

# **VERIBEST ISD**

## **Substitute Teacher Handbook**

---



**2023-2024**

---

## Substitute Teacher Handbook Receipt

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby acknowledge receipt of my personal copy of the Veribest ISD Substitute Teacher Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this booklet. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform Veribest ISD Human Resource Department (325-655-4912) of any changes in personal information, such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting the Veribest ISD central office/administration office (325-655-4912) if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Note: You have been given two copies of this form. Please sign and date one and keep it. Sign and date the other copy and forward it to Kim Dusek.

## **General District Information**

---

Veribest ISD consists of two public school campuses:

- Elementary School (PK - 6) Campus
- Secondary School (Grades 7-12)

The District establishes high standards for teachers and substitutes. Substitutes are an important part of the educational program and contribute to the education of the children in this community.

This guide should help answer many of the questions a substitute might have. However, if additional questions arise, please feel free to contact the Human Resources Department at 325-655-4912.

## CENTRAL OFFICE / ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF (325-655-4912)

### **Superintendent**

Amanda Traylor

10062 FM 380  
PO Box 490  
Veribest, Texas 76886

Kim Dusek, District Secretary

325-655-4912

### **Business Manager/Human Resources**

Denise Dusek

10062 FM 380  
PO Box 490  
Veribest, Texas 76886  
325-655-4912

### **Principals**

Amber Palmer, Principal  
Veribest Elementary School

10062 FM 380  
PO Box 490  
Veribest, Texas 76886  
325-655-2851

Glen Jones, Principal  
Veribest Secondary School

10062 FM 380  
PO Box 490  
Veribest, Texas 76886  
325-655-2851

### **Nurse**

Chelsea Pehl

10062 FM 380  
PO Box 490  
Veribest, Texas 76886  
325-655-2851

# Procedures and Requirements

---

In order to be considered for employment as a substitute in Veribest ISD, the following items must be filed with the Human Resources Office:

- Substitute Teaching Application;
- W-4 Form (Federal Withholding tax);
- I-9 Form (Employment Eligibility Verification);
- Criminal History Authorization;
- Direct Deposit Authorization w/copy of voided check;
- Copy of Teaching Certificate (if applicable);
- Two references.
- Finger Printed

Prospective substitutes will not be placed on the list until all documentation is received and have attended Veribest ISD substitute teacher training. Campuses are provided with an updated list of eligible substitutes as new substitutes are added to the list. The contact person designated for the district or for each campus schedules substitutes from the updated list. When possible, substitutes are called in advance, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Most calls are made early in the morning of the day on which a substitute is needed.

A substitute may indicate a preference for a campus/grade level or for certain days of the week. These preferences may limit the opportunities for substituting assignments. An attempt will be made to match the substitute's training, certification, and/or experience to the class in which he/she will substitute. For example, a substitute with a math major would be assigned to a math classroom.

It is not necessary for the substitute to accept every assignment for which he/she is called. However, substitutes who are dependable and regularly accept assignments are most often contacted by the campus contact person.

If a substitute assignment has been accepted and the substitute is unable to report when expected, the substitute should notify the campus contact person immediately. The campus contact person should be provided with the following information:

- the substitute's name;
- the name of the teacher for whom the substitute was assigned;
- the estimated length of absence; and /or
- any other pertinent information.

Additionally, a substitute should notify the district contact person of;

- a change of address;
- a change of telephone number; and/or
- the inability to continue as a substitute.

# **Substitute Contact Names**

---

## **DISTRICT CONTACT**

District Secretary

Kim Dusek  
325-655-4912

## **CAMPUS CONTACTS**

The campus contact persons are:

Campus Secretary

Leah Zaruba  
325-655-2851

When a substitute is contacted for an assignment, he/she should request the name and number of the campus contact person. It may be necessary to notify the campus contact person in case an emergency occurs which prevents the substitute from performing his/her assigned duties.

# Arrival at School

---

Substitutes should report for duty at least 15 minutes prior to the first class. The campus contact person will provide information about beginning times. An early arrival provides a substitute the opportunity to review campus procedures, locate the classroom(s), review the teacher's instructions, and prepare materials for instruction.

Upon arrival at the campus:

1. **The substitute should check in at the main office of the school and sign in.**
2. The campus contact person will inform the substitute regarding the location of the substitute notebook or other campus/teacher instructions.
3. Substitutes should expect to find
  - information about attendance procedures;
  - class schedules;
  - lesson plans;
  - general procedures;
  - information about other duties such as hall, lunchroom, or bus duty;
  - instructions about restroom privileges;
  - information about the location of the teacher's lounge and restrooms;
  - emergency procedures; and
  - information about expected changes from normal daily routines.

The principal or school secretary should be able to assist the substitute with any additional information. The substitute should not hesitate to ask for any help or information.

# Getting Started

---

The campus contact person will direct the substitute to the notebook or folder provided by the regular classroom teacher. This notebook/folder will contain the information necessary to have a successful day with the students in the assigned classroom.

An effective substitute will locate the following:

- a neighboring teacher who can answer any questions;
- lesson plans;
- seating charts;
- schedules for library and physical education classes;
- list of students who may study in various groups;
- list of student helpers;
- recess schedules;
- list of students requiring special seating or attention;
- fire drill instructions; and
- instructions to follow in case of a student accident or illness.

The substitute should post his/her name in a prominent place in the classroom.

Prior to the beginning of the first class, the substitute should review all of the materials provided by the teacher. If a seating chart cannot be located, the substitute should create one and insert the student's names as soon as they are seated. This seating chart will help the substitute to identify individual students by name and will eliminate many student management problems. The ability to call a student by his/her name is an important tool for classroom management.

If the necessary materials are unavailable in the classroom, the substitute should seek help from the campus contact person immediately.



# Classroom Activities

---

It is important for the substitute to greet the students and welcome them to the classroom as they arrive. Student management hinges upon the relationship between the teacher and the students, and this is the difficult part of being a substitute.

Some recommendations are:

- Greet each student and direct the student to his/her seat and to an assignment on the board or projector. If the regular teacher has not left such an assignment, the substitute should feel free to use an appropriate alternate assignment.
- While the students complete the assignment, the substitute should complete attendance, lunch count, etc.
- If the substitute collects money for anything, the substitute should make a list including the name of the student, the amount of money, and the reason the money was collected. The money and the list should be given to the campus secretary or principal as soon as possible.
- The substitute should walk around the classroom monitoring students and activities.
- The substitute should take a few minutes to share some personal information with the students. (For example: husband or wife, children, hobbies, trips, etc.)
- The substitute should ask each student to introduce him/herself. Following introductions, the substitute may want to use an inclusion activity. This may seem like a waste of time, but investing in getting to know a little bit about the students at the beginning of the class may pay off when regular assignments begin.
- The substitute should stay focused on classroom activities and the monitoring of students at all times. Phone usage and personal calls should be limited to urgent calls only - while in the classroom with students.
- **The substitute should attempt to follow the teacher's lesson plans as closely as possible.** However, if the substitute varies assignments, notes should be left for the teacher describing the nature and reason for the changes.

## Discipline

---

Discipline is usually the most difficult aspect of substituting. If the substitute prepares as suggested above, the potential for discipline problems should be reduced. If students are engaged in meaningful, interesting activities, it will be less likely that misbehavior will occur. The substitute should vary activities and prepare something for those students who finish early. A good substitute carries his/her own “bag of tricks”.

A substitute’s “bag of tricks” might include:

- a story that the students would enjoy hearing;
- an activity related to the story, such as writing, drawing a picture, identifying characters, writing a letter to a character, describing a character and comparing the character to others in the story, etc.);
- incentives and an incentive plan;
- several activities that can be adapted to the student age group and subject being taught; and/or
- ideas for additional “filler” activities.

If problems arise, don’t feel like a failure. **When a substitute is unable to adequately address a discipline problem, the principal should be contacted immediately.**

A substitute **must not administer corporal punishment for any reason.** This type of discipline is administered only by District employees authorized by policy.

## Monitoring Students

---

**The substitute should not leave students unattended at any time.** In the absence of the teacher, a substitute assumes full responsibility for students in the class, outside the class, on the playground, in the cafeteria, tutorials, etc., unless another adult is assigned that responsibility by the campus principal. Students should not be released before the bell unless the substitute is instructed to do so by a teacher or campus administrator.

If a person who is not connected with the school seeks information about a student or permission to take the student from the room, the person should be referred directly to the principal. The principal will decide whether or not the student should be excused and will officially notify the substitute of the decision.

**A student is never allowed to leave school with a person who has not gained official permission from the school office. Under no circumstances should a student be released without permission of the principal.**

## **Before Leaving**

---

The arrival and departure times for teachers vary from campus to campus, and substitutes are expected to observe these time lines at a minimum. Teachers and substitutes are generally required to be on duty for an eight (8) hour day inclusive of lunch. To be a successful substitute, it may be necessary to spend additional time, especially at the beginning of the day.

When substituting duties are complete for the day, the substitute should:

1. Straighten the classroom and leave appropriate notes for the regular teacher.
2. Complete the substitute evaluation form, if one is provided, and leave it for the teacher.
3. Secure all doors and windows in the classroom.
4. **Check out at the front office of the school.** Please be sure that you signed in/out. This is extremely important as this record determines the dates for which a substitute is paid.
5. Leave keys, badge, and any other school materials with the campus contact person.
6. Ask the campus contact person if substitute services will be needed the next day.

# Compensation Information

---

## Pay Dates/Cutoff Dates

Veribest ISD pay date is always the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month unless that date falls on a weekend or holiday, in which case the pay day will be the day before. Cutoff for all pay activity is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## Direct Deposit

Veribest Independent School District encourages all employees to participate in electronic deposited into either a savings or checking account of their choice. Doing so ensures against lost paychecks, eliminates the need to make special arrangements for summer checks and does away with waiting in long lines to deposit a check.

The documents required for direct deposit are the Veribest ISD Direct Deposit Authorization Form, and a voided check (not temporary) or an account card from the financial institution. All documentation needs to be received by Denise Dusek or Kim Dusek in the Business Office **prior** to the employees first date of work.

Please check with your bank the first month after authorizing direct deposit to ensure that the direct deposit took effect.

The payroll calendar is structured in such a way that it may be thirty (30) days after a substituting assignment before a substitute receives his/her check. It is very important that each substitute keep accurate records of substitute assignments. In the event there are questions about paychecks, please contact the payroll office at the administration building, 325-655-4912.

## Substitute Pay Scale

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| • Substitutes ½ day                             | \$45.00 per ½ day |
| • Substitutes 1 whole day                       | \$90.00 per day   |
| • Certified Teachers 10+ days in the same class | \$125.00 per day  |
| • Non-Certified 10+ days in the same class      | \$115.00 per day  |

**Substitutes may be asked to perform hall duty, cafeteria duty, etc. during the scheduled teacher planning period. Principals of the campus will direct substitutes to where they are needed throughout the workday.**

## Retirement Benefits

A substitute does not qualify for membership in the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) unless he/she teaches for a total of ninety (90) days during one school year. For substitutes who teach ninety (90) or more days, funds are not withheld from the substitute's check and payment into the TRS must be made directly to the system by the substitute.

## **Federal Withholding Tax**

Federal Withholding Tax is withheld from the substitute's wages according to the exemptions filed on the W-4 form submitted by the substitute. Should a substitute desire to make any changes in the exemptions filed, the substitute should notify Denise Dusek, 325-655-4912.

## **Worker's Compensation**

The District, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to any substitute who suffers a work-related illness or who is injured on the job. Any injury incurred while a substitute is on school property during the normal course of duties as a substitute teacher should be reported immediately to the campus principal. A written record of the injury must be established. The campus principal will inform the substitute of procedures following a work-related injury.

# **Employee Conduct and Welfare**

---

## **Work Performance**

Substitute Teacher's work performance issues at the campuses are reported to school administrators. Upon receiving a negative report, the administrator will issue a written statement to the employee. The employee may be counseled at that time. The second negative report will result in a conference and written warning. The third such report may result in termination. Reports of a severe nature may result in immediate termination.

## **Computer Use and Data Management (*Policy CQ*)**

The district's electronic communications systems, including its network access to the Internet, are to be used for administrative and instructional purposes only. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications systems are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Employees and students who are authorized to use the systems are required to abide by the provisions of the district's communications systems policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action.

**Substitute teachers are prohibited from using the computers in the classroom unless directed to do so by campus administration.**

### **Standards of Conduct** (*Policy DH*)

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the district and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct:

- Recognize and respect the rights and property of students and coworkers; maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor as early as possible (preferably in advance) in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, and tardiness may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Know and comply with department and district procedures and policies.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.

### **Harassment** (*Policies DIA, FB*)

Harassment of a coworker or student motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. A substantiated charge of harassment against a student or employee shall result in disciplinary action. The term harassment includes repeated unwelcome and offensive slurs, jokes, or other oral, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or age that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.

Employees who believe they have been harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal or supervisor. If the campus principal or supervisor is the subject of a complaint, the employee shall report the complaint directly to the superintendent. An employee who suspects or knows that a student is being harassed by a school employee or by another student shall inform his or her principal or immediate supervisor.

Any allegation of harassment of students or employees shall be investigated and addressed. An employee may appeal the decision of the principal or supervisor regarding the investigation into the allegations in accordance with the employee complaint and grievance policy and procedures. To the greatest extent possible, complaints shall be treated as confidential. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough

investigation. The district will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith reports perceived harassment.

### **Sexual Harassment** (*Policies DAA, FB*)

**Employee-to-Employee.** Sexual harassment of a coworker is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct under the following conditions:

- Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions.
- The conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or otherwise offensive work environment.

**Employees who believe that they have been subject to sexual harassment are encouraged to come forward with complaints and should inform their principal, supervisor, or the Superintendent, Mandy Traylor at 325-655-4912.** Employees must follow the procedures outlined in this handbook for filing a complaint, except when it would require presenting a complaint to the alleged harasser. The district will promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment and take appropriate disciplinary action.

**Employee-to-Student.** Sexual harassment of students by employees is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment of students includes any welcome or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other oral, written, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Romantic relationships between district employees and students are strictly prohibited. Other prohibited conduct includes the following:

- Engaging in sexually oriented conversations for the purpose of personal sexual gratification
- Telephoning students at home or elsewhere and engaging in inappropriate social relationships
- Engaging in physical contact that would reasonably be construed as sexual in nature
- Enticing or threatening students to get them to engage in sexual behavior in exchange for grades or other school-related benefits

Sexual abuse of a student by an employee violates a student's constitutional right to bodily integrity. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to, fondling, sexual assault, or sexual intercourse.

Employees who suspect a student is being sexually harassed or abused by another employee are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal immediately. All allegations of sexual harassment or sexual abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. Conduct that may be characterized as known

or suspected child abuse will also be reported to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. Employees with questions or concerns relating to the alleged sexual harassment of a student should contact Mandy Traylor, Superintendent.

### **Student Confidentiality** (*Policy FL*)

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records.

The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

- Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes.
- The student (if 18 or older) or attending an institute of postsecondary education.
- School officials with legitimate educational interests.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) defines education records as any records, documents, files, or other material containing personally identifiable information about students, that are maintained by a school district or by someone on behalf of a school district [*See Board Policy FL LEGAL*). Some information about students is "directory information" and is available upon request by any person, unless a parent has asked that it not be released. Other types of records can only be released with a parent's express permission. Material containing personally identifiable information about students should not be sent through the Internet or E-mail either in the body of electronic messages or as enclosures or attachments to the messages.

E-mail messages about a student or employee may be accessible--to the extent that FERPA allows--through an open records request in accordance with the Public Information Act (formerly called the "Texas Open Records Act"), if the messages have been retained or are retrievable in the computer system. Each user should take care not to send or store any message he or she would not want made available to others.

Any student information sent by Internet or E-mail is considered public information and, therefore, could be subpoenaed in court.

*Therefore, no confidential information about students should be sent through Internet or E-Mail unless the written permission of the parent is given.*

Materials that are not considered educational records and do not have to be made available to a parent or student include teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher.

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

### **Safety** (*Policy CK*)



The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students, and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirement:

- Observe all safety rules.
- Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times.
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor.
  - Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact Bobby Fryar at 325-655-4912.

#### **Tobacco Use** (*Policies DH, GKA, FNCD*)

Smoking or using tobacco products is prohibited by law on all district-owned property. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking while inside the vehicle. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in all school buildings.

#### **Name and Address Changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees should notify the Human Resources office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, home telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. Forms to process a change in personal information can be accessed by calling Human Resources at 325-655-4912.

#### **Possession of Firearms and Weapons** (*Policies FNCG, GKA*)

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, illegal knives, or other weapons on school premises or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors immediately.

### **Visitors in the Workplace (*Policy GKC*)**

All visitors are expected to enter any district facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive a visitor's badge and given directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

### **Employee Dress Code**

Mission: As a Substitute Teacher, you are to “dress for success” in order to be recognized as professionals, which we are. During regular school hours, we will “dress for success.” The dress and grooming of all Veribest substitute teachers shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments. Our employees shall act as role models, exemplifying the highest standards of professional appearance, to teach community values and proper grooming and hygiene.

- Shorts of any type will not be allowed with the exception of gym/athletic classes.
- Athletic attire including sweats, wind suites, etc., is to be worn during athletic classes only.
- Use good professional judgment in dressing for success.
- For further direction, follow the VISD Employee Dress code

## **Drug-Free Schools & Workplace Requirements**

Veribest ISD is committed to maintaining a drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of illegal drugs in the workplace. Substitutes who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The District's policy on drug abuse and drug-free schools follows:

Substitutes shall not unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours while at school or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours:

- Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
- Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
- Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
- Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drugs.

A substitute need not be legally intoxicated to be considered “under the influence” of a controlled substance.

The District prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance, illicit drug, and alcohol, as those terms are defined in state and federal law, in the workplace, on school premises, or as part of any of the District’s activities.

Substitutes who violate this prohibition shall be removed from the District’s substitute list. Compliance with these requirements and prohibitions is mandatory and is a condition of substitute employment.

Smoking or using tobacco products is prohibited by law on all district-owned property. This includes all buildings, school buses, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. The use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited at all school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property.