

STEP

Senior **T**ax **E**xchange **P**rogram

HANDBOOK

Darlington Community School District
11630 Center Hill Road
Darlington, WI 53530
608-776-2006
www.darlington.k12.wi.us

DEFINITION

Darlington Community School District's Senior Tax Exchange Program (STEP) recognizes that our senior citizens have lifetimes of knowledge, skills, talents, and wisdom that can serve as tremendous support to our school system. STEP offers retired Darlington property owners the opportunity to work in our district and have their earnings applied toward payment of their school property taxes.

These cross generational experiences can be invaluable to students, especially those who need more positive adult role models in their lives.

QUALIFICATIONS

Darlington STEP allows citizens 62 years of age and older, who have retired from full time employment, who own property in the district and pay property tax in Darlington, to apply to work in the district in exchange for property tax credit.

COMPENSATION

Compensation is set at \$5.00 per hour. Eligible residents of the same property may share work to meet the \$500 annual maximum amount of tax credit for each primary residence. This \$500 amounts to a maximum of 100 work hours/household/year.

HISTORY

The Senior Tax Exchange Program started in Colorado and has since been adopted by other states. In Wisconsin, the Kaukauna Area School District was the first to offer STEP beginning in 1995, and other districts have followed suit. Darlington will begin its program with the start of the 2016-2017 school year.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A variety of federal, state, and local laws, policies and procedures govern the work of the school district, some of which are described in this handbook. School Board policies and procedures, and rules for each school building, apply to all persons employed in the school district, as well as participants in STEP.

CONTACT US

The STEP Coordinator, Don Osterday, may be reached with STEP questions at 608-776-2006, option #3.

SUPERVISION

STEP workers are under the immediate supervision of the staff person who requested them and should consult directly with them regarding day to day matters. The principals supervise all staff members in their buildings, and routinely problem solve as needed. Additionally, the STEP coordinator can be contacted to facilitate discussion at the request of the STEP worker or supervisor.

ROLE OF STEP WORKERS

In today's complex society, students may enter school with needs greater than just education. Some pupils may be at risk for failure. These special needs- physical, social, emotional, or mental- must be addressed to enhance student learning. The STEP worker helps in the team effort to meet the needs of all students, as a support for the work of district staff. An individual comment of warm praise may be remembered for a lifetime, while a judgment or criticism may leave a lasting scar. Sensitivity to the dignity and self-worth of every student is a crucial part of each STEP worker's job. Adults modeling the behavior that is expected from all students sets the standard for everyone involved in our schools. If a child needs to be disciplined, the STEP worker should refer the issue to the appropriate staff member. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, the STEP worker must report the suspected situation to the pupil's teacher, administrator or counselor immediately.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

Each school has a dress code that requires clothing that does not distract from education. In addition, dress should be clean, neat, comfortable, and appropriate to the job.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

STEP workers **must report to the school office prior to work to sign in**. They are required to wear their name tag with "STEP" on it for identification at all times. In addition, they are asked to sign out upon leaving each day.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Each teacher sets standards for her/his classroom as defined by school policy. Communication between a STEP worker and her/his supervisor is the key to providing a good learning environment for the students and a good working experience for the STEP worker and supervisor.

A STEP Worker must adhere to the same code of ethics that is expected of all school personnel. State guidelines maintain that all students' personal matters and records be kept confidential. The rights of children, their families and the STEP worker are respected when information is kept confidential. Therefore, STEP workers must maintain the confidentiality of names of individual students, as well as their behavior and academic records.

REPORTING ILLNESSES, ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

If a STEP worker is ill or an emergency prevents work as scheduled, s/he should contact the school office. All workers shall immediately report any personal accident or injury occurring on school property to their immediate supervisor. Loss and/or damage to personal belongings is not the responsibility of the school, so valuables should be secured or not brought to school.

INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINES FOR STEP WORKERS

No setting, including the school environment, can be totally risk free. However, adherence to prevention recommendations will optimize the safety of all students and staff and minimize transmission of infectious diseases.

HAND WASHING

Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of disease.

Hands should be washed:

- *at the start of the school day
- *before serving or eating food
- *after going to the bathroom
- *after inadvertently handling any body secretions
- *after handling any items contaminated with body secretions (tissue, etc.)

EFFECTIVE HAND WASHING TECHNIQUES

- *use soap and warm running water
- *rub hands vigorously for 10 seconds
- *wash all skin surfaces, including backs of hand, wrists, between fingers, under fingernails and rings
- *dry hands with a paper towel
- *turn off water with a paper towel, not with your bare hands

There are alternatives to hand washing when soap and water are not available. These are temporary measures, not meant to replace hand washing, but to be done in the interim until soap and water are available. These would include antiseptic products, often in gel form, which primarily have an alcohol base.

MOST IMPORTANTLY...

1. Do not touch the body fluids of another person, if at all possible.
2. If unavoidable, ask your supervisor where gloves are available in your particular workplace and put them on before touching the body fluids of another person.
3. If you do come in contact with the body fluids of another person, wash as directed above, and let your supervisor know within 24 hours.
4. Consult with your doctor about the advisability of vaccines such as flu shots.
5. Model the behavior of covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, as we teach to students.

DRILLS FOR EMERGENCIES

Please consult your direct supervisor for proper emergency drill procedures for the particular building and room in which you are working. Emergency instructions are posted throughout the school buildings. Ask your supervisor where to look for these if they are not immediately apparent.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Local radio stations such as D99.3 and 93.7 FM and local TV stations will relay announcements regarding school closings, and these will also be posted on the district website at www.darlington.k12.wi.us and on Facebook.

TRAINING

The STEP Coordinator provides the following information:

Topics covered with **workers** are:

Topics covered with **supervisors** are:

1. Forms required
2. STEP handbook
3. How schools have changed
4. Other timely subjects

1. Mechanics of STEP
2. Job requests from seniors
3. STEP handbook

PAYMENT OF STEP WORKERS

Compensation will be made via a two-party check made payable to the STEP worker and the Treasurer of the respective town or township where the STEP worker resides in January for payment of property tax bills. (This procedure must be approved by our business manager, district administrator and the village manager and treasurer.)

The maximum number of hours for which tax credit can be earned is 100/tax year. If the worker exceeds the maximum number of hours, s/he will only receive payment for this pre-established number. The hourly rate and maximum hours will be determined at the beginning of each budget year by the district.

TIME SHEETS

Each STEP worker is responsible for completing a time sheet and sending it to the STEP Coordinator at the end of each month of work. The STEP worker is encouraged to make a personal copy of the time sheet on the school copier prior to sending it to the STEP Coordinator, Don Osterday, at Darlington Elementary Middle School. Time sheets, as well as other STEP documents, may be sent by interoffice mail.

EVALUATION

In addition to sending evaluation forms to supervisors and STEP workers, the STEP Coordinator will be available to speak with STEP workers and job supervisors to identify job concerns, and possible means of improvement. Please feel free to bring comments and/or suggestions to the attention of your immediate supervisor or the STEP Coordinator.

LOCATION OF STEP WORKERS

Every attempt will be made to place STEP workers within both school buildings. This will depend upon job requests submitted and job goals and qualifications of applicants.

TRANSPORTATION

STEP workers are responsible for their own transportation to and from their work assignment.
STEP workers may not transport children in their personal vehicles.

DARLINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT CALENDAR

A current year school calendar is included with STEP documents and is available on the district website at www.darlington.k12.wi.us.