



WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

October 2023

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SECTION 1: WELCOME TO WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Westchester Library System (WLS). Each employee is an important member of this organization, which is dedicated to serving, celebrating and respecting the diversity within Westchester County.

Employees are encouraged to ask any questions they may have regarding any policies or procedures outlined in this handbook. A staff member's immediate supervisor can provide clarification on the information outlined below.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook contains general information about employment at WLS. It is designed as a working guide for employees and supervisors, to provide staff with information on benefits, policies and practices. This version of the WLS Employee Handbook supersedes all previous versions of the handbook.

This handbook is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies, practices, or benefits described. Nothing in this handbook confers any rights or privileges upon any WLS employee. There are no promises or guarantees of any kind contained in this handbook, nor should it be regarded or construed by WLS employees as a contract between WLS and any of its employees. Please note that this handbook is subject to change, and policies may be modified or discontinued by the WLS Board of Trustees at any time.

OVERVIEW OF THE SYSTEM

A focus on community engagement and outreach provides the framework for programs and services at the Westchester Library System (WLS). It is through collaboration with the member libraries, governmental agencies, service organizations, community members, Westchester County and others that WLS is able to assist them in their efforts to create and grow welcoming, inclusive services and programs for all residents of their community and the County.

WLS works to provide cost-effective approaches for administrative and technology support, cataloging assistance, delivery of materials, training of library staff and trustees, the sharing of digital resources. We do our work with a disciplined focus on equity, diversity, and access, which gives our outreach programs and member library activities the broadest reach and relevance. We are committed to providing services for the interest, information, and enrichment of all people in the communities we serve.

WLS is one of New York State's 23 public library systems and was established by State Education Law in 1958. WLS is a membership organization comprised of the 38 independent public and association libraries within the geographic boundaries of Westchester County. Each of the

member libraries is an independent organization with its own board of trustees, director, staff, policies and chartered service area. WLS strives to help each member library support the specific needs and interests of its community, while also encouraging the development of critical interdependencies that result in more effective and cost-efficient library services throughout the County. To that end, WLS provides ongoing training and professional development for library directors, staff, and library trustees fostering best practices in library services, community engagement, and fiscal responsibility. WLS also provides expert guidance in complying with NYS rules and regulations to member libraries. Additionally, WLS offers robust, community centered outreach programs collaborating with libraries, community agencies and nonprofits to serve the County's most vulnerable populations.

MISSION STATEMENT

WLS empowers lives and communities by connecting people in Westchester County with the resources, services, and programs available through WLS and the member libraries.

VISION STATEMENT

WLS promotes the love of learning, discovery of new ideas and opportunities for all in Westchester County. It will strengthen the member libraries of Westchester County by enhancing their ability to share information and resources and by supporting a welcoming environment to everyone in the community.

CORE VALUES

WLS bases its policy and operating decisions on the following set of core values:

Advocacy,
Diversity,
Value,
Innovation,
Cooperation, and
Education.

GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS

WLS strives to provide recognition, opportunity, and job satisfaction for all staff. To this end, the organization:

- * Encourages respect for the individual dignity of each employee
- * Provides leadership in which employees may have faith and confidence
- * Cultivates current employees to advance within the organization
- * Offers training opportunities for employees and encourages them to develop their capacities to the maximum potential
- * Provides and continually reviews a balanced program of employee benefits
- * Maintains open channels of communication and continually seeks ways of maintaining high morale through fair and equitable treatment of all employees
- * Ensures that WLS personnel policies are administered fairly and consistently.

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SECTION 2: GENERAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

WORK SCHEDULES

Hours of Work

The standard workweek for WLS employees is a 5-day, 35-hour workweek. Hours may vary depending upon assignments. Some employees may be required to work evenings and/or Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Schedule adjustments may be made at the convenience of the Department, as determined by the Department Head in consultation with the Executive Director.

Meal Breaks

Employees are entitled to a 30-minute unpaid lunch break between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. for shifts six hours or longer that extend over that period, and may take up to 1 hour.

Employees are entitled to a 45-minute meal break at the time midway between the beginning and end of a shift of more than six hours starting between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m (this is not a typical WLS workday, but could apply to special events and circumstances).

All employees are entitled to an additional 20-minute meal break between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. for workdays that extend from before 11:00 a.m. to after 7:00 p.m. (this is not a typical WLS workday, but could apply to special events and circumstances).

Staggered lunch breaks may be necessary to meet WLS needs.

Breaks

Full-time employees are allowed 2 paid 15-minute scheduled breaks during each 7-hour workday. One break should be taken in the morning and one in the afternoon, or one in the afternoon and one in the evening depending on the employee's work schedule.

Part-time and hourly employees are provided with one paid 15-minute scheduled break for every 3-1/2 hours worked during a given day.

Break time may not be used at the beginning or the end of a workday, may not be accumulated or attached to meal breaks and may not be used to make up lateness.

Religious Accommodation

WLS is committed to working with employees to provide reasonable accommodation for religious observances. To request accommodation for a sacred day off, space to pray during the workday or other needs based on religion, please contact the Executive Director or Operations Manager.

ABSENCE AND LATE ARRIVAL NOTIFICATION

If an employee needs to take an unscheduled absence, a call to the appropriate supervisor must be placed by 9:00 am or within 15 minutes of the time scheduled to begin work. Employees may leave a voicemail message if the supervisor is not available.

If an employee will be unavoidably late, the same call-in procedure as outlined above should be followed. Lateness of more than one hour will be charged to vacation or personal time. Lateness may be made up with the approval of the Department Head. Only non-exempt employees may be approved to “make up” time for their lateness. (Please see the “Employee Classifications” section for the definition of exempt and non-exempt employees.)

DRESS CODE/APPEARANCE

WLS maintains a professional work environment. Although there is not a strict dress code for staff, work attire should be clean, in good repair, not pose a safety hazard and be suited to the work to be performed that day.

INNOVATION, SUCCESSION AND TRANSFERS

WLS's policy is to cultivate the talents of current employees so they may advance within the organization. All decisions regarding new positions, promotions and transfers are made in compliance with WLS's Equal Employment Opportunity policy, strategic plan and the current Board's plans for succession and development of the workforce.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

WLS is committed to employee training and development. Funds are budgeted to support employee participation in conferences, workshops, and trainings. Emphasis is placed upon the employees receiving training within their department. In addition, general staff meetings and/or training sessions may be conducted. At the discretion of the supervisor and with the approval of the Executive Director, an employee may be requested to attend, or encouraged to attend, training outside of the department.

Any employee wishing to apply for administrative leave to attend library related meetings, conferences and/or workshops other than those sponsored by WLS must submit a *Conference Attendance Request* form to their Department Head with a copy to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will approve or deny attendance at conferences and workshops and will determine the extent to which expenses will be paid and/or administrative leave approved when funds are not allocated.

Reimbursement for expenses or leave with pay will not be authorized without a copy of the request form approved and signed by the Executive Director. Request for reimbursement must be submitted within 30 days following the conference, workshop, or other approved program.

In accordance with New York State law, all employees are required to attend approved sexual harassment prevention training on an annual basis.

CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS

Before an appointment is granted as a librarian with WLS, a staff member must be certified by the New York State Education Department. Information about filing for certification may be obtained from the Operations Manager.

EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS

WLS complies with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regarding the classification of employees. An employee is classified as "Exempt" if determined to be an executive, administrator or professional, as defined by FLSA. All other employees are classified as "Non-exempt".

Based on the conditions of employment, appointments of WLS employees fall into the following categories:

- * Full-time Regular Appointment
- * Part-time Regular Appointment
- * Hourly Appointment
- * Grant/Contract Appointment
- * Temporary Appointment
- * Volunteer Appointment

Full-time Regular Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work a full workweek of 35 hours per week. Employees in this classification are eligible to participate in WLS's health benefits program, life insurance, tax-deferred annuity plan (403b), and leave programs, and are required to participate in the New York State Employees Retirement System or the New York State Voluntary Defined Contribution Plan.

Part-time Regular Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work more than 20 hours in a normal workweek. Employees in this classification are eligible to participate in WLS's health benefits program, life insurance, tax-deferred annuities (403b), certain leave programs on a prorated basis (as more fully described in this Handbook), with optional participation in the New York State Employees Retirement System.

Hourly Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work 20 hours or less in a normal workweek, on a schedule that may vary to meet the demands of WLS. Employees in this classification are eligible to participate in tax-deferred annuities (403b), with optional participation in the New York State Employees Retirement System. In addition, employees in this classification are eligible to earn sick leave as defined in New York State and Westchester County laws.

Grant-funded Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work in positions funded through a grant or contract to perform a specific job. Employees in this classification may be eligible for various benefits according to the terms of the individual grant or contract, including eligibility to earn sick leave as defined in New York State and Westchester County laws. In addition to being at-will, employees hired for these positions may have their employment terminated if grant funding or contract is not renewed.

Contract Workers

Individuals contracted by WLS to work for the duration of a specific project or assignment pursuant to a contract with criteria to be independent contractors may work on site at WLS from time to time, but are not "employees."

Volunteers

Individuals are welcomed by WLS in an unpaid capacity to help provide extra services and/or to assist in the performance of specific routines, services, and programs. Individuals in this classification are not eligible to receive any benefits from WLS. Appointees to volunteer positions do not perform duties to maintain the regular operations at WLS and are not required to perform specific hours as a condition of volunteering.

Student Interns

Students in an accredited education program may serve as interns and work at WLS in a manner consistent with NYS Department of Labor guidelines. Individuals in this classification are not eligible to receive any benefits from WLS.

Trainees

Trainees may receive experience and instruction at WLS in a manner consistent with NYS Department of Labor guidelines. Individuals in this classification are not eligible to receive any benefits from WLS.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENDITURES

Expenses for Meetings, Workshops and Conferences

In general, reimbursable expenses include approved travel, tolls, transit fares, lodging, meals (but no alcohol), registration and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in connection with WLS functions and authorized professional meetings. Employees traveling overnight will be granted a per-diem stipend for meals and incidental expenses in lieu of submitting expenses for reimbursement. The stipend rate will be as determined by the Internal Revenue Service using the High-low Substantiation Method. Requests for advance payment for conference attendance must be submitted sufficiently in advance to allow for approval by the Executive Director, and shall be made in a manner consistent with IRS and NYS labor law.

Personal Vehicle Use

There is no requirement that personal vehicles be used for WLS purposes. For employees who elect to operate their personal vehicle for a work-related activity (such as attending a meeting off-site), the employee must have a valid driver's license, appropriate for the type of vehicle being driven at the time of travel.

The employee will be reimbursed for mileage driven in a personal vehicle at the standard rate as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage reimbursement covers fuel, maintenance/repairs, and operating costs so these expenses are not reimbursed separately. In addition to the mileage allowance, tolls and necessary parking charges may be reimbursed.

The employee is expected to operate the vehicle in a safe manner and must abide by all traffic rules and regulations, as well as the rules of any private property being visited for work-related purposes. WLS does not assume liability for damage to personal vehicles for any reason and does not assume liability for deductibles or any other insured loss to the vehicle. Expenses for repairs to personal vehicles are not reimbursable, nor are parking fines or fees for traffic violations.

Employees are expected to complete *Local Travel Reimbursement Request* forms on a quarterly basis to obtain reimbursement. Reimbursement of expenses must be submitted within 30 days following the end of the quarter.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Personnel Records include: notice of hire, job description(s), employee evaluation materials, problem-solving documentation, notices of job change (change of duties, promotion, transfer), documentation related to requests for leave, ADA accommodation-related materials, insurance-related materials, all leave-related documentation not provided to an insurance carrier, notice of termination, requests to review Personnel Files.

Unless record-keeping requires otherwise, all records relating to individual employees are kept in the employee's personnel file. These records are maintained in a confidential manner and only the Operations Manager, Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director have access to them. Individual employees may have access to their personnel records upon written request to the Executive Director, consistent with applicable law.

Records that pertain to an employee, but are not "Personnel Records" are:

- Conflict of Interest forms;
- Whistleblowing report and investigation records;
- Anti-discrimination and sexual harassment report and investigation records;
- Payroll records;
- Vacation and sick leave accrual records (note: accrual records are available to employees within three days upon request);

- Retirement plan participation records;
- All insurance information that must be transmitted to a carrier.

Employees are responsible for notifying the Operations Manager of any change of address and/or telephone number, as well as any change that may affect payroll or benefits.

MANDATORY POSTINGS AREA

WLS maintains physical and electronic locations for the mandatory posting of notices to employees. The physical location is in the Employee Lounge at the WLS office. The electronic location is in the Files section within the General channel of the WLS HQ Staff group within Microsoft teams.

All WLS Board Approved Policies, including this handbook are maintained electronically and are posted at this URL: <https://www.westchesterlibraries.org/about-wls/wls-board-resources/wls-board-approved-policies/>

SECTION 3: COMPENSATION

PAY POLICY

Pay Frequency

Salaries are paid bi-weekly for base salary due up to the pay date and paid every other Tuesday. Employees are paid through either pay check or direct deposit. The pay period covers 2 weeks starting on Sunday and ending on the Saturday before it is deposited in each staff member's designated financial account(s). If a holiday falls on a Tuesday, employees have access to funds on the preceding Monday. Employees are encouraged to review their advice of deposit carefully each time to see that no inappropriate deductions have been taken. If an employee has any questions or believes that an inappropriate deduction has been made, the Operations Manager should be informed immediately so that a correction can be made in the following pay Period.

Direct Deposit

WLS offers employees the option to have their salary electronically transmitted to their bank of choice. To activate direct deposit, an employee must provide the Operations Manager a voided check, a deposit slip or equivalent document noting the amounts to be deposited (if there are multiple accounts). Due to banking requirements, several weeks may elapse before direct deposit is activated.

STATUTORY DEDUCTIONS

Federal, State, City & FICA Taxes

Automatic deductions are made for Federal, State, and FICA (Social Security/Medicare) withholding taxes for all employees. City taxes will also be deducted where applicable.

FICA for Life Insurance

In accordance with IRS regulations, Group Term Life Insurance above the IRS-defined threshold is taxable for both the employee and the employer. FICA deductions for term life insurance are taken from the first pay period in December of each year.

Garnishment of Wages

When garnishment of an employee's salary is legally ordered, the Executive Director will notify the employee of the garnishment order. Deductions are made in accordance with the provisions of law and the rule or regulation of the issuing agency.

Retirement

Employee contributions to the New York State Employees Retirement System are deducted as required by New York State law.

VOLUNTARY DEDUCTIONS

WLS offers health insurance to all full-time staff. Employees who elect to be covered by WLS health insurance will have their share of the premiums deducted from their bi-weekly pay, as defined in the benefit schedule.

Employees may also request deductions for participation in an approved tax deferred annuity plan, credit union and/or catastrophic medical plan.

OVERTIME PAY

Any employee whose position is classified as non-exempt and whose normal work week is 35 hours is paid additional straight time for hours worked over 35 and up to 40 hours per week, and time and one-half for time worked in excess of 40 hours in a given week. Paid days such as holidays, paid vacations, paid sick and personal time, and paid bereavement or jury duty shall be considered as hours worked in calculating eligibility for overtime pay. When possible, advance notification of overtime assignments will be provided. Part-time employees are paid at their regular rates of pay for hours worked up to 40 hours in a given week.

Individuals who are classified as exempt employees are not eligible for overtime but are responsible for completing the duties of their position regardless of the number of hours worked above the standard workweek.

SECTION 4: BENEFITS

WLS reserves the right to amend, modify or terminate, in whole or part, any or all the provisions of the benefit plans described herein. The complete terms of all WLS employee benefit plans are contained in official plan documents and brochures, which are frequently updated and maintained by the Operations Manager. The official plan documents and brochures will govern in case of any conflict with the terms of this handbook. The descriptions in this handbook are for general information only and describe benefits currently being offered by WLS. Detailed information regarding the terms of all benefits is available from the Operations Manager.

Employees are responsible for notifying WLS of any change in their status, such as address or telephone number changes, number of dependents, marital status, etc. which may affect their benefits.

PAID HOLIDAYS

WLS observes the following holidays:

- (1) New Year's Day
- (2) Martin Luther King's Birthday
- (3) Lincoln's Birthday—FLOATING HOLIDAY
- (4) Presidents' Day
- (5) Memorial Day
- (6) Juneteenth
- (7) Independence Day
- (8) Labor Day
- (9) Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day
- (10) Election Day (November)—FLOATING HOLIDAY
- (11) Veterans Day
- (12) Thanksgiving Day
- (13) Christmas Day

WLS is closed on all the holidays listed above, except for the Floating Holidays. Full-time employees are granted time off with pay for holidays. Hourly or Part-time employees whose normal workday falls on a holiday, are paid for the number of hours normally scheduled for that day. For holidays that fall on Saturday, the Friday immediately preceding will be considered as the holiday. For holidays that fall on Sunday, the subsequent Monday will be considered as the holiday.

Lincoln's Birthday and Election Day (November) are designated as Floating Holidays. The WLS Headquarters will be open these days; however, employees may substitute another day for each at any point in time during the fiscal year with prior approval of their Department Head. If time for these 2 floating holidays is not taken within the fiscal year, no time will be compensated. Coverage for each department is the responsibility of the Department Head. WLS closes early on the workday immediately preceding the holiday observance of Christmas Day unless Christmas Day falls on a Sunday or Monday.

Time required for observance of religious holidays which are not legal holidays may be requested as personal leave or vacation. Employees are encouraged to ask as far in advance as possible, so such requests can be respectfully considered and confirmed in a timely and considerate manner.

If a holiday occurs during an employee's vacation, the holiday is not charged to vacation time.

If a holiday occurs while an employee is attending a convention at the request of the Executive Director, alternate time will be granted.

PAID VACATION

Vacation leave with pay is granted to those classified as full-time and part-time regular employees.

Hourly employees (scheduled to work 20 hours or fewer per week) are not granted vacation with pay.

For full-time employees, 22 days of vacation allowance is granted on January 1 of the new year (as only 10 days may be carried forward into a new year, 32 is the maximum accrual).

For part-time regular employees, vacation days are granted on a prorated basis on January 1 of the new year (as only 10 days may be carried forward into a new year, 30 is the maximum accrual).

New employees beginning work after January 1 will be granted vacation leave on a pro-rated basis in the first year of employment.

A new employee is permitted to take vacation after 90 days of employment.

Vacation leave may be taken at any time in the year, subject to the staffing needs of the department and after fulfillment of the waiting period for new employees. Vacation leave may be taken all at one time, or divided into several parts.

Request for Vacation

Employees who wish to schedule vacation time must submit a written request (hard copy or electronic) to the Department Head for approval. The Department Head will approve or deny the request in writing. If approved, the Department Head will forward it to the Operations Manager.

No more than 10 days of vacation time may be carried over from one year to the next.

An employee who resigns with at least two weeks' notice or is terminated for anything other than misconduct will be paid for up to 10 days of unused vacation time accumulated in the prior year, as well as for any pro-rated current year unused vacation time.

PAID PERSONAL DAYS

Full-time employees are granted 5 personal leave days (35 hours) each calendar year. Part-time regular employees are granted personal leave on a prorated basis. Hourly employees are not granted personal leave.

Personal leave should be taken in half-day (3.5 hours) or full-day (7 hours) increments. Personal leave may not be carried over from one calendar year to the next.

Personal leave may be used for a variety of purposes such as religious observances or for transacting personal business which must be conducted during normal work hours. Personal leave may be used to cover absenteeism or lateness due to extreme weather conditions.

Personal leave may be taken the working day before or after a WLS holiday only at the discretion of the Department Head. The Department Head is responsible for seeing that the department is adequately staffed before permission may be granted.

Personal leave must be approved by the immediate supervisor at least 24 hours in advance except in emergencies.

No payment is made for unused personal days at any time during the employee's employment or at termination/resignation.

PAID SICK LEAVE

Full-time employees are granted 12 days (84 hours) of sick leave per calendar year, which will be front-loaded on January 1 of each year.

Part-time regular employees are granted paid sick leave on a prorated basis, but in no event shall accrual be less than 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

All other employees (hourly, grant-funded and temporary) are eligible to earn sick leave at the rate included in New York State's Paid Sick Leave Law (<https://www.ny.gov/programs/new-york-paid-sick-leave>), and will accrue paid sick leave at a rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked. Sick leave is paid at the employee's normal pay rate.

New full-time employees, beginning work after January 1, will be front-loaded sick leave on a prorated basis in the first year of employment.

Sick leave may not be used until it has been earned. In emergency situations only, sick leave may be advanced with the approval of the Executive Director.

Sick leave may be used for any permitted reason as described in the New York State's Paid Sick Leave Law. In accordance with this law, employees will not be asked to disclose any confidential health information, including, but not limited to, providing a doctor's note to return to work. However, employees should note that they may have to present documentation for other forms

of leave, both paid and unpaid, including but not limited to Paid Family Leave, Family and Medical Leave Act leave, Short-Term Disability and Long-Term Disability.

Full-time employees are permitted to accumulate up to 165 days (1155 hours) of sick leave; part-time regular employees are permitted to accumulate the prorated equivalent of 165 days. Hourly and salaried employees may carry over their unused sick days into the following year or can be paid one day of regular pay for every 3 full days of unused sick leave earned during the period of the prior year December 1 to the current year November 30. Only one option may be chosen each year.

Upon retirement, a number of days of unused sick leave are considered by New York State Employees Retirement System (NYSERS) in computing retirement benefits. (Note: Credit for unused sick leave is in addition to the time required for retirement and cannot be used to meet the requirements established by NYSERS.)

Exiting employees will not be paid for unused sick time at time of separation.

PAID BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Full-time employees are granted up to 5 consecutive working days for a death in the immediate family or the immediate family of their spouse or domestic partner. The immediate family is defined as the following relatives: parent, stepparent, spouse, domestic partner, child, stepchild, aunt, uncle, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, and stepsibling. Part-time and hourly employees are granted the hours they were scheduled to work on these days.

Personal leave may be used if additional time is desired, or for absences due to the death of a non-relative.

Special circumstances may be brought to the attention of the Executive Director.

A maximum of 4 working hours is granted to attend the wake or funeral of a co-worker or co-worker's immediate family, when it falls within the normal working day.

RETIREMENT PENSION

All full-time salaried employees are required to join the New York State Employees Retirement System (NYSERS) or the New York State Voluntary Defined Contribution Plan (NYSVDC). Membership in the retirement system is optional for part-time and hourly employees. Information regarding vesting in the pension plan can be obtained directly from NYSERS (<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/common-retirement-fund>).

TAX-DEFERRED ANNUITY (403b) PLAN

All employees may elect to participate in a Tax Deferred Annuity (403b) plan through payroll deductions. Contributions to the plan are taken from pretax salary, and any interest and investment earnings accumulate on a tax deferred basis until withdrawal or until paid as benefits. Several firms handle WLS's program and offer a variety of plans for consideration. However, this benefit is accompanied by an important responsibility. Because the employee decides how to invest his or her funds, the employee is responsible for any financial gains or losses that result from that decision.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE ATTENDANCE AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS AND CONVENTIONS)

Professional leave may be granted to an employee for work-related attendance at professional meetings, conventions and/or workshops. Such leave will be considered in light of WLS's needs and work schedules and is granted at the discretion of the immediate supervisor, Department Head, and Executive Director. (Please refer to the **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT** section for further information).

Before accepting a responsibility or an office which may require the use of work time, an employee must obtain the approval of the Executive Director.

Employees wishing to apply to attend professional meetings, conferences and/or workshops must complete the *Conference Attendance Request* form available in the Mandatory Postings Area or from the Operations Manager and submit it to their supervisor for approval. Once approved by the supervisor, the Request will be forwarded to the Executive Director for final review and approval. The Executive Director may request that the employee attend meetings which may be of value to the individual and/or WLS.

Professional leave is voluntary. While on professional leave an employee will be paid based on their regular work schedule. Overtime will not accrue while on professional leave. Professional leave will be considered "for work" and as part of professional development or work-related service.

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SECTION 5: INSURANCE

HEALTH INSURANCE

WLS offers health insurance after satisfactory completion of the first 3 months of employment. Grant-funded employees may participate in the plan if health insurance coverage is included in the terms of the grant/contract.

There is an employee contribution required for individual and family health coverage; however, WLS pays the remaining portion of the premium. The portion of the health insurance coverage paid by the employee is, with written authorization by the employee, deducted from the employee's bi-weekly pay.

EYEGLOSS INSURANCE

WLS offers eyeglass insurance coverage for the individual employee only. Dependents are not covered by the Eyeglass Insurance Plan.

DENTAL INSURANCE

WLS offers dental insurance coverage for the individual employee only. Dependents are not covered by the Dental Insurance Plan.

LIFE INSURANCE

For employees covered under this plan, the amount of life insurance will be equal to double their gross salary in the previous calendar year. Included in this policy is a provision for accidental death and dismemberment.

Employees who continue to work after age 65 may be subject to reduced coverage (based on the criteria of the insurance carrier, not WLS).

Term Life Insurance coverage terminates upon an employee's retirement, resignation, or termination.

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SECTION 6: LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND ACCOMODATIONS

JURY DUTY

A leave of absence for jury duty will be granted to any employee who has been notified to serve on a jury. A staff member must notify their supervisor when the notice is received. During this leave, full-time employees will be paid their regular salary for a period up to 15 days within a -12-month period. This time may be taken as full or part days, as the jury service necessitates. Employees must indicate that their employer is paying them for this time when serving on jury duty.

An employee who reports for jury duty and is excused from serving before 12:00 (noon), must report to work for the afternoon, according to the work schedule of the department. However, the combination of jury duty and work hours shall not amount to more than a normal workday.

Upon completion of jury duty service, the employee must submit to their supervisor a signed Certificate of Jury Service indicating the number of days served.

COURT APPEARANCE

An employee who is subpoenaed for a court appearance on a WLS (or WLS member library) related matter shall be considered to be performing work-related duties when responding to a subpoena.

MILITARY DUTY

An employee who enters military service or is required to attend annual Reserve or National Guard duty will be entitled to unpaid time off and to reinstatement in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. The employee should provide the supervisor with as much advance notice as possible so that necessary staffing arrangements can be made. Employees, at their discretion, may elect to take any fully earned vacation at this time.

SAFE LEAVE

Employees who are victims of domestic violence are eligible for up to 40 hours of paid leave under Westchester County's Safe Time Leave Law, to be used to speak with lawyers, attend court or move from an abuser's residence. WLS may require documentation in the form of an affidavit, court appearance ticket or police report to support the need for time off. These documents will be secured in the employee's personnel file. The Operations Manager will engage with the employee to determine if any staff members other than the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer should be informed about the leave. For more information on the Safe Time Leave Law, visit: <https://humanrights.westchestergov.com/resources/westchester-s-safe-time-leave-law>

EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY-BASED MEDICAL LEAVES AND SOLUTIONS

WLS maintains an array of policies and insurance coverage to assist employees in balancing work with personal and family medical needs.

Employees who need to balance work with taking care of family medical needs should review the **Paid Sick Leave Policy** and, for longer-term needs, the **Paid Family Leave Policy**.

Employees who need to take sick leave for non-work-related illness or injury should first refer to the **Paid Sick Leave Policy**, and if further time is off needed, consider their options under the **Disability Policy**.

Employees who need to take sick leave for work-related illness or injury should report such illness or injury immediately, so the process for **Worker's Compensation Coverage** can be initiated.

Employees who need to request **disability accommodations**, including reduction or restructuring of work hours (either separately or together with a type of medical leave), should review the Employee **ADA Accommodations Policy**.

These policies are described below, and further information is available from the Operations Manager.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE POLICY (PFL)

Under New York State law, Paid Family Leave provides eligible employees with paid time off to bond with a new child, provide care for a family member with a serious health condition (with both "family member" and serious health condition" as defined by the PFL law), or handle exigencies related to a family member's active military service. Leave can be taken all at once or in full-day intermittent increments. To qualify for PFL, an employee must work 20 or more hours per week and must have been employed at least 26 consecutive weeks at their current covered employer; employees working fewer than 20 hours per week must have completed at least 175 days at their current covered employer. Employees pay the PFL premium through bi-weekly payroll deduction.

Any questions with respect to WLS's Paid Family Leave Policy should also be directed to the Operations Manager.

PAID SICK LEAVE POLICY

[see pages 16-17]

EMPLOYEE DISABILITY COVERAGE

Disability forms and claims for New York State disability benefits are available from and should be filled out and returned to the Operations Manager.

ADA ACCOMMODATIONS

In furtherance of its mission, the Library follows the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and the New York Human Rights Law with respect to disability and employment.

To that end, employment matters shall be addressed with an eye to ADA accessibility as set forth in WLS’s Employee Disability Accommodation Policy, and employees may request specific disability accommodations per the policy’s stated procedure.

REINSTATEMENT

Employees returning from a leave of absence within the time constraints specified above will be restored to the position of employment held by the employee when the leave commenced or to an equivalent position. An individual who fails to return upon the conclusion of the approved leave or any extension granted will be considered to have voluntarily resigned. Employees returning from leave due to their own serious health condition must provide appropriate medical documentation prior to returning, certifying their ability to resume the essential functions of their job. Employees should provide as much advance notice as possible prior to a planned return to work.

HEALTH INSURANCE AND OTHER BENEFITS

WLS will continue to provide health benefits under the existing group health plan for employees out on an approved leave for up to 12 weeks, or up to 26 weeks in the case of leave to care for a servicemember, on the same basis as prior to the leave. Employees will continue to be responsible for their portion of the premium payment. Employees who fail to return after a leave will be required to reimburse WLS for the entire cost of health insurance premiums.

NURSING AND PRIVATE AREA FOR EXPRESSION OF BREAST MILK

WLS will provide a private area for the expression of breast milk for up to three years following the birth of a child. Nursing employees may take a 20-minute unpaid break every three hours. An employee may take more or less time, as needed. At the employee’s choice, each break may be taken independently or right before or after a regularly scheduled paid or unpaid break. An employee may choose to work before or after regularly scheduled work time to make up for the break time taken to pump breast milk.

Accommodation for the expression of breast milk should be made in advance, if possible. WLS will provide a private location for this purpose which will include a chair, small table, and access to an electrical outlet. In addition, WLS provides access to clean water supply and a refrigerator in the employee lounge.

Requests for accommodation should be made in writing to the Operations Manager.

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SECTION 7: JOB PERFORMANCE

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Performance evaluations of employees are completed at least once per year and are designed to help employees prioritize their daily activities in support of WLS's mission, vision, values and strategic goals. Department heads are expected to work with individual employees to help support individuals to move forward on their organizational and professional goals that have been developed through ongoing discussions between the department head and employee.

Written performance evaluations must be signed by the employee as an indication that the employee has read it. Signature of the employee does not necessarily imply agreement with the evaluation.

Written performance evaluations become part of the employee's personnel file.

PROGRESSIVE CORRECTIONS

To maintain an orderly, safe, and efficient work environment, WLS on occasion may have to respond to and correct inappropriate employee behavior or conduct. In many instances, corrective action will be progressive, beginning with an oral warning, followed by a written warning, culminating with termination of employment. Some or all of these steps may not be followed in each instance. At the discretion of the Executive Director, the progressive corrections process may be bypassed, and immediate actions may be taken.

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SECTION 8: PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCEDURES

To ensure fair and equitable treatment of all complaints or employee concerns, a problem-solving procedure has been established, which employees are encouraged to use. If a staff member has a concern that they would like to have addressed, then as a first step, the employee should speak with their supervisor for further clarification.

Step 1. The employee shall take up the matter with their immediate supervisor or Department Head (if different) in an attempt to agree on a satisfactory resolution.

Step 2. In the event a satisfactory resolution is not reached in Step 1 or if for some reason the employee does not wish to discuss the problem with the Department Head, the Executive Director will review and investigate the matter and attempt to find a mutually agreeable solution to the problem.

Step 3. In the event the employee feels that the remedies from steps 1 and 2 have overlooked the nature of a severe problem, the employee may address the matter to the President of the WLS Board of Trustees. The employee should provide a synopsis of the problem as well as evaluation and/or proposed resolutions by supervisors along with any documentation. The burden of questioning the Executive Director's decision is on the employee. The President will bring the issue before the WLS Board.

Information gathered during each step of this procedure will be treated discreetly and confidentially by all parties involved.

NOTE: Complaints and investigative procedures related to civil rights reports (matters involving harassment, discrimination, ADA and retaliation), whistleblowing claims and conflict of interest concerns, all of which have precise reporting and procedural requirements, cannot be addressed using these problem-solving procedures and can be found in their respective policies.

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SECTION 9: SAFETY AND SECURITY

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Paid leave will be granted if WLS is officially closed for the following reasons:

- * Extreme inclement weather
- * An extended breakdown of heating or air conditioning equipment
- * Other adverse situations which affect working conditions.

Although employees are expected to try to get to work during inclement weather, there will be no obligation to travel placed on anyone who deems it dangerous or unsafe to do so. An employee who calls in an absence on an inclement day will be required to use personal or other leave for the entire scheduled workday, regardless of whether WLS closes any time after opening.

Employees who elect to leave early due to inclement weather will also be required to use personal or other leave for any scheduled hours not worked.

If an employee has already scheduled time off for a day when WLS closes because of inclement weather, the employee will be charged for that time.

Part-time and hourly employees are paid only for the time scheduled to work on the emergency closing day.

In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, WLS will notify employees by email if the WLS offices will be closed or have a delayed opening on that day.

SECURITY

Staff are to be security-conscious about safety and property. Incidents of lost or suspected stolen property caused by theft, misappropriation, malicious destruction or another criminal act should be immediately reported to a supervisor or the Executive Director.

Employees should be familiar with the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy.

ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

WLS strives to provide a safe and healthy working environment, free from occupational hazards. When a work-related injury or illness occurs, it is the employee's responsibility to inform their supervisor immediately; it is the supervisor's responsibility to immediately fill out the appropriate form and ensure it is submitted as required by the WLS worker's compensation carrier.

Employees who are disabled due to a work-related illness or injury are eligible to receive disability benefits under the Workers' Compensation policy. The amount of the benefit is dependent upon the disabled employee's compensation rate and guidelines established by the State of New York.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Should a staff member suffer a work-related injury, disease, or illness, they will receive benefits under WLS's Workers' Compensation policy. To ensure the staff member's physical wellbeing and the correct processing of these claims, the appropriate supervisor should be notified immediately about any injury occurring during and as a result of employment, no matter how slight. When seeking medical attention, it is important that the staff member indicates the injury was due to a work-related accident.

SECTION 10: SEPARATION PROCESS

RESIGNATIONS

A written letter of resignation, addressed to the Department Head, is required of all employees intending to resign. The Department Head is responsible for forwarding the letter of resignation to the Executive Director. Letters of resignation are filed in the employee's personnel file.

To ensure a smooth transition, WLS asks that as much notice as possible be provided, preferably no less than 2 weeks. For positions at the managerial level and higher, 4 weeks notice is desirable. At least 10 days' notice is required in order for the resigning employee to receive up to ten days of accrued vacation.

Employees who resign in good standing under all WLS policies including this handbook will be eligible for reemployment for a period of up to six months from the last date of employment, with benefits tied to seniority reinstated in full. Former employees will be considered for open positions along with all other candidates. Former employees who apply for reemployment after six months will be treated as new employees for purposes of seniority-related benefits.

RETIREMENT

Notification of retirement should be made in the same manner as a resignation (see above).

For employees contemplating retirement, the New York State Employees Retirement System requires notice prior to the intended retirement date. Information concerning State requirements for making application for retirement benefits may be obtained from the Operations Manager or online from the New York State Employees Retirement System (<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/retirement>).

For post-retirement health insurance coverage, WLS has set the 12/31/2008 health insurance premium as a benchmark. An employee who has worked a minimum of 10 years for WLS, and who is within 5 years of the date on which they are entitled to receive a retirement allowance, is eligible for post-retirement health insurance through WLS and will be responsible for payment of any amount above the 2008 health care premium. In accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department of Civil Service, the employee must pay the full premium, with no break in coverage, from the time of separation until reaching age eligible for receipt of the pension.

WLS will reimburse retirees for Medicare premiums, provided they are eligible for post-retirement health insurance through WLS.

TERMINATION

Violations of WLS policies, rules and regulations, or poor job performance may result in discharge from employment. Termination for misconduct will result in forfeiture of termination benefits except those required by law. Terminated employees will be notified of their last date of employment in writing. Payment of final salary owed to resigning or terminated employees will be made available on the next regular payday or sooner, consistent with applicable law.

LAST WORKDAY

Employees are responsible for ensuring that all paper and electronic files are accessible to WLS prior to the last day of employment. All information created by the employee for WLS is the property of WLS and cannot be shared with any parties outside the organization.

Employees are required to return any WLS issued property no later than their last workday.

SECTION 11: WLS POLICIES

The full text of WLS policies, including the employee handbook, can be accessed on the WLS website (<https://www.westchesterlibraries.org/about-wls/wls-board-resources/wls-board-approved-policies/>).

Anti-Harassment

Board Meetings (formerly Board Meeting Participation via Video Conference)

Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

General Municipal Law Article 18 re: Conflicts of Interest of Municipal Officers and Employees

Credit Card Usage

Data Security Program, Safeguards and Policy

Collection Development

Electronic Data and Telecommunications NOTE: (should be updated to reflect changes to labor law regarding notice about monitoring communications) – proposed amendment attached

Equal Employment Opportunity

Exempt and Non-Exempt Employee Pay

Gift Acceptance

Health Emergency Plan

Internet Safety and Use

Investment of Funds

Privacy

Progressive Discipline

Records Retention

Remote Work

Purchasing

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment Complaint Form

Whistle-Blower Protection

Workplace Violence

ADA/ADAAA

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SECTION 12: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

The Employee Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with WLS.

Please sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgment of this Employee Handbook.

I have received and read a copy of WLS’s Employee Handbook. I have also acknowledged that I have received the online link for, and have reviewed, the WLS Board approved policies. I understand that the policies and rules described in it are subject to change at the sole discretion of WLS.

I further understand that my service is terminable at will, either by myself or WLS, regardless of the length of my service.

I understand that no contract of employment has been expressed or implied, and that no circumstances arising out of my service will alter my “at will” status.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and that I have received a copy of the WLS Employee Handbook.

Employee’s Printed Name:

Employee’s Signature: _____

Position: _____ Date: _____

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