

# Employee Handbook

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## Barrington Public Schools

**283 County Road  
Barrington, RI 02806**





## Statement of Assurance

- The Barrington Public Schools (hereafter called the District) Employee Handbook (Handbook) is neither intended to be an employment contract or agreement, nor does it contain promises or commitments of any kind to employees. The contents should not be construed otherwise. Any references to or discussion of matters related to employment shall not be treated as a contractual agreement or guarantee of employment.
- The employment relationship established with the District is terminable at will (except for employees covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement), by either the employee or the District at any time, for any reason, with or without cause. Therefore, the contents of this Handbook shall not be construed as creating a right to employment for any specific period of time.
- This Handbook applies to employees represented by a labor union only to the extent that the Handbook's provisions are not in conflict with a specific term or condition stated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). To the extent that the Handbook is in conflict with a term or condition of the employee's applicable CBA, the provision in the CBA shall take precedence.
- Where provisions in this Handbook are in conflict with Local, State, or Federal statutes, those laws prevail.
- The District reserves the right to change any of the policies or procedures in this Handbook at any time at its sole discretion without notice.
- Failure to adhere to any provision of this Handbook does not create rights nor constitute a waiver.
- No person is authorized to make oral exceptions to this Handbook. Written exceptions are permitted only when signed by the Superintendent.



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## Welcome to the Barrington Public Schools

This Handbook is designed to acquaint you with Barrington Public Schools and provide you with information about working conditions and policies and procedures affecting your employment. You must read, understand, and comply with all provisions of the handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the District's policies and procedures.

No employee handbook or policy can cover every circumstance or situation. Barrington Public Schools reserves the right, from time to time, to revise or modify any of its policies, including any policy set forth in this handbook as the need may arise.

### Disclaimer

It is the intent of the Barrington Public Schools that all procedures and information contained in this Employee Handbook are accurate and up-to-date as of the distribution date. The District reserves the right to add new policies, to delete existing policies, and/or to change policies at any time. The District will make a good faith effort to do so in a reasonable and equitable manner.

If this Handbook or any of the provisions herein conflict with any terms in an employee's contract (employment agreement), except for federal or state law, the terms of the contract shall prevail. No administrator, principal, or supervisor has any authority to vary, by contract or otherwise, the employment relationship between the employees and the District, except for the Board (or its designee). This Handbook, including the practices and benefits provided herein, do not constitute a contract between the District and any employee.

This Handbook shall be interpreted so as to conform to local, state, and federal laws. In the event of conflicts or ambiguities, the District shall interpret the provisions herein. If an employee has a question about the interpretation of a Handbook provision(s), the employee should contact Human Resources for assistance.



## Employment

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Statement**

Barrington Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, gender, age, religion, or sexual orientation in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs and activities.

### **National Background Check (BCI)**

Pursuant to state law 16-2-18.1, offer of employment is conditioned not having any disqualifying information on a state and national background check. A background check must be initiated no later than seven days from the date acceptance, by bringing an appointment letter to your local police department or if you are not a resident of Rhode Island, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Office of the Rhode Island Attorney General. New hires are responsible for any fees associated with this process.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

The District is committed to hiring the most qualified individual for every position. The most qualified applicant shall receive the position based upon education, training, experience, ability, certification, previous employment record, and the specific requirements of the position to be filled. Selection criteria established by the Superintendent will be used for an applicable position to insure a consistent methodology is used in narrow candidate pool.

Reference: School Committee [Policy GCC](#)

### **Attendance and Tardiness**

The District considers their faculty and staff as professionals and holds them in high regards in all aspects. It is therefore the District's expectation that employees will report to their respective buildings to adhere to his/her assigned schedule, to perform all assigned duties, and to work all scheduled hours during each designated workday, unless the employee has received approved leave.

Breaks and meal periods may only be taken during times designated by the employee's direct supervisor/principal. Any deviation from assigned hours must have prior approval from the employee's direct supervisor/principal.



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All teachers and support staff shall enter their absences in AESOP for the purpose of notifying the principals and securing a substitute for the period of the absence(s). Any time spent not working during an employee's scheduled day must be accounted for with approved leaves of absence. Please refer to the AESOP employee guide for additional information.

The District will monitor attendance and absence patterns. The following examples of incidents will be investigated and may result in the appropriate level of discipline including oral and/or written warning, suspension and/or possible dismissal from employment:

- theft of time and/or improper modification of time worked records;
- misuse of sick leave
- failure to notify his/her direct supervisor/principal of an absence

An individual that is deemed to have demonstrated a pattern will be addressed by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

## Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure

The District has developed and maintains a Bloodborne Exposure Control Plan that complies with the Occupational, Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements. The purpose of this plan is to create a healthy work environment through a plan to control or minimize occupational exposure to Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and other Bloodborne pathogens for employees who face a health risk from exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials. For specific information please speak with your school nurse.

Reference: School Committee [Policy GBEB \(Also JHCE\)](#)

## Change of Personal Status

If your personal information has changed, please complete the "Name Address Change Form" located on the BPS website and forward it to attention of Human Resources. [Click here to access the form](#)



## Conflict of Interest

The School Committee members and School Department employees must adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct; respect the public trust and the rights of all persons; be open, accountable, and responsive; avoid the appearance of impropriety; and not use their position for private gain or advantage. The School Department shall at all times comply with [R.I.G.L §36-14-1 et seq.](#), known as the Rhode Island Code of Ethics in government, and the statutory and regulatory references therein and the Code of Ethics of the Charter of the Town of Barrington §1-4-1, as may be amended from time to time.

Reference: School Committee [Policy BCB](#)

## Confidentiality

District employees frequently come to know about confidential student, family, employee and District information.

Student information that an employee obtains as a result of his/her employment with the District is confidential and not to be disclosed unless that information has been designated as student directory data by School Committee policy and state statute. Respect for students and the law requires that student issues are only discussed with employees and parent(s)/guardian(s) who need to know the information.

Any violation of confidentiality may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## Dress Code

Employees are expected to dress professionally on a daily basis in order to set an appropriate example for students, coworkers, and the general public during school days and school related activities. The direct supervisor/principal will notify each employee about the specific dress code for his/her position in the District and any changes related thereto throughout the school year. The direct supervisor/principal will enforce the dress code. A direct supervisor/principal may, at his/her discretion, make an exception(s) to attire in specific situations when appropriate.

## Drug-Free Workplace

Barrington Public Schools supports a policy of a drug-free workplace and does not tolerate any violation of our Drug & Alcohol policy.

Reference: School Committee [Policy JFCI](#)



## Employee Evaluation

The District's certified staff is evaluated using the current RI Department of Education Evaluation model. Certified staff is also supported through a process as agreed to in the labor contract. Non-certified staff and custodial/maintenance are evaluated using a district's established evaluation model.

## Harassment Bullying Free Workplace

No student, school employee, contractual agent, volunteer or other member of the school community shall at school engage in, nor solicit and/or encourage any other individual to engage in any action of harassing, intimidating and/or bullying any other person. (See policy for "School" definition)

Reference: School Committee [Policy JICFB](#)

## Sexual Harassment Policy

The District will maintain an educational and working environment free of sexual harassment in any form. Supervisors, administrators, and all other employees, as well as students, are absolutely prohibited from engaging in sexual harassment of District employees, students, and visitors.

Reference: School Committee [Policy GBCB](#)

## Health and Wellness

The District promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity to prevent obesity. Moreover, the District recognizes that improved health optimizes student and staff performance potential.

Reference: School Committee [Policy IHAMD](#)



## No Smoking Policy

Tobacco product use is prohibited inside any part of school buildings, on school busses or any other vehicle transporting students in parking lots, on athletic playing fields, or any other areas designated as school property (owned, rented or leased). This policy includes school events held on and off school property and non-school events held on school property, (24 hours per day, 7 days per week) and pertains to all students and visitors, including contractors and business invitees. Tobacco product use shall mean the smoking or use of any substance or item which contains tobacco, including but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, pipes, other smoking tobacco, or the use of snuff or smokeless tobacco, or having in one's possession a lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, or other substance or item containing tobacco.

Reference: School Committee [Policy JFCG](#)

## Nondiscrimination

The District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship, status as a disabled veteran or past or present honorable military service with respect to access to, the provision of, or employment in its educational services, programs, and activities, including admissions, athletics, and other Department programs. It is the policy of the Barrington Schools Committee to maintain an educational and working environment free of unlawful discrimination and harassment in any form. Supervisors, administrators and all other employees, as well as students, are absolutely prohibited from engaging in unlawful discrimination and/or harassment of District employees, students and visitors.

Reference: School Committee [Policy GBA](#)

## Parking

The District issues parking permit for faculty and staff. Barrington Public Schools/Town of Barrington is not responsible to damage to personal vehicles parked on Town of Barrington property, unless said damage was caused by the negligence and willful intent by the District.

## Personal Safety

The District makes every effort to provide a safe work place. Security cameras and lockdown procedures are in place to control access to the building. Barrington Public Schools does not tolerate misconduct by a student or another co-worker. Since employees play an integral part in maintaining a secure environment any witness or knowledge of such act/potential act should be



report to this to immediate supervision/principal. Barrington Public Schools has adopted a bullying policy and embraces the Professional Learning Community (PLC) philosophy. Furthermore the district has embedded Positive Responsive Classroom Behavior that encourages students to behave respectfully during the school day and school activities.

## **Technology Resources Responsible Use**

Barrington Public Schools is pleased to offer authorized users access to district computers, the Internet, and an array of technology resources to promote educational excellence. Authorized users include students, staff, and guests hereafter referred to as simply users. Each user is responsible for his/her use of technology whether personal or district-provided. While using district or personal technology resources on or near school property, in school vehicles, and at school-sponsored events, as well as using the district's technology resources via remote access, each user must act in a manner consistent with school, district, and legal guidelines.

The District reserves the right to review, audit, intercept, monitor, access, disclose, copy and/or download any communication created, transmitted, or maintained on any of the District's computer or electronic communication systems.

Reference: School Committee - [Responsible Use Policy IIAE \(also JGF & IIBH\)](#)

## **Whistle Blowing Policy**

The District's whistleblower policy is intended to provide a mechanism for the reporting of illegal activity or the misuse of District assets while protecting employees who make such reports from retaliation.

Reference: School Committee [Policy GBCC](#)

## **Benefits**

### **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

The District shall provide leave under the Federal and State Family Medical Leave Act to all "eligible employees". The District will use July 1 through June 30 as the twelve month calendar to determine the leave cycle. Employees are entitled to up to 13 weeks of leave as defined in [RIGL §28-48-2](#) within the calendar cycle. After ten days out of work or upon receipt of a doctor's note for more than two weeks, the employee will be notified of the start of FMLA leave



for 13 weeks, if eligible, in accordance with State and Federal laws. Employees will be allowed to use all of their sick days for any illness, which would run concurrently to FMLA leave.

Reference: School Committee [Policy GCC](#)

## **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

The District by vote of its School Committee will comply with the Privacy Regulations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. The School Department shall limit the use of and access to Protected Health Information held by the School Department or its lawful agents. Protected Health Information (PHI) is any written, oral, or electronic form of information relating to a person's past, present or future health condition, delivery or payment of health services that identifies an individual, or where there is a reasonable basis to believe the information could be used to identify an individual. Administrative, technical and physical safeguards established to limit use and access to protected health information are stated as an integral part of this policy. Established as part of daily operating procedures and will be maintained by all responsible staff and representatives of lawful agents and business associates of the School Department. [\(HIPAA Employee Privacy Notice\)](#)

Reference: School Committee [Policy GBJA](#)

## **Leave**

Leave shall include but is not limited to the following items. Please see you applicable labor contract

- I. Jury and Subpoena Leave**
- II. Vacation Leave**
- III. Medical Leave** - Please see Medical Leave Request Form
- IV. Time Off Without Pay**
  - a) Time Off Without Pay must be requested in advance through the Superintendent or his/her designee



## Leave of Absence without Pay

Please refer to your applicable labor contract

## Maternity/Paternity Leave

Please refer to your applicable labor contract for leaves. This leave is credited towards employees annual entitlement to Family Medical Leave under State and Federal Law. The employee must obtain from his/her physician, in writing, the period of time he/she will be physically unable to perform their duties following the birth of their child.

## Return to Work

Employee must provide a doctor's note when returning from an illness/injury that is more than 3 days or as requested by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

## Personal Property

### A. Liability

The District does not assume any responsibility for loss, theft, and/or damages to personal property. In order to minimize risk, the District advises employees not to carry unnecessary amounts of cash or other valuables. If employees bring personal items to work, they are expected to exercise reasonable care to safeguard them. The District does not assume responsibility for any potential damage occurring during a police search of District buildings and grounds. The District carries no accident insurance or other insurance coverage for any loss of property or injury for which the District does not have legal responsibility.

### B. Search of Personal Effects and Work Spaces

Employees shall have no expectation of privacy to items in plain view, including, but not limited by enumeration to: automobiles parked on the District's property, items left on top of or within desks and cabinets, lockers, etc. Items not in plain view and contained within personal property, (e.g., purse, satchel, wallet, coat, backpack, etc.), may be searched in accordance with applicable state and federal law. Employees shall also have no expectation of privacy with respect to any item or document stored in or on District-owned property, which includes, but is not limited to: desks, filing cabinets, mailboxes, lockers, tables, shelves, electronic network, electronic devices (e.g., computers, flash drives, discs, etc.), and other storage spaces in or out of the classroom. Accordingly, the District may at any time and in its sole discretion conduct a search of such



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property, regardless of whether the searched areas or items of furniture or storage are locked or unlocked or password protected, in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

## School Issued Identification Badge

All employees will be issued an identification badge that will include their name, assigned school, and current photo. This must be worn during the school day, when visiting any other school building, or any time the employee is serving as a Barrington Public Schools employee.

## Payroll Policy Statement & Procedure

All Barrington Public Schools employees that are hourly and those working overtime need to fill out time sheets “pink slips”. The pink slips are given to the school principal for approval and then forwarded to the payroll clerk.

All District employees are encouraged to participate in a **direct deposit** of their payroll compensation. An employee’s net compensation (wages less deductions) is deposited into his/her checking or savings account as long as the financial institution is connected to the Automated Clearing House (ACH). It is the employee’s responsibility to notify the payroll clerk of changes to his/her financial institution. Direct deposit statements will be emailed to all employees. It is the responsibility of the employees to save these statements on their personal computer or personal cloud environment for future access. To take advantage of **direct deposit** [\*\*Click here to access the Direct Deposit form\*\*](#)

## Pay Period Cycle

Employees paycheck is issued on a biweekly basis. The pay cycle is established each year based on the previous years’ cycle.

## Personnel Records

A confidential personnel file is maintained for each employee in the District and contains such information as applications, college credentials, transcripts, references, evaluations, and other pertinent employment information. Human Resources maintains a current file on each District employee in accordance with established procedures.

Access to employment records is limited to the employee, Superintendent, Director of Administration & Finance, and other appropriate personnel within Central Office. An employee



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shall have the right to review personnel records as permitted by state and federal laws. The District may duplicate file materials for an employee for a nominal fee.

Requests for information resulting from a court order or government request will be honored in accordance with Public Records Law when a written release of information is obtained from the employee. Otherwise, employee information available to the public is limited to the name of the employee, assignment, dates of employment, and compensation.

## Professional Development

The District believes in lifelong learning, improvement, and achievement for its students and employees. The District encourages and supports professional development for all staff to enhance their knowledge and skill base, improve their performance, and to promote student learning and achievement. Professional development is provided through and by the District, and the District encourages self-initiated professional growth, as well. Whether through self-initiated or District provided professional development, all employees are expected to learn and to incorporate new knowledge, concepts, skills, and best practices into their performance.

## Travel and Expense Reimbursement

The District will pay the necessary expenses of employees when authorized to travel on official school business. Travel expenses that may be reimbursed include, but may not be limited to: transportation, conference registration, meals, and/or lodging. Direct supervisor/principal approval must be obtained prior to travel and for reimbursement of travel expenses. [Click here to review the detail Travel and Expense Reimbursement Procedure](#)

### **In-District Travel**

Employees shall be reimbursed for travel from one school property to another at the current school reimbursement rate as identified in Schedule B of the NEAB contract.

### **Out-of-District Travel**

Conference Travel Request form is available at your respective schools or on-line under Business Office/ Personnel Forms and Important links.

1. Eligible expenses include the following:
  - a. Transportation will be reimbursed to the extent of the actual fare paid for bus, taxi, tolls, airfare, and airport shuttle as documented by receipts. Car rental may be approved when advantageous to the District. Automobile travel will be reimbursed at the current school rate plus necessary parking costs;



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- b. Meal expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the per diem meal allowance approved annually by the school board. Meals included as part of a registration shall not be reimbursed to the employee. The per diem meal allowance does not cover alcoholic beverages, but does include tips, nonalcoholic beverages, and meals. Meals for out-of-district travel that do not require an overnight stay will not receive reimbursement.

Individuals seeking reimbursement for mileage and/or travel expenses may obtain a form at each school or from the Business Office.

## Tuition Reimbursement

Please refer to your applicable labor contract for approval process, reimbursement limits and time table. **Certified Staff's form is located under Professional Growth & Eval**

## Workers' Compensation

The District is committed to the promotion of safety awareness and accident prevention. Occasionally, an employee may have an accident or suffer a work related illness. The District ensures that the employee will receive the appropriate medical care and treatment provided the employee provides immediate notification regarding a work-related injury, so that the employee can return to good health and employment as soon as possible.

In accordance with state law, the District provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and provide state regulated income while recovering. An employee injured on the job is required to report an injury immediately, or as soon as practical, to his/her direct supervisor/principal using the district's "First Report of Injury" form. The employee and/or the direct supervisor/principal will then report the incident to the Business Office. The "First Report of Injury" will be submitted to the employer's worker's compensation insurance carrier and state reporting agency for any work-related injury which causes permanent or temporary disability resulting in compensation for lost time. Any employee who is unable to report to work after an injury must provide a doctor's statement with an anticipated length they will be out. Before returning to work the employee must provide a doctor's statement stating that the employee can return to full duty, without restrictions or must specify the employee's restrictions.

Reference: [www.dlt.ri.gov](http://www.dlt.ri.gov)



## Retirement/Pension

### Employees' Pension Benefits

Eligible employees are required to participate in the State of Rhode Island's pension system known as the Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island (ERSRI). This plan covers both certified and non-certified staff. Certified are covered under the ERSRI and the non-certified staff are covered under the Municipal Employees Retirement Plan (MERS). This plan is also known as a **defined benefit plan**. For specific information about your pension plan please visit [Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island](#).

In addition to the employee and employer contribution to a defined benefit plan, there is also a contribution made to a **defined contribution** plan through TIAA-CREF. There are certain restrictions when accessing TIAA-CREF funds upon separation of employment.

### The Rhode Island Retirement Security Act of 2011 (RIRSA) and 2015 Settlement Agreement

The Rhode Island Retirement Security Act of 2011 (RIRSA) was implemented on July 1, 2012. This law made numerous changes to retirement benefits for public employee and retiree groups. Several of these employee and retiree groups challenged these changes in court. A settlement agreement was reached with almost all of the parties and legislation to enact the settlement terms was passed as part of the FY 2016 state budget.

### TIAA-CREF

TIAA-CREF contributions are applied to individual specific accounts. If you are transferring from another participating Rhode Island School District you will retain your account and contributions will continue in that account.



## State of Rhode Island Forfeiture Process (TIAA-CREF)

The State of Rhode Island Defined Contribution Plan is a 3-year cliff vesting plan with a 5 year reinstatement period.

If an employee terminates prior to being fully vested and

- 1) Does not request a distribution:
  - a. The funds will remain in the contract until the 5-year time frame from termination has expired. The funds will then be moved to the location level forfeiture account.
- 2) Does request a distribution:
  - a. The non-vested portion of the contract will be moved to the location level forfeiture account at the time of distribution
  - b. The forfeiture account balance may be used to offset future remittances for that location
- 3) Requested a distribution and returns before the 5-year reinstatement period expires
  - a. The previous location where they worked is responsible for resubmitting the non-vested portion to the employee's contract.
- 4) Requests a distribution and works for a school district
  - a. The initial steps are the same as in #2 above
  - b. The non-vested amounts moved to the forfeiture account are reported to RIDE on a monthly basis. RIDE will deduct 40%, of the employers 1% contribution, of the non-vested balance from the school districts future reimbursement.

## Deferred Compensation (403b)

All employees are eligible to participate in the Barrington Public Schools 403(b) Salary Reduction Program. A signed hardcopy of the Salary Reduction Agreement will be kept in the employees personnel file. **[Click here to review a list of approved "Annuity Company Contact Info"](#)**.

If you want to start a 403b or 457 you must contract one of the approved vendors which can be found on the BPS website under [Business Office/Personnel & Important links/ Annuity Company Contact Info](#). Once you have an account established with an approved vendor please visit the [Omni Group website](#)



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Under “Employer Plan Info” enter “Rhode Island” in the EMP STATE section and “Barrington Public Schools” in the EMP NAME section.

Complete the “Salary Reduction Agreement – Online” or “PDF”

Once your information has been confirmed by Omni they will notify payroll to start your deduction. This could take up to two weeks to process.

If an employee is over the age of 59 ½, they are able to either move their funds to an IRA account or make a cash withdrawal from their 403(b) account.

They can continue to contribute to the 403(b) should they choose to do so, or they can opt to discontinue their contributions if they move the entire balance to an IRA.

Employees can exchange funds from their current 403(b) company to another approved 403(b) provider at any time, there are no age restrictions for these types of transactions.

## What You Need To Know When Retiring

- Notify the Superintendent in writing no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> in the year you will retire.
- Make an appointment with the [Employees Retirement System of RI \(ERSRI\)](#) you can also visit their website for contact info, FAQ’s and forms.
- Make an appointment with Social Security Administration for specific benefits
- Medicare eligible employees must opt for Part A; if an employees’ spouse is working and provides coverage the employee may defer Part B. If both the employee and spouse are retired, they would need to apply for Part B. As changes are made on a regular and sometime infrequent basis, it is strongly recommend discussing these options with a Social Security Administration representative for clear guidance.
- Eligible employees must meet with Human Resource to review benefit options as defined in the respective labor contracts no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> in the year you will retire.

## Medicare Eligible Employees

Medicare eligible employees must opt for Part A, if an employees’ spouse is working and provides coverage the employee may defer Part B. If both the employee and spouse are retired they would need to apply for Part B. As changes are made on a regular and sometime infrequent



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basis, we strongly recommend discussing these options with a Social Security Administration representative for clear guidance.

## **Windfall Elimination Provision – (Certified Staff)**

The Windfall Elimination Provision affects how the amount of a retirement or disability benefit is calculated if an employee receives a pension from work where Social Security taxes were not taken out of your pay. A modified formula is used to calculate an employees' benefit amount, resulting in a lower Social Security benefit than you otherwise would receive. Please refer to SSA website <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/> and search for Windfall Elimination Provision.

## **Code of Ethics – see Town Charter**