

Big Sandy Public Schools Classified Staff Handbook



2023-2024 School Year



BIG SANDY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The impossible can always be broken down to possibilities

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Welcome Employee!

We believe that each employee contributes directly to Big Sandy Schools' growth and success and we hope you will take pride in being a member of our team. This handbook is designed to acquaint you with Big Sandy Schools and provide you with information about working conditions, employee benefits and some of the policies affecting your employment. You should read, understand and comply with all the provisions of the handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the programs developed by Big Sandy Schools to benefit employees. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth. If there is any question between this handbook and the school board policy, the school board policy takes precedent.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As Big Sandy Schools continue to grow, the need may arise and Big Sandy Schools reserves the right to revise, supplement or rescind any policies or portion of this handbook as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion.

Employees will, of course, be notified of such changes to the handbook as they occur,

We hope that your experience here will be challenging, enjoyable and rewarding.

Again, welcome!

Sincerely

Dan Schrock, Superintendent

Heather Wolery, Principal

101 Employee Relations

Big Sandy Schools believes that the work conditions, wages and benefits it offers to its employees are competitive with those offered by other schools in this area. If employees have concerns about work conditions or compensation, they are strongly encouraged to voice these concerns openly and directly to their supervisors. Our experience has shown that when employees deal openly and directly with supervisors, the work environment can be excellent, communications can be clear and attitudes can be positive. We believe that Big Sandy Schools amply demonstrates its commitment to employees by responding effectively to employee concerns.

This is intended for employees to effectively communicate about their own work conditions and compensations NOT that of other employees.

102 Equal Employment Opportunity

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at Big Sandy Schools will be based on merit, qualifications and abilities. Big Sandy Schools does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by law.

Big Sandy Schools will make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination and access to benefits and training.

Any employee with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace is encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor or the Superintendent. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment

103 Ethics and Conduct

The successful operation and reputation of Big Sandy Schools is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct for our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity. Big Sandy Schools will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its employees to conduct themselves in accordance with the letter, spirit and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest or unethical conduct. In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of actions, the matter should be discussed openly with the Superintendent for advice and consultation. Compliance with this policy of ethics and conduct is the responsibility of every Big Sandy Schools employee. Disregarding or failing to comply with this standard of business ethics and conduct could lead to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

104 Immigration Law Compliance

Big Sandy Schools is committed to employing only United States citizens and aliens who are authorized to work in the United States and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin,

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form 1-9 and present documentation establishing identity and eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if they have not completed an 1-9 with Big Sandy Schools within the past three years, or if their previous 1-9 is no longer retained or valid.

Employees with questions or seeking more information on immigration law issues are encouraged to contact the District Clerk. Employees may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

105 Disability Accommodations

Big Sandy Schools is committed to complying fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring equal opportunity in employment for qualified persons with disabilities. All employment practices and activities are conducted on a non discriminatory basis.

Hiring procedures have been reviewed and provide persons with disabilities meaningful employment opportunities. Upon request, job applications are available in alternative, accessible formats, as is assistance in completing the application. Pre-employment inquiries are made only regarding an applicant's ability to perform the duties of the position.

Reasonable accommodations are available to all disabled employees, where their disability affects the performance of job functions. All employment decisions are based on the merits of the situation in accordance with defined criteria, not the disability of the individual.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal pay and other forms of compensation (or changes in compensation) as well as in job assignments, classifications, organizational structures, position descriptions, lines of progression and seniority lists. Leave of all types will be available to all employees on an equal basis.

Big Sandy Schools is also committed to not discriminating against any qualified employees or applicants because they are related to or associated with a person with a disability. Big Sandy Schools will follow any state or local law that provides individuals with disabilities greater protection than the ADA.

This policy is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Big Sandy School is committed to taking all other actions necessary to ensure equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADA and all other applicable federal, state and local laws.

201 Employment Categories

It is the intent of Big Sandy Schools to clarify the definitions of employment classifications so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Accordingly, the right to terminate the employment relationship at will at any time is retained by both the employee and Big Sandy Schools.

Each employee is designated as either NONEXEMPT or EXEMPT from federal and state wage and hour laws. NONEXEMPT employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws. EXEMPT employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws. An employee's EXEMPT or NONEXEMPT classification may be changed only upon written notification by Big Sandy School management.

In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one other employment category:

PERMANENT FULL-TIME employees are those who are not in a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work Big Sandy Schools' full time schedule. Generally, they are eligible for Big Sandy Schools' benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of each benefit program.

PERMANENT PART-TIME employees are those who are not assigned to a temporary or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work 40 hours per week at least nine months but less than 12 months. They do receive all legally mandated benefits (such as social security and workers' compensation insurance) and are eligible for Big Sandy Schools' other benefits programs.

YEAR-ROUND PART TIME employees are those who work less than forty hours per week, but work fifty two weeks per year.

SEASONAL employees are those who work less than forty hours per week, nine months per year.

TEMPORARY employees are those employed in any capacity but duration of employment is indefinite.

202 Access to Personnel Files

Big Sandy Schools maintains a personnel file on each employee. The personnel file includes such information as the employee's job application, resume, records of training, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increase employment records.

Personnel files are the property of Big Sandy Schools and access to the information they contain is restricted. Generally, only supervisors and management personnel of Big Sandy Schools who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file are allowed to do so.

With reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel files in Big Sandy Schools' offices and in the presence of an individual appointed by Big Sandy Schools to maintain the files.

203 Personnel Data Changes

It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify Big Sandy Schools of any changes in personnel data. Personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, number and names of dependents, individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency, educational accomplishment and other such status reports should be accurate and current at all times. If any personal data has changed, notify the District Clerk.

204 Performance Evaluations

Supervisors and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal day-to-day basis. Additional formal performance evaluations are conducted to provide both supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals. Performance evaluations are scheduled at a minimum of once every 12 months.

205 Job Descriptions and Board Policy

It is the employees' responsibility to familiarize themselves with School Board Policy and Board approved job description. All job descriptions and board policy are available in the district office and online.

301 Vacation Benefits

Classified employees are entitled to vacation leave with pay after they have been continuously employed for six months. Vacation leave is earned beginning with the first day of employment. Vacation leave credits are earned at a yearly rate calculated in accordance with the following schedule:

Years of Completed Employment Calculation

Working days credit

0 - 10 years 15 $(.0577 \times \# \text{ of hrs})$

11 - 15 years	18	(.0692 x # of hrs)
16 - 20 years	21	(.0808 x # of hrs)
21 years +	24	(.0923 x # of hrs)

Excess vacation time is not forfeited if taken within 90 calendar days from the last day of the calendar year in which the excess was accrued. (MCA 2-18-612)

Year-round Part-time, Seasonal and Permanent Part-time employees shall earn prorated amounts of vacation time. Temporary employees do not earn leave.

Annual vacation leave may be accumulated up to twice the annual earned vacation time, for permanent full-time, permanent part-time and year round part-time. The district suggests that employees take vacation leave at a time other than the days when students are in school. All vacation leave must be approved as per the leave request portion of these policies.

302 Child Care Benefits

Given below is a brief description of child care assistance that may be provided when feasible. For more detailed information, please contact the Administration Office.

* CAFETERIA PLAN/FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT: Employees choose benefits (including child care) from a list of options and contribute a part of pretax salaries to a child care account. This option allows employees to minimize the federal tax they must pay on child care dollars.

* SICK LEAVE BENEFITS: Employees may use accrued sick leave benefits in the event of the illness of a child.

303 Sick Leave Benefits

Sick leave refers to leave with pay caused by a classified employee's illness or injury. Employees are not entitled to be paid sick leave until they have been continuously employed 90 days.

Sick leave credits are earned at the rate of 12 working days for each year of service for full time employees and are prorated for all others except temporary employees who do not earn sick leave. Calculation is .046 x the number of hours worked each month. (MCA 2-18-618)

Sick leave may be accumulated from year to year. Such accumulation is unlimited. Upon termination of employment with the Big Sandy School District, the employee is entitled to a lump-sum payment equal to one-fourth (1/4) of the pay attributed to the accumulated sick leave.

Sick leave can be used for personal illness or disability, or serious illness in the immediate family. Definition of immediate family is: husband, wife, son, daughter, step daughter, step-son, father, mother, brother, sister, step-mother, step-father, step brother, step-sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, , son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, grandchildren, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, aunt or uncle.

304 Benefits Continuation (COBRA)

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under Big Sandy Schools' health plan when a "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation, termination of employment, death of an employee, a reduction in an employee's hours or a leave of absence, an employee's divorce or legal separation and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employees or beneficiary pays the full cost of the coverage at Big Sandy Schools' group rates. Big Sandy Schools insurance group provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when the employee becomes eligible for coverage. The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations.

305 Bereavement Leave

Employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify their supervisor immediately. Big Sandy Schools defines "immediate family" as the employee's father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother, sister, son, daughter, spouse, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandfather and grandmother. A maximum of three days of emergency leave may be used per year because of death in the immediate family or at the discretion of the superintendent. Leave will be deducted from sick leave, vacation or leave without pay.

306 Jury Duty

Employees must show the jury duty summons to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate their absence. Of course, employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits. You must surrender the pay check received from serving if you have been paid by the District for time not worked.

307 Public Employees Retirement System (PERS)

The Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) is a public pension plan for employees of the state university system and local governments. Money that the employee pays into PERS earns interest and helps pay for your benefits. The MPERA keeps track of your money that you have contributed and will credit your account with interest. As a PERS member, you will have an opportunity to choose membership in either the:

Defined Benefit Retirement Plan (DBRP): A DBRP guarantees a specified retirement benefit based on a percentage of your highest average compensation and your years of service credit. When eligible, your monthly benefit will be increased each year by a Guaranteed Annual Benefit Adjustment. Your monthly benefit will be paid to you for your lifetime. In a DBRP, the retirement system bears the risk when it guarantees your lifetime retirement benefit.

Defined Contribution Retirement Plan (DCRP): In a DCRP, the contributions into the plan are known; the benefit is not. A DCRP establishes individual member accounts and offers a variety of investment options. Members direct their (and a portion of the employers') monthly contributions to investment options selected from those offered by the plan. The retirement benefit received is based upon the account balance - contributions plus investment earnings (or losses), less administrative cost. In a DCRP, members bear the risk that their investment and accumulated account balance will be sufficient for lifetime retirement.

308 403(b) Savings Plan

Big Sandy Schools allows employees to participate in established 403(b) savings plans.

Eligible employees may participate in the 403(b) plan subject to all terms and conditions of the plan.

The 403(b) savings plan allows you to elect how much salary you want to contribute so you can tailor your own retirement package to meet your individual needs.

Because your contribution to a 403(b) plan is automatically deducted from your pay before federal and state tax withholdings are calculated you save tax dollars now by having your current taxable amount reduced. While the amounts deducted generally will be taxed when they are finally distributed, favorable tax rules typically apply to 403(b) distributions.

309 Health Insurance

Big Sandy Schools' health insurance plan provides employees and their dependents access to medical insurance. Employees in the following employment classification are exempt to participate in the health insurance plan:

Temporary Eligible employees may participate in the health insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between Big Sandy Schools and the insurance carrier. Details of the health insurance plan are described in the Summary Plan Description (SPD). An SPD and information on cost coverage will be provided in advance of enrollment to eligible employees. Contact the District Clerk for more information about health insurance benefits.

310 Life Insurance

Life insurance offers you and your family important financial protection. Big Sandy Schools provides access to a basic life insurance plan for eligible employees.

Employees in the following employment classification are exempt to participate in the life insurance plan:

- Temporary Eligible employees may participate in the life insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between Big Sandy Schools and the insurance carrier.

Details of the basic life insurance plan including benefit amounts are described in the Summary Plan Description provided to eligible employees. Contact the District Clerk for more information about life insurance benefits.

311 Holidays

Big Sandy Schools will grant holiday time off to classified employees as per the categories and stipulations listed below.

Permanent Part-Time and Seasonal Employees

The following days, when they occur on a regular classified employee's work day, will be paid holidays:

1. New Year's Day (January 1)
2. Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
3. Independence Day (July 4)
4. Labor Day (first Monday in September)
5. Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November)
6. Christmas (December 25)

If these holidays fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the preceding Friday or following Monday are not holidays.

Permanent Full-Time Employees The following days will be paid holidays for Permanent Full-Time employees;

1. New Year's Day (January 1)
2. Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
3. Independence Day (July 4)
4. Labor Day (first Monday in September)
5. Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November)
6. Christmas (December 25)

If these holidays fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the preceding Friday or following Monday are not holidays.

Year-round Part-time Employees: The following days will be paid holidays when they occur on a regular classified employee's work day:

1. New Year's Day (January 1)
2. Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
3. Independence Day (July 4)
4. Labor Day (first Monday in September)
5. Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November)
6. Christmas (December 25)

401 Timekeeping

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every nonexempt employee. Federal and state laws require Big Sandy Schools to keep an accurate record of time worked in order to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing duties. Employees should accurately record hours worked each day using the time clock in the high school or elementary school. Overtime work or work above their contracted hours must always be approved before it is performed. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees

should report to work no more than 15 minutes prior to their scheduled starting time or stay no more than 15 minutes after their scheduled stop time without expressed prior authorization from their supervisor.

It is the employees' responsibility to sign their time records to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. The supervisor will review and then initial the time record before submitting it for payroll processing. In addition, if corrections or modifications are made to the time record, both the employee and the supervisor must verify the accuracy of the changes by initialing the time record.

402 Work Schedules

Work schedules for employees vary throughout our organization. Supervisors will advise employees of their individual work schedules. Staffing needs and operational demands may necessitate variations in starting and ending times, as well as variation in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week.

403 Overtime

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during working hours, employees may be scheduled to work overtime hours. When possible, advance notification of these mandatory assignments will be provided. All overtime work must receive the supervisor's prior authorization. Overtime pay is based on actual hours worked. Time off on sick leave, vacation leave or any leave of absence will be considered hours worked for the purpose of performing overtime calculations at the discretion of the Superintendent. Employees who work overtime without receiving prior authorization from the Superintendent, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment

404 Paydays

All employees are paid monthly on the 15th of the month. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the end of the previous payroll period. If a

regular payday falls during an employee's vacation, the employee's paycheck will be available upon his or her return from vacation.

405 Severance Pay

Big Sandy Schools may provide severance pay to eligible employees whose employment is terminated for reasons that are not prejudicial to Big Sandy Schools, as determined by Big Sandy Schools in its sole discretion. Severance pay may be provided to the following eligible employee classifications:

- Permanent full-time employees
- Permanent part-time employees
- Year round part-time employees
- Seasonal employees

Specifically excluded from benefits under this provision are employees who were hired as temporary employees.

406 Administrative Pay Corrections

Big Sandy Schools take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday.

In the unlikely event that there is an error of the amount of pay, the employee should promptly bring the discrepancy to the attention of the District Clerk so that corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

The law requires that Big Sandy Schools make certain deductions from every employee's compensation. Among these applicable deductions are federal, state and local income taxes. Big Sandy Schools also must deduct social security taxes on each employee's earnings up to a specified limited amount that is called Social Security "wage base". Big Sandy Schools match the amount of social security taxes paid by each employee.

Big Sandy Schools offers programs and benefits beyond those required by law. Eligible employees may voluntarily authorize deductions from their paychecks to cover the cost of participation in these programs. If you have questions concerning why deductions were made from your paycheck or how they were calculated, the District Clerk can assist in having your questions answered.

501 Safety

To assist in providing a safe and healthful work environment for employees and visitors, Big Sandy Schools has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority for Big Sandy Schools. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

Big Sandy Schools provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos or other written communications. A labor management safety committee, composed of representatives from throughout the organization, has been established to help monitor Big Sandy Schools' safety program and to facilitate effective communication between employees and management about workplace safety and health issues.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise in all work activities. Immediately report any unsafe conditions to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, who fail to report or where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify the appropriate supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedures.

502 Worker's Compensation Insurance

Big Sandy Schools provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or if the employee is hospitalized immediately.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses should inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it is reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.

Neither Big Sandy Schools nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social or athletic activity sponsored by Big Sandy Schools.

503 Use of Tobacco

In keeping with Big Sandy Schools' intent to provide a safe and healthful environment, the use of tobacco is prohibited throughout the schools. This policy applies equally to all employees, customers and visitors.

504 Rest and Meal Periods

Each workday, full-time nonexempt employees are provided with 2 rest periods of fifteen minutes in length. To the extent possible, rest periods will be provided in the middle of work periods. Since this is time counted and paid as time worked, employees must not be absent from their work stations beyond the allotted rest period time. All full-time employees are provided with one meal period each workday. Supervisors will schedule meal periods to accommodate operating requirements. Employees will be relieved of all active responsibilities and restrictions during meal periods and will not be compensated for that time.

505 Use of Equipment and Vehicles

Equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance and follow all operating instructions, safety standards and guidelines.

Please notify the supervisor if any equipment, machines, tools or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible employees or others. The supervisor can answer any questions about an employee's responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job.

The improper, careless, negligent, destructive or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles, as well as excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

506 Emergency Closings

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, power failures or earthquakes can disrupt school operations. In extreme cases, these circumstances may require the closing of a work facility. In the event that such an emergency occurs during non working hours, local radio and/or television stations will be asked to broadcast notification of the closing.

When the decision to close is made AFTER the workday has begun, employees will receive official notification from their immediate supervisor. When the decision to close is made BEFORE the workday has begun, time off from scheduled work will be unpaid. However, with supervisory approval, employees may use available paid leave time, such as unused vacation benefits. In cases where an emergency closing is not authorized, employees who fail to report for work will not be paid for the time off. Employees may request available paid leave time such as unused vacation benefits.

Employees in essential operations may be asked to work on a day when operations are officially closed. In these circumstances, employees who work will receive regular pay.

507 Visitors in the Workplace

To provide for the safety and security of employees and the facilities at Big Sandy Schools, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps maintain safety standards, protects against theft, ensures the security of equipment, protects confidential information, safeguards employee welfare and avoids potential distractions and disturbances. All visitors should enter Big Sandy Schools at the building's Superintendent's office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destinations. Employees are responsible for the conduct and safety of their visitors. If an unauthorized individual is observed on Big Sandy Schools' premises, employees should immediately notify their supervisor or if necessary direct the individual to the Superintendent's office.

508 Business Travel Expenses

Big Sandy Schools will reimburse employees for reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on assignments away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the Superintendent.

Employees whose travel plans have been approved should make all travel arrangements through Big Sandy Schools' office. When approved, the actual cost of travel, lodging and other expenses directly related to accomplishing business travel objectives will be paid by Big Sandy Schools. Meals will be reimbursed as per Board Policy. Employees are expected to limit expenses to reasonable amounts.

Expenses that generally will be reimbursed include the following:

- . Mileage at state rates (only if a school vehicle is not available for travel dates)

- Meals at District approved rates

Employees who are involved in an accident while traveling on business must promptly report the incident to their immediate supervisor. Vehicles owned, leased or rented by Big Sandy Schools may not be used for personal use without prior approval.

When travel is completed, employees should submit completed travel expense reports within fourteen (14) days. Reports should be accompanied by receipts for all individual expenses.

Employees should contact their supervisor for guidance and assistance on procedures related to travel arrangements, expense reports, reimbursement for specific expenses or any other business travel issues.

Abuse of this business travel expenses policy, including falsifying expense reports to reflect costs not incurred by the employee, can be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

601 Employees Conduct and Work Rules

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, Big Sandy Schools expects employees to follow the rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

- Theft or inappropriate removal of possession of property
- Falsification of timekeeping records Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs Possession, distribution, sale, transfer or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment.
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace
- Unsatisfactory performance or conduct

602 Use of Phone and Mail Systems

Employees are required to reimburse Big Sandy Schools for any charges resulting from their personal use of the telephone. The use of Big Sandy Schools paid postage envelopes for personal correspondence is not permitted. To ensure effective telephone communications, employees should always use the approved greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner. Please confirm information received from the caller and hang up only after the caller has done so.

603 Computer and Email Usage

Computers, computer files, the e-mail system and software furnished to employees are Big Sandy Schools property intended for business use. Employees should not use a password, access a file or retrieve any stored communication without authorization. Big Sandy Schools strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and sensitive to the diversity of its employees. Therefore, Big Sandy Schools prohibits the use of computers and the email system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others or harmful to morale.

For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages and cartoons is not allowed. Other such misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes or anything that may be construed as harassment or showing disrespect for others.

Big Sandy Schools purchases and licenses the use of various computer software for business purposes and does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation. Unless authorized by the software developer, Big Sandy Schools does not have the right to reproduce such software for use on more than one computer. Employees may only use the software on local area networks or on multiple machines according to the software license agreement. Big Sandy Schools prohibits the illegal duplication of software and its related documentation.

Employees should notify their immediate supervisor, the Superintendent or any member of management upon learning of violations of this policy. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

604 Drugs and Alcohol Use

It is Big Sandy Schools' desire to provide a drug-free, healthful and safe workplace. To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner. While on Big Sandy Schools premises and while conducting business-related activities off Big Sandy School premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace. Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment and/or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation program. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

Employees with drug or alcohol problems that have not resulted in, and are not the immediate subject of, disciplinary action may participate in a rehabilitation or treatment program through Big Sandy Schools' health insurance benefit coverage. Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, an employee who performs work for a government contract or grant must notify Big Sandy Schools of a criminal conviction for drug-related activity occurring in the workplace. The report must be made within five days of the conviction. Employees with questions on this policy or

issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should raise their concerns with their supervisor or the Superintendent without fear of reprisal.

605 Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment

Big Sandy Schools is committed to providing a work environment that is free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. As an example, sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship and is strictly prohibited. Any employee who wants to report an incident of sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly report the matter to his or her supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should immediately contact the Administration or any other member of management. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly advise the Administration or any member of management who will handle the matter in a timely and confidential manner. Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

606 Attendance and Punctuality

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, Big Sandy Schools expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on Big Sandy Schools. In the rare instance when employees cannot avoid being late for work or are unable to work as scheduled, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible in advance of the anticipated tardiness or absence.

607 Personal Appearance

Dress, grooming and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image Big Sandy Schools presents to customers and visitors. During business hours, employees are expected to present a clean and neat appearance and to dress according to the requirements of their positions. Consult your supervisor or department head if you have questions as to what constitutes appropriate attire,

608 Return of Property

Employees are responsible for items issued to them by Big Sandy Schools or in their possession or control, such as the following:

- Keys
- Tools

All Big Sandy Schools property must be returned by employees on or before their last day of work.

609 Resignation

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with Big Sandy Schools. Although advance notice is not required, Big Sandy Schools request at least 2 weeks written resignation notice from all employees.

610 Progressive Discipline

The purpose of this policy is to state Big Sandy Schools' position on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. The best disciplinary measure is the one that does not have to be enforced and comes from good leadership and fair supervision at all employment levels.

Big Sandy Schools' own best interest lies in ensuring fair treatment of all employees and in making certain that disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform and impartial. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct the problem, prevent

recurrence and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. Employment with Big Sandy Schools is based on mutual consent and both employees and Big Sandy Schools have the right to terminate employment at will. Big Sandy Schools may use progressive discipline at its discretion. Disciplinary action may call for any of four steps - verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay or termination of employment - depending on the severity of the problem and the number of occurrences. There may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed. Progressive discipline means that, with respect to most disciplinary problems, these steps will normally be followed: a first offense may call for a verbal warning, a next offense may be followed by a written warning, another offense may lead to a suspension and still another offense may then lead to termination of employment. Big Sandy Schools recognize that there are certain types of employee problems that are serious enough to justify either suspension or in extreme situations, termination of employment, without going through the usual progressive steps. While it is impossible to list every type of behavior that may be deemed a serious offense, the Employee Conduct and Work Rules policy includes examples of problems that may result in immediate suspension or termination of employment. However, the problems listed are not all necessarily serious offenses, but may be examples of unsatisfactory conduct that will trigger progressive discipline.

By using progressive discipline, we hope that most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefiting both the employee and Big Sandy Schools.

700 Life-Threatening Illnesses in the Workplace

Employees with life-threatening illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and AIDS often wish to continue their normal pursuits, including work, to the extent allowed by their condition. Big Sandy Schools supports these endeavors as long as employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards. Medical information on individual employees is treated confidentially. Big Sandy Schools will take reasonable precautions to protect such information from inappropriate disclosure. Managers and other employees have a responsibility to respect and maintain the confidentiality of employee medical information. Anyone inappropriately disclosing such information is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

The employee handbook describes important information about Big Sandy Schools and I understand that I should consult the Superintendent regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have entered into my employment relationship with Big Sandy Schools voluntarily and acknowledge that the specified length of my employment is stated in the signed contract.

Since the information, policies and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur. All such changes will be communicated through official notices and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify or eliminate existing policies. Only the school board of Big Sandy Schools has the ability to adopt any revisions to the policies in this handbook.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I have received the handbook and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (printed):

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE:

DATE: _____