll deductions from either Colonial Insurance or Aflac Insurance. You may contact the representatives for each company directly at:

- Colonial Insurance - David McGeary, 413-218-5878
OR
- Aflac Insurance – John Charrette, 508-479-2700, or johncharrette@rcn.com

AUTOTOMOBILE AND HOME DISCOUNT INSURANCE

Horace Mann Educators Corp.

Horace Mann Educators is the largest multi-line insurance company focusing on the financial needs of the nation's educators and their families. Horace Mann offers discounted Auto Insurance through Commerce Insurance, Homeowner/Renters Insurance, Life, Disability, Annuities, Mutual Funds, and 529 College Savings Plans. Contact Brett Ralph at 413-273-1380 for more information.

WORKPLACE ADVANTAGE

Save up to 60% on ticketed events, travel, and shopping. Log onto www.workingadvantage.com, select the **Register** button at the top of the page. Select **Employees Click Here** and then enter **Member ID#996206030**.

OTHER LPVEC EMPLOYEE DISCOUNTS

As an employee of LPVEC, you are entitled to discounts at various establishments, including:

- Caesars Getaway Club – Save up to 40% off
- Century Fitness - \$19.99 per person, per month. No sign-up fee.
- Scantic Valley YMCA – Discounted rates
- HealthTrax - \$10 off Regular rates
- BJ's Wholesale Club - \$25 Membership (12 months)
- Verizon Wireless Discount – 15% Discount

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA)

The LPVEC complies with all requirements of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for eligible employees. "Eligible employees" are employees who: 1) have been employed for at least twelve (12) months, and 2) have worked at least 1,250 hours over the past twelve (12) months.

FMLA provides leave to eligible employees for the following reasons: (1) for incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth, (2) to care for the employee's child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care, (3) to care for a child (who is either under age 18 or age 18 or older), (4) to care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition, or (5) for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform his or her job.

The FMLA Amendments allow a way to support family members of military personnel to be eligible for up to 26 weeks of job-protected leave in a 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury incurred in the line of active duty. While FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave, LPVEC policy requires employees to use available paid time including all accrued and vacation time during the employee's FMLA leave.

During an approved FMLA leave, your health insurance coverage will be maintained on the same terms as if you continued to work, if you have indicated your intent to return to work at the end of your FMLA leave. Arrangements to pay the employee share of such benefits must be made by contacting the Office of Human Resources. If you do not return to work upon the completion of your FMLA leave, the LPVEC may recover the cost of any payments made to maintain your health insurance coverage, unless the failure to return to work was for reasons beyond your control. Use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of FMLA leave.

Employees who return to work on or before the expiration of their FMLA leave will be restored to their original or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. Employees on FMLA leave are, however, not entitled to any greater rights than they would otherwise have been entitled, had they continued as active employees at the LPVEC. Some key employees may not be entitled to reinstatement at the conclusion of their FMLA leave. Key employees will be notified of their status as such at the time of their leave request.

FMLA defines a serious health condition as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities. Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may also meet the definition of continuing treatment.

An employee does not need to use FMLA leave in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Intermittent leave is not, however, available to care for a child during the first 12 months after the birth, adoption, or placement in foster care. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis. If you use intermittent leave, you must comply with our regular call-out procedure for each day on which you are absent, including specifically referring to the FMLA- qualifying reason for the leave.

The LPVEC has designated a rolling leave year, which determines FMLA leave eligibility by reference to the amount of FMLA leave taken during the twelve months immediately preceding the request for FMLA leave. This "rolling" leave year does not apply to Military Caregiver Leave. The leave year for Military Caregiver Leave is a single 12 month period that begins on the first day of the employee's leave.

Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures. Employees must provide sufficient information for the LPVEC to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions; a covered family member is unable to perform daily activities; the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider; or circumstances supporting the need for Qualified Exigency or Military Family Leave. Employees also must inform the LPVEC if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Employees may be required to provide a fitness for duty statement before they return after a FMLA leave for their own serious health condition. If you will be required to provide this statement, you will be notified at the time that your leave is approved.

Absent extenuating circumstances, employees who are taking FMLA leave for their own or a covered family member's serious health condition or to care for a child after birth, adoption, or placement in foster care are not permitted to work for any other employer while on FMLA leave from their job with the LPVEC. Employees who accept employment with other employers while on FMLA leave from the LPVEC will be considered to have voluntarily resigned their employment and will not be eligible for reinstatement at the end of their previously approved leave.

The LPVEC will also comply with the FMLA by not, (1) interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of any right provided under FMLA or (2) discharging or discriminating against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

If you have any questions about your FMLA rights or responsibilities or if you disagree with a decision we make regarding FMLA leave entitlement, please contact Human Resources to resolve your concerns as soon as possible. To enforce rights under the FMLA, an employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights. Please consult Human Resources for any additional information relating to FMLA leave or visit <http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/employeeguide.pdf>.

MEDICAL LEAVE

Employees who are not eligible for Family and Medical Leave and who are absent from work for 5 or more consecutive days because of their own physical or mental impairment are eligible to request an unpaid job-protected Medical Leave of Absence. Employees are required to promptly submit written medical documentation verifying the need for the absence and including an anticipated return to work date to the Office of Human Resources. If written medical documentation is not received in a timely manner, the absent employee is subject to being placed on unpaid status, and is also subject to being deemed as having resigned employment by abandoning his or her job or having terminated his or her employment.

An employee, who is granted a Medical Leave of Absence, will be reinstated to the employee's previous job at the end of that leave, unless changed business circumstances make reinstatement impossible or an undue hardship to the company. Prior to returning to work, employees on a Medical Leave of Absence will be required to provide a medical note attesting to their fitness for duty and describing any restrictions that may apply to their ability to perform the essential functions of their position, together with any accommodations that might be necessary to permit them to perform those essential functions.

Employees on a Medical Leave of Absence will be required to exhaust all paid leave, including vacation and accrued time, while on their leaves of absence. After the employee has exhausted his or her paid leave, any additional leave will be unpaid, unless the employee qualifies for Workers Compensation benefits. The LPVEC will not pay its share of the employee's health insurance premium during an unpaid Medical LOA leave. The employee will be offered COBRA coverage and the employee will be responsible for payment of the full premium.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Employees who are not eligible under the FMLA may nonetheless be eligible under state law for parental leave. Under this leave, employees are eligible for up to eight (8) weeks of unpaid leave for the purpose of birth of a child or for adopting a child under the age of eighteen, or for adopting a child under the age of twenty-three if the child is mentally or physically disabled. The following conditions must be met:

- The employee has either completed the introductory period (not to exceed three months) or, in the event that the introductory period does not apply, has been employed consecutively for three months as a Full-Time employee.
- The employee must provide two weeks' written notice of the anticipated date of departure and state in writing the intention to return to his or her position or provide notice as soon as practicable based on the situation. Requests to extend Parental Leaves of Absence must be made in writing to the Office of Human Resources.
- The employee must state the anticipated date of return to work.

During this period of leave, no vacation leave is accrued. Health insurance coverage will continue during this leave time, as described in this Handbook for active employees. Other benefits resume as of the date the employee returns to Full-Time employment. This leave will not affect the employee's rights to receive vacation leave or other benefits for which he or she was eligible at the date of his or her departure. An employee returning to work at the completion of the eight week leave will be restored to his or her previous position or a similar position. To the extent that the employee is eligible for Parental leave and Family and Medical Leave pursuant to the FMLA, such leaves run concurrently.

Employees anticipating Parental Leave, who wish to use unused vacation, sick, or personal time during all or part of the leave, may do so, and should submit the request in writing to the Office of Human Resources prior to taking the leave.

Any 2 employees of LPVEC shall only be entitled to 8 weeks of Parental leave in aggregate for the birth, placement, or adoption of the same child.

EMPLOYEE LEAVE FOR FAMILY OBLIGATIONS (SMALL NECESSITIES LEAVE)

Under state law, eligible employees are able to take up to 24 hours leave for family obligations during any fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). This law applies to employees who have been employed for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1,250 hours in the prior 12 month period and who are seeking leave for the purpose of participating in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of the employee's son or daughter, such as parent-teacher conference or interview for a new school; to accompany a son or daughter to a routine medical or dental appointment such as a routine check-up or vaccination; or to accompany an elderly (60 years or more) relative to a routine medical or dental appointment or for other professional services such as interviewing at a nursing home. Leave may be taken in increments of at least one hour for up to 24 hours in a fiscal year. This leave augments leave taken under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, as it is for a different purpose. This leave is unpaid unless an employee chooses to apply accrued paid vacation, sick or personal time as provided in LPVEC policy and except as may be provided for in state law or city ordinance. Seven days' notice in writing is required, whenever foreseeable, to the extent possible. If the need is not foreseeable, the employee must notify his/her immediate supervisor as soon as practicable.

COMPASSIONATE CARE LEAVE

The LPVEC recognizes that there may be occasions when employees are required to be away from work to care for a gravely ill or dying family member. For the purpose of this policy, "Family Member" is defined as the employee's spouse (including same sex spouse), a parent, or step-parent or foster parent of the employee, a sibling of an employee, or a child, or step-child of the employee.

In order to support those employees, the LPVEC, on request, may provide a leave of absence up to a maximum of eight weeks in a rolling twelve-month period from the first date of requested leave. This policy will apply if the employee's need for leave is not covered under any other LPVEC policy. This policy applies to all LPVEC regular

employees who have worked at the LPVEC for one year or more. The leave may be taken on an intermittent basis depending on the specific needs of the employee or employee's family member. If two or more LPVEC employees take Compassionate Care Leaves to care for or support the same family member, the total of the leaves taken by those employees shall not exceed eight weeks in total. Employees on Compassionate Care Leave will be required to exhaust all available paid leave while they are on Compassionate Care Leave.

An employee who wishes to take Compassionate Care Leave must request such a leave in writing from Human Resources. If it is imperative that an employee begin the leave urgently, the employee must advise Human Resources as soon as possible after beginning the leave. A completed "Medical Certificate for Compassionate Care Leave" is required in addition to the written request for the Leave. This form is available from Human Resources and the LPVEC website. The medical certificate is proof that an ill family member needs care or support and is at significant risk of death within 52 weeks. The certificate must be completed and signed by a medical doctor or another medical practitioner authorized to treat the gravely ill person.

The earliest an employee may start the leave is the first day in the 52-week period identified on the medical certificate. An employee may not remain on Compassionate Care Leave after the earlier of the following dates: 1) the day in which the family member dies, or 2) the last day in which the 52 week period ends.

In some circumstances, another form of unpaid Leave of Absence may be available to employees who require additional time off work. See the Leave of Absence section of the handbook for details or contact Human Resources.

An employee must provide 48 hours' notice to Human Resources and his or her supervisor if he/she wishes to return from the Compassionate Care Leave earlier than the expected return date. An employee who returns from Compassionate Care Leave will return to the position held prior to commencing the leave and is entitled to the same pay and benefits received before commencing the leave. While the employee is on Compassionate Care Leave, the employee will be responsible for paying the full amount of his/her health insurance benefit premium once accrued time has been exhausted. Human Resources will provide a payment schedule to the employee at the beginning of his/her leave.

If the family member dies while the employee is on leave, the employee is required to notify the Office of Human Resources as soon as possible. The Compassionate Care Leave expires on the date of the death and the employee is then eligible for Bereavement Leave in accordance with LPVEC policy.

If an employee takes Compassionate Care Leave for a family member and the family member does not die within the 52 week period, the employee may be eligible for another type of leave as allowed by LPVEC policies.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Bereavement time is provided for the purpose of enabling an employee to attend to matters pertaining to the death of a relative and to attend the funeral. An employee shall be granted up to five work days to be taken upon the death of a spouse or domestic partner, a child or step-child, a mother or father, or other member of the employee's household. An employee shall be granted up to three work days upon the death of a son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, sister, step-brother, step-sister, or significant other. An employee shall be granted one work day of bereavement leave upon the death of their aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandparent, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law for the purpose of attending the funeral on that day. Proof of death and relationship to the deceased may be required. Bereavement time will not be deducted from the employee's accrued time.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

All employees are permitted to take up to 15 days of unpaid leave per year to address any needs resulting from incidents of "abusive behavior," which include domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and kidnapping. Domestic violence includes physical, mental, and sexual abuse, including threats by persons with specific relationships to the employee or the employee's family member. Employees must use all vacation leave, personal leave, and sick leave available to the employee before becoming eligible for leave under this law.

The employee cannot be the perpetrator of the abusive behavior, and the victim must be the employee, or have one of the following relationships to the employee: spouse, parent or step-parent, child or step-child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, person with whom the employee cohabitates, or person with whom the employee has a child in common.

An employee may only take this leave in order to address issues directly related to the abusive behavior, including but not limited to seeking professional treatment, securing housing, and engaging with law enforcement officials. The employee must give advance notice pursuant to the LPVEC leave policy, except in cases of imminent danger to the employee or covered family member. In cases of imminent danger, the employee has three (3) work days to notify the employer of the need for leave under this policy.

LPVEC may require documentation as specified by the law before allowing or recognizing time off as leave under this law. For scheduled absences, the employee has 30 days after the leave terminates to provide any required documentation. LPVEC will keep all documents and information confidential as required by law.

After taking leave under this law, the employee has the right to the same or an equivalent position, as well as all accrued benefits, as they existed on the last day before taking leave. Additionally, LPVEC may not interfere with or retaliate against the employee's valid exercise of these rights. Any questions regarding your rights should be direct to Human Resources at 413-735-2200.

MILITARY LEAVE

When an employee is called to military service (including active duty, active duty training, inactive duty training, full-time National Guard duty or an absence to determine fitness to perform services), the employee must give advance notice to the Office of Human Resources of the military leave. Written notice of military service may include provision of copies of orders or other written documentation with respect to being called to service. If, however, military necessity precludes providing notice or giving notice is otherwise impossible or unreasonable, the employee may have an appropriate military officer provide such notice.

Employees in the National Guard or Armed Forces Reserve who participate in annual two-week active duty or training program may apply for a paid short-term military leave of absence provided that such service cannot be scheduled during a school vacation period.

LPVEC pays an employee who is on approved military leave the difference in salary between the amount of military pay received from the government and the amount of regular salary for those on approved military leave (with the exception of any employee who is assigned to theatres of combat operations as described below). The employee is required to provide to the Payroll Department documentation of the amount of military pay he or she received from the government so that appropriate offset can be made.

Under special statute, employees of the LPVEC who are assigned and present in a theatre of combat operations such as Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001 are eligible for the following pay and benefits: continuation of full base salary without any reduction for pay or allowances received from the U.S. government during the period of military leave; up to five (5) calendar days of pre-deployment paid leave for those required to be on such military leave for 90 days or more, such leave not to be deducted from personal, sick, vacation, or other leave, or be deducted from creditable service for retirement purposes; no loss of seniority during period of leave; no loss of accrued vacation, sick, or personal leave during such period of military leave; and no loss of service credit towards retirement during such period of military leave.

JURY DUTY

Employees shall be granted time off with pay to serve Jury Duty. Appropriate documentation should be provided to the employee's supervisor for submittal to the Office of Human Resources. The LPVEC will make up the difference, if any, between Jury Duty pay and regular salary for the period of Jury Duty service.

UNPAID PERSONAL LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Unpaid personal leaves of absence for individual educational or other valid reasons may be requested and are subject to approval by the Executive Director. Such leaves may not exceed one (1) year. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the Office of Human Resources. At the very minimum, the employee must provide the

reason necessitating the request, the length of time requested, and show evidence of his/her commitment to return to work at the conclusion of the leave. Benefits will not be earned during the leave. All benefits earned prior to the leave will remain intact during the leave with resumption of earnings upon return to work. The LPVEC will not pay its share of the employee's health insurance premium during an unpaid Board Approved leave. The employee will be offered COBRA coverage and the employee will be responsible for payment of the full premium.



2016-2017 HANDBOOK GENERAL EMPLOYMENT POLICIES & GUIDELINES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND UNDERSTANDING OF AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT STATUS

I have received a copy of Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative's General Employment Policies & Guidelines Handbook and understand that it is my responsibility to read the Handbook completely and thoroughly and to become familiar with its provisions.

I understand that I am an at-will employee of the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative (LPVEC) and that both I and the LPVEC are free to terminate my employment at any time, with or without cause or notice, for any reason or for no reason at all. This Handbook is not a contract of employment, either expressed or implied. I understand that violation or failure to comply with the standards and policies outlined in the Educational Guidelines will be grounds for corrective action up to and including termination.

I understand that LPVEC reserves the right to modify, suspend, interpret, cancel in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice, any personnel policies, whether contained in this Handbook or otherwise, according to its business judgment and sole discretion.

If I have any questions about the meaning or significance of any of the provisions in this Handbook, I understand that I should speak to my supervisor or to a representative from Human Resources, who will answer my questions for me.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Program Name