Welcome

Whitko Community Schools would like to take this opportunity to welcome you. Instructional Assistants are important members of the educational team who work with all other school employees within Whitko Community Schools to help students to learn, grow, give, and graduate successfully from high school.

Your main role as an Instructional Assistant is to support students – either directly or indirectly - to help extend the educational services provided by teachers. The students with whom you will work may need extra academic, behavioral, physical, sensory, and/or social support in order to be successful throughout school.

At one time, most Instructional Assistants were hired to work in self-contained special education classrooms and were not as involved in grade-level instructional endeavors. As laws changed, *Inclusion* (placing children with special needs in general education classrooms) became the common practice, rather than self-contained rooms. *Inclusion* also means that Instructional Assistants now spend much of their time in the general education classrooms. This change of focus has benefited more students because Instructional Assistants now work closely with students and other staff at the school, providing and supporting the least restrictive environment (LRE) for all students. Learning in a general education classroom is possible for more students because Instructional Assistants assist students with their individual needs; implement accommodations, modifications or instruction under the direction of the teachers(s); and assist teachers by supporting the education of all students as needed.

*Welcome to Whitko Community Schools!*
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I. Job Description

Job Title: Instructional Assistant (IA)
(Sometimes also referred to as Para-Professional and/or Teacher's Aide)

An individual hired to assist one or more students – either stationed with the individual student or groups of students, who need additional educational support.

Reports to: Teacher Supervisor

Teacher Supervisor: Each Instructional Assistant will have a person (usually a teacher) designated as his/her immediate supervisor. This person will provide guidance about the specific job responsibilities expected in the Instructional Assistant position from day to day. The supervising teacher will also complete the Performance Evaluation.

Principal: The Principal of the building should be approached when more than the Teacher Supervisor is needed. The Principal and/or Special Services Administrator likely hires instructional assistants, and will review Performance Evaluations with the Teacher Supervisor.

Director of Special Services: If you have a question that cannot be answered by your Teacher Supervisor or Principal, please contact the Director of Special Services.
II. Job Assignments

Your duties are generally for the length of one school year, depending on your hire date and student need. There will be evaluations on your performance filled out by your supervisors at least once every year or more often at the supervisor’s discretion. Be aware that your assignment and/or location are able to be changed. Where ever there is a student need is where Instructional Assistants will be placed. Since it is impossible to list all the activities an Instructional Assistant may carry out, the following are given as suggestions:

Instruction related:

- Monitor student conduct and behaviors during teacher instruction
- Chart student behavior data and follow Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Listen to a student’s oral reading
- Provide reading or storytelling for one student or small group
- Review reading, spelling, and vocabulary words with student(s)
- Write teacher’s lesson assignments on whiteboards or Smart Boards
- Help an individual or small group of students practice lesson materials
- Support students in completion of seatwork
- Accompany students during specials (art, music, physical education, etc.)
- Administer classroom tests to students

Non-instructional:

- Pass out materials and supplies
- Prepare instructional materials for teacher (flashcards, charts, cut-outs, etc.)
- Collect homework
- Monitor students on playgrounds, in cafeterias, halls, inside recess, etc.
- Maintain folders of student work
- Set up and operate technology tools, such as Smart Boards, iPads, computers, televisions, etc.
- Collect data as needed and instructed to do so by supervising teacher.
- Assist students with personal care routines.
III. General Expectations

1. Dress professionally as well as functionally.
2. Speak kindly. Use positive words when speaking.
3. Use “Person First” language. (say “student with autism” rather than “autistic student”) (Don’t allow the disability to define the person.)
4. Learn the names of your co-workers and the students quickly.
5. Greet students when they enter or exit the building or classroom or when you help them on or off the bus, by using their names and a smile.
6. Anticipate students doing well. With positive thoughts come positive actions.
7. Treat students “fair” rather than “equal” as some students will need much more support, accommodations, and attention than others, in order to reach the same goal.
8. Even if you are assigned mainly to one student, circulate around the room to assist others, whenever possible.
10. Do your best to not have outside interruptions while you are supporting or working with students. Cellphones should be out of sight at all times. Use break times to check messages.
11. Visually supervise students you are assigned to work with at all times.
12. Be sure to keep careful and accurate records. Students can be disorganized and forgetful and may not always remember whether they did or did not turn in their homework.
13. Maintain confidentiality at all times, whether in school or out. (Including social media sites)
14. Understand that learning takes place everywhere. This includes playgrounds, buses, lunchrooms, hallways, special occasions, school events, besides the classroom.
15. Provide a real effort to meet a student’s individual needs in the general education classroom to keep them in the classroom as long as possible.
16. All school employees are to foster a safe and positive learning place.
Display professionalism and be responsible:

1. Be prompt and work the full amount of hours you are assigned. When reporting to work and completing assigned tasks it is important that you are on time and the work is completed when needed. Other people rely on you on a daily basis. If an emergency arises that makes it necessary for you to be late to work or leave early from work, be sure to make your teacher supervisor aware as soon as possible. It is a good idea to have substitute plans ready.

2. Establish a good attendance record. Only be absent from work when it is absolutely necessary or when you are on a pre-planned absence.

3. Courtesy and cooperation are two basic elements of success with your job. Be courteous and cooperative with the public, co-workers, students and parents; who are all a part of the district you serve.

4. Keep open lines of communication. If any instructions given to you are unclear, ask for further explanation to make certain that you understand exactly what is expected of you.

5. Try to be as clear and concise as possible when explaining matters to students, staff and the public.

6. Remember to keep all school business confidential. While many things that happen at the school are a matter of public record, releasing information about them is the responsibility of specific offices and individuals. Refer any unusual requests for information to the appropriate personnel.

7. Dress appropriately for your position. Remember you are representing the school district to students and the public.

8. Wear your Corporation name tag at all times when at work whether it is in the building, outside, on a field trip, etc.

9. Avoid using work time for personal time. Cell phones and other technology tools should not be used for personal reasons. Personal business should be dealt with on your lunch break or other breaks, NOT while you are responsible for students.

10. You are responsible for the safety and welfare of students 100% of the time. If you take your lunch or other break make sure that another person is aware, and is available to provide appropriate supervision.

11. Know all safety procedures and follow them, especially when they pertain to the student(s) and behaviors, injuries, severe weather, lock downs, etc.

12. Accept constructive criticisms given by supervisors to help you improve.

13. An Instructional Assistant should not hover right beside any one student, but should instead allow each student to obtain more independence and become more self-sufficient in any small way possible, while still assuring his/her safety.
IV. Confidentiality

All Whitko Community School employees are important members of the educational team and are expected to maintain student confidentiality both in school and in the community. This means:

- Do not discuss any personal information about a student with anyone as it relates to the student’s education. This includes but is not limited to topics such as:
  1. Behavior
  2. Grades
  3. Character
  4. Medication(s)
  5. Disability
- Do not leave documents, such as IEP’s, daily activity sheets, individual reports, referral forms, etc. on counter tops, copy machines or other locations of public access.

FERPA, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, is a federal law that ensures confidentiality of information concerning children and families;

- To protect embarrassing personal information from disclosure
- To prevent information that might increase the likelihood of discrimination
- To protect personal and family security
- To encourage individuals to make use of services designed to help them

Additional Guidelines:

- In the community, don’t point out children as “my” student
- Suggest to others inquiring that any questions pertaining to students be directed to their teacher(s).
- Do not use student information as gossip or a joke and never change or exaggerate information that you can share
- Stay positive and gear any comments you do make towards the strengths of the students
- Remember when talking to co-workers that need to know, do so in private.

Confidentiality is not only expected of you, it is the law.
V. Special Education Eligibility Areas

A student may be found eligible for special education and related services in one or more of the thirteen (13) disability categories:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- Blind or Low Vision (BLV)

- Cognitive Disability (CD) (Mild, Moderate, or Severe)
  All three must be present to qualify as a Cognitive Disability:
  - Significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning;
  - Existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior; and
  - Manifested during the developmental period (birth to 18 years of age)

- Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH)

- Deaf-Blind (DB)

- Developmental Delay (DD) (early childhood only)

- Emotional Disability (ED)

- Language or Speech Impairment (LSI)

- Multiple Disabilities (MD)

- Other Health Impairment (OHI)

- Orthopedic Impairment (OI)

- Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

For more details on the individual disability categories, see 511 IAC 7-41-1 through 7-41-13 in Article 7.
VI. Special Education Acronyms

AAC – Alternative Augmentative Communication
ABA – Applied Behavior Analysis
ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
ADHD – Attention Deficit Disorder with or without hyperactivity
ASL – American Sign Language
ASD – Autism Spectrum Disorder
AT – Assistive Technology
BIP – Behavior Intervention Plan
CD – Communication Disorder
CF – Cystic Fibrosis
DB – Deaf/Blind
DCS – Division of Child Services
DD – Developmental Delay
DI – Direct Instruction
DOE – Department of Education
DS – Down Syndrome
ED – Emotional Disability
EL – English Language
ENL – English as a New Language
ESSA - Every Student Succeeds Act
ESL – English as a Second Language
ESY – Extended School Year
FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education
FAS – Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
FBA – Functional Behavior Assessment
FERPA - Family Educational Rights Privacy Act
GE – General Education
GT – Gifted and Talented
HI – Hearing Impaired
HOH – Hard of Hearing
HS – Head Start
HS – High School
ID – Intellectual Disability
IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP – Individualized Education Program
IFSP – Individualized Family Service Plan
LD – Learning Disability
LEA – Local Education Agency
LI – Language Impairment
LRE – Least Restrictive Environment
MD – Multiple Disabilities
MHT – Mental Health Therapist
MTSS – Multi-Tiered System of Support
NCLB – No Child Left Behind Act
OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
ODD – Oppositional Defiant Disorder
OHI – Other Health Impaired
OI – Orthopedic Impaired
OT – Occupational Therapy
PBIS – Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
PD – Physical Disability
PDD – Pervasive Developmental Disorder
PLOP - Present Levels of Performance
PS – Preschool
PT – Physical Therapy
RS – Related Service
RTI – Response to Intervention
SB – Spina Bifida
SI – Speech Impairment
SLD – Specific Learning Disability
SLP – Speech-Language Pathologist
SPED – Special Education
SSI – Social Security Income
TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury
TS – Tourette Syndrome
VI – Visual Impairment
VR – Vocational Rehabilitation
VIII. Whitko Community Schools
Instructional Assistant
Performance Evaluation

Date:__________________

Name:__________________ Position:__________________

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<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Instructional Assistant’s performance has been:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good – goes beyond expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Satisfactory - meets all required expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2*</td>
<td>Needs Improvement – area(s) of underperformance need to be acknowledged and discussed with a plan to bring up performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1**</td>
<td>Ineffective - poor performance in multiple areas. The supervisor/principal must help the Instructional Assistant complete a corrective plan of action for temporary and extended amounts of time, with clear goals, and a follow through with expectations</td>
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*A written plan of improvement should be created and signed by the employee and principal/supervisor to ensure support for the employee on performance goals.

**A written plan of improvement must be created and signed by the employee and principal/supervisor and revisited by a set time period. The principal/supervisor must assure that the Instructional Assistant improves immediately, to guarantee that the education and well-being of students are kept priority.
1. **Quality of work**
   Understands and carries out oral & written instructions

2. **Attendance and Punctuality**
   Observes designated work hours & follows leave policy

3. **Maintains Confidentiality**
   Keeps student information private (grades, attendance, behavior, etc.)

4. **Is a Positive Role Model**
   Promotes positive self-concept in students

5. **Encourages student growth in life skill areas**
   Promotes student independence and self-help skills

6. **Demonstrates teamwork**
   Cooperates with all staff member

7. **Provides educational support to students**
   Assists the teacher/督导or to support instruction

8. **Flexibility and Initiative**
   Adapts to different tasks as needed and thinks ahead

9. **Responds well to Productive Critiques**
   Demonstrates use of constructive criticism for improvements

10. **Appearance**
    Attire and grooming are on a professional level
**SCORE PER ITEM NUMBER:**  
4 = highly effective, 3 = Effective, 2 = Needs Improvement, 1 = Ineffective

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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
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Comments (required for any item above receiving a "2" or a "1"): 

__________________________________  
Employee Signature*  

__________________________________  
Date  

__________________________________  
Evaluator Signature  

*My signature indicates I have read this evaluation, not necessarily that I agree with it.

☐ Continued employment for next school year is anticipated.

☐ Continued employment for next school year will be decided at a later date.
Disclaimer
This Instructional Assistant Manual has been prepared and provided for your information and future reference concerning your responsibilities, expected performance, and behavior while working for Whitko Community Schools.

This manual will answer some commonly asked questions by Instructional Assistants. This manual does not constitute a contract. Although every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of publication, changes may occur. Whitko Community Schools reserves the right to modify or deviate from the manual at any time and at its sole discretion. Employees and perspective employees should not in any way rely upon the provisions of the manual in accepting or continuing employment.

Equal Employment Opportunities
Whitko Community Schools shall adhere to a policy of equal employment opportunities for all employees. It is the policy of the School Board to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, marital status, disability, or sex; in admission, access, treatment, or employment in its programs and activities.

Acknowledgment
Special thanks to Mollie Trottier and Jana Vance for compiling much of the contents of this Instructional Assistant Manual. Thanks to all of the individuals who have worked as Instructional Assistants in past years and have asked good questions so that the contents of this manual will be helpful to others.
Whitko Community Schools
Special Education Instructional Assistant Handbook

I have received and read the Whitko Community Schools Special Education Instructional Assistant Handbook. I will follow the Special Education Instructional Assistant Handbook while working as an Instructional Assistant at Whitko Community Schools.

Instructional Assistant ____________________________ Date ____________________________