

Chattahoochee County Schools



Employee Handbook

AUG 2023

**Chattahoochee County
Board of Education**

326 Broad Street
Cusseta, Georgia 31805
Phone: (706) 989-3774



Kristie Brooks, Ed.D.
Superintendent,
Chattahoochee County Schools
www.chattco.org

Chattahoochee County School District Members:

Whether new to the district or if you are a long-time Panther, our Board of Education and team look forward to supporting you in your journey as you serve the students and families of ChattCo! As a Panther, we continuously challenge ourselves to reflect on how we can better prepare for the future.

Becoming the District that we have envisioned requires collaboration, communication, and consistency to better prepare our buildings, classrooms, and students for the future. Each employee in ChattCo has an important role in making our vision become a reality for every student. Our expectation is that as an employee of the District that you are committed to positively changing lives and committing to the district's vision of: ***Instilling Pride + Igniting Possibilities= Infinite Possibilities***. We believe focusing on the established priorities will ensure that Chattahoochee County Schools will obtain our mission of preparing all students for college and career readiness as they grow to become productive contributors in society.

As we work as a unified team to support all students, the following focus areas remain as our critical priorities:

- Providing learning environments that foster individual growth for future driven students
- Improving parent and community engagement with Panther Pride
- Serving all stakeholders through service-oriented practices

Thank you for choosing to be part of the Chattahoochee County School District!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristie Brooks".

Kristie Brooks, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Chattahoochee County School District

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The information in this handbook does not create or amend any contract of employment.

Changes made in Board Policy subsequent to the distribution of this handbook take priority.

All employees are expected to adhere to Board Policy.

Acceptance of employment for any employee is an agreement to approved Board Policy and the Code of Ethics

GENERAL INFORMATION

● **SYSTEM VISION, MISSION, BELIEF STATEMENTS**

OUR VISION:

Instilling pride. Igniting passion. Infinite possibilities.

OUR MISSION:

To prepare all students for college and career readiness as they grow to be productive contributors in society.

OUR BELIEFS:

- We believe in providing an instructional environment that meets the diverse needs of all individuals.
- We believe individuals are inspired and thrive when academic and social engagement are related.
- We believe all students deserve equal opportunity access to a strong, vibrant and safe educational environment from cradle to career and beyond.
- We believe our students are prepared for successful academic careers to become contributing members of society.
- We believe in a culture of high expectations and accountability for all stakeholders (students, staff, parents, and community).
- We believe in community partnerships that provide outside resources to help the school system meet its strategic goals.

● **PORTRAIT OF A CHATTCO GRADUATE**

AQUIRE

Every Chattahoochee County Panther graduate will learn the necessary skills and training that are essential for success.

Every graduate will have:

- A Strong Academic Base
- Valuable Work Skills
- Adaptable Leadership Skills

ASPIRE

Every Chattahoochee County Panther graduate will apply work skills and academic achievement for lifelong success.

Every graduate will be:

- Future Driven Visionaries
- Well Rounded Individuals



● **PURPOSE**

This handbook is designed to answer frequently asked questions concerning policies, procedures, benefits, services, work rules and other areas of concern to employees. While it is intended to be as comprehensive as possible, the handbook may not cover every situation. For further information, please review the Chattahoochee County website: www.chattco.org

The information in this handbook does not create or amend any contract of employment. The Chattahoochee County Board of Education has the right to adopt new policies and procedures and to modify, amend or eliminate any of its existing policies and procedures. The Board of Education periodically undergoes a review of Board policies. Any changes will take priority over the information stated in this guide even if the changes have not been reprinted or substituted into the guidebook. Local schools may institute additional procedures relating to normal school operations, but those may not conflict with the Board Policy or items specified in this handbook.

● **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Chattahoochee County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability or sex in its employment practices. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and all accompanying regulations.

Any employee, applicant for employment or other person who believes he or she has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of this policy must make a complaint in accordance with the procedures outlined in policy GAAA.

Reference: Policy GAAA

● **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Chattahoochee County School System is governed by a five-member, elected Board of Education. The Board exercises authority over the schools in accordance with applicable laws. It determines policy, has financial management over the district including approving budgetary items, delegates executive, supervisory and instructional authority to the Superintendent, and appraises the results achieved in light of the goals of the school system.

The Board oversees the school system and establishes general policies for its operation in keeping with the State Board of Education rules and regulations and the requirements of the law. In carrying out this function the three fundamental duties of the Board are:

- Formulating and interpreting educational policies;
- Delegating administrative duties to the Superintendent; and
- Making a continuous appraisal of progress

Reference: Policy BCBL

● **CHAIN OF COMMAND**

<u>DISCIPLINE</u>	<u>CURRICULUM</u>	<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>
Teacher	Teacher	Appropriate Assistant Principal
Appropriate Assistant Principal	Counselor	Principal
Principal	Appropriate Assistant Principal	Transportation Director
Superintendent	Principal	Facilities & Operations Director
Local Board of Education	Appropriate Director	Superintendent
State Department of Education	Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum	Local Board of Education
	Superintendent	State Department of Education
	Local Board of Education	
	State Department of Education	

*Any issues outside of this chart addressed by Principal (Note: Coach > Athletic Director > Principal)

● **COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL**

The Board will consider hearing citizen complaints when they cannot be resolved by the administration.

Persons desiring to communicate with the Board shall **make their request made known to the Superintendent** no later than **24 hours prior to the scheduled Board meeting.**

When requesting the opportunity to address the Board, stakeholders should include:

- their **name**,
- home **address**,
- the **topic about which they wish to speak**
- and the **group they represent**, if applicable.

School Board Meeting Dates can be found at www.chattco.org under the **SCHOOL BOARD** tab.

After reading such complaints, and if more information which might challenge or question the good name or character of an individual is needed, the Board shall consider this in the Executive Session. The Board will not consider or act on complaints that have not been explored at the appropriate administrative level or if the appropriate chain of command has not been attempted.

BOARD OFFICE MAILING ADDRESS:

Chattahoochee County School District
326 Broad Street
Cusseta, GA 31805

CHATTCO PHONE NUMBERS:

Board Office: 706.989.3774
High School: 706.989.3678
Middle School: 706.989.3678
Education Center: 706.989.3648

KEY PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

For further information, refer to Chattahoochee County Policies located in EBoard at www.chattco.org

● **ACTIVITY FUNDS**

All money collected in connection with any school program or event shall be received and accounted for with the procedures identified in the approved policy. A clear audit trail shall be maintained from receipt of the funds to the disbursement of the funds. The school funds will be audited annually, and conclusions of the audit shall be sent to the Superintendent to share with the Board of Education as well as available for any external stakeholder.

Online payments are encouraged and preferred. At no time shall an employee seek direct payment or reimbursement from parents or students. At no time shall any employee conduct school business using any digital wallet such as Venmo or CashApp. Approved administrators are the only employees authorized for an agreement of payment of services. The Superintendent or designee are the only approved administrators authorized to enter a contractual agreement.

Reference: Policy DK and School Activity Funds Procedures.

● **CERTIFICATION**

Certified level employees of the Chattahoochee County District must hold proper credentials from the Georgia Professional Standards Commission or be granted a waiver in accordance with the system's charter waiver process. It is the responsibility of the individual to keep his/her certification current. Employees are contacted by the district's Certification Coordinator with detailed instructions of steps required for initial certification as well as recertification. Each step must be completed within the given timeframe as a requirement for continued employment. Other than specific job roles as identified in the hiring process, an individual's waiver is allowable in the District for up to three years.

Reference: The Georgia Professional Standards Commission at <http://www.gapsc.com/>.

● **DRESS CODE GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEES**

Appropriate appearance by employees contributes to a positive learning environment. All employees are expected to set a positive example for students and the community by being professionally dressed to perform their duties. These guidelines are intended to reduce questions about expectations and to provide consistency in the type of dress worn throughout the system by all employees.

Modesty and cleanliness are always expected. Good taste must be displayed. Business apparel is appropriate for all job positions that do not require a uniform. Spirit-casual dress is allowable at the discretion of the supervisor and in summer months. Employees are expected to have their system issued Identification badge visible.

● **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

The Board recognizes that a drug-free workplace encourages employee productivity and promotes the accomplishment of the Board's missions and goals. In accordance with the Drug- Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Board of Education hereby declares that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession of or use of a controlled substance or alcohol is prohibited in the workplace, on school premises, or as a part of any of the school's activities for all school system employees. As a condition of employment, employees will abide by the terms of this policy and shall notify the Superintendent of any criminal drug statute or DUI conviction not later than five (5) days of event.

● **EMPLOYEE WORK CALENDARS, PAYROLL CALENDAR AND CERTIFIED SALARY SCHEDULES**

The approved school year calendar includes the scheduled work days. The calendars include holidays and school closings. Some categories of employment have floating adjusted work calendar days that will be scheduled by the employee's supervisor and will be formally approved in advance by the Superintendent or designee. The school year calendar, payroll calendar and salary schedules are available at www.chattco.org under Human Resources.

● **EVALUATION**

All employees of the Board of Education will have their performance evaluated annually by an appropriately trained evaluator. Performance evaluation records are a part of the personnel evaluation file and are confidential. All certified teachers will be evaluated with Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and all certified administrators will be evaluated with Leadership Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) unless otherwise notified. All other certified and classified employees will be evaluated with a board approved, position-based evaluation tool.

● **FRAUD PREVENTION—FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE**

Ethics, waste and fraud policies are reviewed with all administrators annually. Principals and Directors are expected to discuss the same information with their personnel annually. Each employee is expected to review the Employee Handbook. The terms of employment include understanding that fraud of any kind will not be tolerated and are grounds for dismissal. Any and all suspicious activities must be reported to the direct supervisor or the Federal Programs Coordinator. Any report of fraud will be investigated under the strictest confidentiality allowed under law.

Reference: Policy DIE

● **IDENTIFICATION AND SECURITY BADGES**

All employees of the Chattahoochee County School District will have picture identification badges. The badge allows the employee to be admitted to Chattahoochee County extracurricular activities for no fee; this excludes tournaments and certain other events as indicated by the school. Badges for terminated and inactive employees must be returned to the Chief of Police for the school district. Lost badges will incur a \$15.00 replacement fee.

● **INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

An employee who is infected with an infectious disease will remain in his or her employment setting unless he or she presents a significant risk of contagion. The determination of degree of risk will be made by the Board of Education after consultation with the employee's physician, a public health official knowledgeable about the disease, and/or the Board of Education's consultant physician (if in the judgment of the Superintendent it is necessary to consult a private physician).

Whether or not an infected individual presents a significant risk of contagion shall be determined based upon reasonable medical judgment given the state of medical knowledge about:

- The nature of the risk, (how the disease is transmitted);
- The duration of the risk, (how long the carrier is infectious);
- The severity of the risk, (the degree of potential harm to third parties); and
- The probability that the disease will be transmitted and will cause varying degrees of harm.

Both the decision to require the removal of the employee and the decision to permit the employee to return to work shall be based upon the advice of public health or other medical experts.

Reference: Policy GANA

● **INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT FOR EMPLOYEES**

The Chattahoochee County School District strongly believes in the educational value of internet electronic information services and recognizes the potential to support curriculum and student learning in facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication.

The District will make every effort to protect students and teachers from any misuse or abuse as a result of interacting with an information service. Inappropriate and/or illegal interaction with the information service is strictly prohibited.

By virtue of using Chattahoochee County School District technology, employees are subject to the provisions of this acceptable use agreement. If any user violates these provisions, access to the information service may be denied and you may be subject to disciplinary action including the recommendation of termination of employment.

● **TERMS OF INTERNET USAGE**

- **User Responsibility.** As an employee of this school system, employees will accept user responsibility for reporting any misuse of the network to their school administrator. Misuse may come in many forms, but is commonly viewed as any message(s) sent or received that indicates or suggest pornography, unethical or illegal solicitation, racism, sexism, inappropriate language and other issues described below.
- **Acceptable Use.** The use of assigned employee accounts must be in support of education and research aligned with educational goals and objectives of the Chattahoochee County School District. Employees are personally responsible for the following provisions at all times when using the electronic information service:
 - Use of other organization's networks or computing resources must comply with rules appropriate to that network.
 - Transmission of any material in violation of any United States or other state organizations is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by trade secret.
 - Use of commercial activities by for-profit institutions is generally not acceptable.
 - Use of product advertisement of political lobbying is also prohibited.
- **Privileges.** The use of the information system is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The school administrator may close an account at any time deemed necessary. The administration of a particular school may request that the system administrator deny, revoke or suspend specific user accounts.

Access to district provided applications (i.e. PowerSchool, Google) will end within twenty-four hours after the last day of employment.
- **Network Etiquette and Privacy.** All employees are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette.
- **Services.** The Chattahoochee County School District makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for electronic services provided. Chattahoochee County School District is not responsible for any damages suffered while on this system. Potential damages may include but are not limited to loss of data, non-deliveries, deliveries to unintended recipients or service interruptions. Use of any information obtained via the information system is at your own risk. The District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through these services.

- **Security**. Security is a high priority. Any employee identifying a security problem must notify the school administrator immediately. Never demonstrate the problem to other users. Never use another individual's account without written permission from that person. All use of the system must be under the user's assigned account. Any user identified as a security risk will be denied access to the information system.
- **Vandalism**. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user including any other public or private provider connected to the system. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Any vandalism may result in the loss of computer services, disciplinary action and legal referral.
- **Updating**. The information service may occasionally require new registration and updated account information from the employee to continue the service. Employees must notify the information system of any changes in account information.
- **Social Media**. When participating in social media activities, even off duty and off premises, such activities must not violate any Board policies or otherwise interfere with the employee's or co-workers' job performance. All policies that govern employee behavior, ethics, performance and professionalism apply to social media, just as it would anywhere else. The Board expects all employees to exercise professionalism and good judgment in social media activities.

Furthermore, social media activities must comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, copyright, trademark, defamation, privacy, securities and any other applicable laws and regulations.

Employees using Chattahoochee County School District's technology agree to abide by the provisions and conditions of this internet usage agreement. Because students may use the network for individual work or in the context of another class, employees cannot be held responsible for student use of the network. However, employees are responsible for instructing students in their classes on acceptable use of the network and proper network etiquette.

Reference: Policy IFBG

● **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT EMPLOYEES**

The Chattahoochee County School District recognizes that many of our staff, students, parents and community members are active social media users. As a school district, we incorporate social media as part of our communication strategy.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help you participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects your reputation and the reputation of the Chattahoochee County School District, and that respects the relationship among employees, students, parents and community members.

These guidelines complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet that are in place for the Chattahoochee County School District.

We encourage responsible participation in social networking sites, subject to existing policies, including, but not limited to, those concerning non-discrimination, anti-harassment, anti-bullying and copyright/fair use. All employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our schools and to remember they are role models to students in this community. We ask that you carefully consider the public forum you are participating in and act in a way that properly represents both your professional reputation and the Chattahoochee County School District.

Express your ideas and opinions in a respectful, professional manner. Seek to build trust and responsibility in your relationships. Avoid insulting others, including students, staff, parents, our extended school community or other school districts. Do not use racial slurs, innuendos, obscenity or other inappropriate content. Avoid posting, sharing, commenting or otherwise engaging in rumors or unsupported information.

Represent the District and the students and parents you serve in the best light. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. You are responsible for what you post and communications that would be deemed inappropriate or actionable if they occurred inside or outside the classroom do not become acceptable merely because they are made online.

Express your ideas and opinions in a respectful, professional manner. Seek to build trust and responsibility in your relationships. Avoid insulting others, including students, staff, parents, our extended school community or other school districts. Do not use racial slurs, innuendos, obscenity or other inappropriate content. Avoid posting, sharing, commenting or otherwise engaging in rumors or unsupported information.

Represent the District and the students and parents you serve in the best light. Your posts and comments should help build and support the school community. You are responsible for what you post and communications that would be deemed inappropriate or actionable if they occurred inside or outside the classroom do not become acceptable merely because they are made online.

DISTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA: The purpose of social media is to present matters of stakeholder interest. Moderation of comments is permitted for items that create substantial disruption from the safe operation of school or those that are clearly off topic such as conversations between users. Posts are expected to be courteous and professional. Criticism may be offered but posts that include specific personnel or individuals will be removed. Abusive language, threats, derogatory comments, profanity, harassment, or advertising is strictly prohibited. Confidential student or personnel matters are not allowable comments. All media contacts are handled by administration/designee. Please refer to Board Policy BCBI for additional guidance on expectations for public participation.

● **ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES TO CONSIDER**

- **Use common sense when posting online.** While these guidelines are in no way intended to limit or infringe upon your rights to free speech, it remains good practice to never post anything that would embarrass you or the Chattahoochee County School District, or would call your professional reputation into question including your use of language, grammar, and tone.
- **Any content you publish will be public for a long time.** Not only can your content show up in Google and other search engines, but the FTC allows private corporations to store publicly accessible Facebook posts for a period of seven years to be used in employee background checks made by current or potential employers. Moreover, even posts that are “private” may be subject to discovery in legal actions.
- **Ask yourself if you would want your post in the media.** Would you feel comfortable if your content was read by colleagues, your students, parents or the School Board? If the answer is “no,” then the content is best not shared.
- **Special care should be taken when posting personal photographs.** Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your professional reputation. All photographs should be posted with the assumption that they could end up in the public realm and reflect your professional image as a District employee.
- **Content should not include provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, content showing or promoting the excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol or use of drugs, or any activity students are legally prohibited from doing.** Remember, even with privacy settings in place, your content could be seen by students or parents or find its way into the public realm.
- **The lines between personal and professional are blurred in the online world.** When you are online, you may be connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Sometimes those connections may be direct and obvious. Other times the connections may be indirect or via mutual connections. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work in the Chattahoochee County School District.
- **Your online behavior** should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration you apply offline.
- **Protect your privacy.** You are responsible for understanding and controlling privacy settings on each social network you use. Always assume default settings will make your profile and any content you share publicly accessible. You should also understand that even with maximum privacy settings in place, content can still find its way in to the public domain.
- **Use your personal email addresses** on personal social sites and while engaging in off duty social media activities or sites that are not connected with or approved by the district. Never use your district email address on personal sites. Do not access personal social media sites during the workday or on the system network.
- **At no time should you claim to be speaking or issuing opinions on behalf of the Chattahoochee County School District,** except with prior, written consent from the appropriate supervisor.
- **Respect the privacy and rights of both colleagues and students.** Confidential student or personnel information should not be posted online. Be sure not to violate any provision of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
- **Do not create any social media account, blog or website intended to represent the Chattahoochee County School District** without express prior consent from the Superintendent or designee. It is important for the district to protect its brand, ensure certain brand standards and content guidelines are maintained, and ensure any new accounts fit overall communications and education standards established by the District.

● **SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA REGARDING EMPLOYEE—STUDENT RELATIONS**

Employees must exercise great care in connecting with students on any social media channels. Do not send permission-based friend or follower requests to students, such as a Facebook/Instagram/ SnapChat friend request. Use discretion and carefully consider the guidelines provided by the district before accepting any permission-based friend or follower requests received from students. It is the Chattahoochee County School District's recommendation that if an employee decides to accept friend or follower requests received from students that they should accept all such requests after a student is graduated and not selectively limit their interactions to what could be perceived as a few preferred individuals.

The District recognizes there may be certain limited exceptions to these guidelines, such as a student being a family member or relative, or in those instances where an employee's interaction with a student is as a result of certain extra-curricular activities, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, religious organizations or other similar relationships. Any employee-student communications or relationship via social media should be of an appropriate professional nature, have content that is appropriate for both the communications medium and the audience addressed, and must not violate any provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Employees who are connected to or communicate with students via social media must understand they may be granting those students access to all content in their personal social media profiles and should consider the guidelines the district has provided to ensure students are protected from exposure to inappropriate content or content that might compromise the employee's professional reputation. The Code of Ethics must guide the professional standards when engaging in social media use as it pertains to interactions with school system stakeholders.

Employees are also responsible for immediately reporting to the District any inappropriate communication received from a student. This is as much for the employee's protection as the student's. Any content or communication generated either by you, or by a student, which would be inappropriate in the classroom should also be considered inappropriate when shared via social media.

● **PAYROLL**

Annual payment is based on employment verification received and the approved salary scale for the job role of employment. All employees shall be paid using Direct Deposit. Generally, salary is divided over a 12-month time frame with monthly payment into direct deposit account occurring on the last working day of the month. Each employee shall receive an annual final salary verification sheet to verify the annual amount of salary based on the approved number of work days. 190- and 200-day employees receive their initial disbursement of pay beginning with the September cycle.

Payments for Staff Development Units, After-School Program, Department Head, Athletic Supplements, etc., must be initiated by the administrator and approved by the Superintendent. The documentation must include the employee's name, amount of payment, reason for payment and list the appropriate funding source.

With the exception of VALIC, Valu-Teachers, MEA Federal Credit Union and Member's Alliance Credit Union and under certain conditions, State Health Benefit Plan, changes made to payroll deductions may only be made during open enrollment. Open enrollment begins with preplanning days and ends on August 30th with the exception of State Health Benefit Plan whose open enrollment is set by the Department of Community Health. Any changes to payroll must be submitted in writing and approved. The payroll changes go into effect with September pay date. Salary deduction must align with the approved policy.

Reference: Policy DJCB

● **PURCHASING PROCEDURES**

PURCHASE ORDERS—All items must have an approved Purchase Order through all of the following steps BEFORE an item can be ordered. Only in Emergency Situations approved by the Finance Director can an item be ordered without going through the approval process · An authorized employee will initiate an electronic Purchase Order to the immediate supervisor for approval · The supervisor will verify that the school/department budget funds are available to make the purchase. Additionally, the purchase request is aligned with the strategic planning of the department/school. Any request for items using Federal Programs funds, CTAE funds, or Special Education funds must be approved by the appropriate director. · If funds are not available, the supervisor will deny the request. · If funds are available and the supervisor approves the request, the Purchase Order will be forwarded to the Finance Director's office to review funding and other pertinent information. · If adequate funding is available, the Purchase Order will be forwarded to the Superintendent for approval. A completed Purchase Order must include the total cost amount, the item, and funding source. · Once approved by the Superintendent, the Purchase Order will be provided to the appropriate support staff for prompt ordering of items.

PACKING SLIPS are usually included in the shipment order. These must be returned to the central office. All packing slips should be clearly marked with the date received, whether all was received, and who is checking the packing slip. If there is any discrepancy between billing and purchases made by personnel on purchase orders, etc. please meet with the designated employee at the board office to discuss these issues. If no packing slip is included, the employee must print either the PO or invoice to document receipt of the items. Receipts - Anytime you purchase any goods or services for the school, receipts must be submitted. Approval to purchase must occur with a completed PO before any purchase is made.

SCHOOL ACTIVITY ACCOUNTS - These same procedures are to be followed for the School Activity Accounts. The requisitions have to be signed by the Sponsor/Coach and must be signed by the Principal before any order can be placed. Tax exempt forms must be sent with the orders to ensure that the school does not pay sales tax. Packing slips must be retained and verified.

CREDIT CARDS - Credit Cards for the School or District are subject to the following procedures. Credit cards must be kept under lock and key. Credit cards must be checked out for use and approved for use by the supervisor. Purchase Orders are required prior to the use of any credit card. All purchases are required to have tax exempt status. The Administrative Team may use the credit card to purchase approved gift cards (not over \$50) that relate to action steps in the strategic plan/ school plan. Receipts of purchase and documentation must be provided. Meals may only be purchased for Groups/Teams that are conducting approved business (documented with agenda, meeting minutes, attendees) of the school/district. Meals that coincide with the day-to-day operations are not allowable for purchase on the credit cards. All items purchased with credit cards will be subject for monthly review and analysis. Charges not approved or failure to adhere to these procedures will result in disciplinary findings to include termination.

CHECKS – Checks and personnel reimbursement checks, are only issued twice a month. At the beginning of the month (1st-10th) and at the end of the month (the 20-25th).

● **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All employees are expected to participate in required trainings designed to maintain or improve job skills. The Chattahoochee County Board of Education requires the preparation and implementation of a system-level comprehensive school improvement plan that includes a component for staff and professional development.

Reference: Policy GAD

● **REASSIGNMENT**

The Superintendent is authorized by the Board to reassign at his/her discretion any employee to a location other than the one previously assigned. The right to reassign and transfer personnel to other positions should be for the betterment of the school system when such conditions as the following exist:

- Increases or decreases of enrollment in various grades
- Opening of new buildings or closing of old ones
- Changes in organization of the school system
- Addition or elimination of an educational service
- Vacancies
- Personnel adjustments
- Compliance with federal court orders and new state or federal requirements

● **REDUCTION IN FORCE**

Under certain circumstances, the Chattahoochee County Board of Education may implement a reduction in force. Examples include:

- A decrease in student enrollment in the School District which would necessitate a decrease in personnel or a discontinuation of programs;
- A change in state or local curriculum, personnel, or financial practices which would necessitate a change in or elimination of program or services provided by the School District;
- A loss of funds due to a reduction in state funds, reduction in local funds or other funds that make necessary a reduction in spending;
- A lack of funding for programs, personnel, or services provided by the School District;
- Any reasonable reorganization plan to achieve a more efficient school district.

If the Board acts at the recommendation of the Superintendent to terminate an employee under contract or to downgrade an employee's position, the Superintendent shall notify the affected employee in a manner consistent with the provisions of Georgia's Fair Dismissal Law and he or she shall have whatever rights the Fair Dismissal Act provides for such employee.

Reference: Policy GAKA

● **SAFETY—VECTOR SOLUTIONS**

SAFETY & SECURITY: For security purposes, CCSD records all activities on school campus sites

Vector Solutions is an online training system that focuses on the safety of Chattahoochee County School District employees. It provides information and strategies for employees to help prevent injury and comply with state and federal mandates. The information and strategies are provided through online training courses that pertain specifically to different departments as well as courses that apply district wide. Employees will receive an email with directions on how to access the program and complete the courses required for their specific department, and these courses are required as part of an agreement for employment.

● **STAFF MEETINGS**

Regular staff meetings are a necessary part of the district operations. Each school shall have a schedule for staff meetings and/or trainings. The principal shall call special staff meetings for professional learning, accreditation and/or workshops as deemed necessary. All staff members are required as part of their teaching/employment responsibilities to attend any or all such meetings as designated by the principal.

● **SUSPENSION / TERMINATION**

If the Board acts at the recommendation of the Superintendent to terminate an employee under contract or to downgrade an employee's position, the Superintendent shall notify the affected employee in a manner consistent with the provisions of Georgia's Fair Dismissal Law and he or she shall have whatever rights the Fair Dismissal Act provides for such employee.

Since classified personnel are employed by the Board of Education for an indefinite period of time, their employment may be suspended or terminated at any time by the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

● **TOBACCO / VAPE PRODUCTS**

All Chattahoochee County Schools are tobacco/vape free zones. All employees of the Chattahoochee County Board of Education shall be prohibited from the use of tobacco or vaping products while performing their duties as an employee of the Chattahoochee County Board of Education. All persons at off-campus school sponsored events are prohibited to use tobacco/vape products.

Reference: Policy GAN

● **TRAVEL PROCESSES**

Employee Travel Expense Statements (reimbursement forms) are available with each program Director and School Bookkeeper. No travel will be reimbursed unless pre-approved through approved Professional Learning or as part of the specific job role. Reservations for hotels, conference registrations, airline reservations (if applicable) shall not be made until Professional Learning Leave is approved. Failure to request and have Professional Leave approve may require an employee to be responsible for costs. Lodging and conference registrations are to be paid using the system credit card. An employee is expected to work directly with their Program Directors, or their designee, or School Bookkeepers to reserve lodging and register for conferences. Employee Travel Expense Statements should be signed by the employee and his/her administrator and submitted to the board office for Superintendent approval. Errors detected and information omitted will be sent back to the employee for correction and may create a delay in the receipt of reimbursement. Only an employee may change/correct the travel form.

All travel should be submitted in a timely manner not later than 30 days from the event. All lodging receipts must be attached to the back of the travel sheet. Meals do not require receipts. Parking fees, etc. do require receipts. Reimbursement checks are only issued twice a month (at the beginning of the month between the 1st and 10th and at the end of the month between the 20th-25th)

Reference: Policy: DJEAC

● **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment. The injured employee must provide notice of the injury immediately, but no later than 24-hours after the accident, to the employer, the employer's representative or the employee's immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. The injured employee may select a medical care provider from the list posted by the Board of Education Panel of Physicians. Only those providers listed are authorized to provide medical care for a work-related injury. The Panel of Physicians is posted in visible locations at all schools and in all facilities maintained by the Chattahoochee County Board of Education.



*Search **APPROVED PHYSICIANS LIST** on our website www.chattco.org for most current listing.

INSURANCE AND BENEFITS

Chattahoochee County School District offers a comprehensive benefits package to employees. New employees have 30 days to select their benefits options. All employees can make changes to benefits plans during the annual Open Enrollment period, held each fall. Below is brief information on benefits that are available to employees.

● **HEALTH INSURANCE**

The System's Health Insurance Program is administered by the State of Georgia, Department of Community Health, and offered through a defined carrier. Employees may choose from the program that best meets his/her needs. The school system pays an employer's share of each employee's health insurance premium. Employees on leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) who exhaust all paid leave will be responsible for the employee's portion of health care premiums.

An employee going on unpaid leave may be able to continue health insurance for a limited time. The benefits department can provide details regarding coverage and possible premium increases. Employees who retire (and will be receiving a monthly pension check) may be able to continue their health insurance coverage. Employees whose health insurance is terminated for other reasons, or covered dependents of employees whose health insurance is terminated, may continue their coverage for a limited period under COBRA.

● **SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE**

Short-Term Disability (STD) and Long-Term Disability (LTD) insurance is available for purchase by eligible employees. The employee pays 100% of the premiums.

● **BASIC GROUP TERM LIFE INSURANCE**

Life insurance is provided free to all active, regular employees in amounts based on their classification.

● **OPTIONAL AND SUPPLEMENTAL LIFE INSURANCE AND ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT INSURANCE**

Optional and Supplemental Life Insurance and Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance is available for eligible employees at group rates. Spousal and children's coverage is also available. AD&D coverage pays only in the event of an accidental death or dismemberment, and should not be considered "life" insurance. The employee pays 100% of the premiums. Optional and Supplemental Life Insurance is offered when an employee is hired. If it is refused at that time, and the employee later seeks to enroll, proof of insurability will be required.

● **DENTAL INSURANCE**

Dental Insurance is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. The Dental Insurance plan provides benefits for Preventive, Basic, Major and Orthodontic procedures. There is no waiting period for coverage under the plan if enrolled at time of hire. The employee pays 100% for dental coverage.

● **VISION INSURANCE**

Vision Insurance is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. Benefits are available for both in-network and out-of-network providers and procedures. The employee pays 100% of the vision insurance.

● **MEDICAL FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT**

A Medical Flexible Spending Account (MFSA) is available for eligible employees, spouses and dependent children. A MFSA is not insurance, but rather a way to pay for certain qualified, non-reimbursed medical expenses in a pre-tax salary reduction. The amount which can be placed in an MFSA each year may be limited by the Internal Revenue Service. The employee contributes 100% to the MFSA.

● **CANCER, ACCIDENT AND CRITICAL ILLNESS INSURANCE**

Cancer, Accident and Critical Illness Insurance offers you and your family supplemental insurance protection in the event you or a covered family member is diagnosed with cancer or one of the other specified diseases covered under this plan or an accident occurs. It protects you and your family 24-hours a day, seven days a week, and is easily convertible. This plan pays benefits directly to you. The employee pays 100% of the premium.

● **TAX DEFERRED INVESTMENTS**

Current IRS regulations allow employees to participate in tax deferred investments under Sections 403(b) and 457(b) of the Internal Revenue Code (commonly known as 403(b)/457 plans) if they qualify. All full time employees are eligible to participate.

PENSION

All employees who are employed at halftime or more in the Chattahoochee County School District must belong to one of two retirement systems.

● **TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM (TRS)**

The majority of Chattahoochee County School District employees participate in the Teachers' Retirement System of Georgia (TRS). TRS offers a defined benefit plan, guaranteeing a monthly benefit – based on a member's average salary (two highest consecutive years) and service – which is payable for the life of the member, and when applicable, transferable to a member's spouse or beneficiary(ies). The State of Georgia guarantees TRS members will receive retirement income for life. Also, depending on the plan of retirement chosen, a TRS retirement benefit can be passed to a beneficiary at a member's death, and the beneficiary continues to receive this income until his or her death.

For detailed information, visit the TRS website at www.trsga.com.

● **PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM (PSERS)**

The Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) serves all eligible Chattahoochee County Board of Education employees not covered under the Teachers' Retirement System of Georgia. The purpose was to provide a supplemental retirement plan for public school employees who did not belong to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS). This means that PSERS is intended as an addition to other retirement income. If you have questions about which system you are a member, please ask the payroll department. PSERS provides lifetime retirement benefits, disability benefits, and death benefits. These are available once you have enough years of service to qualify.

For detailed information, visit the PSERS website at www.ers.ga.gov.

EMPLOYEE LEAVE

● **EMPLOYEE LEAVE**

All school employees are encouraged to be present every day. **Children suffer most when teachers and support staff are absent. Students require consistency for positive outcomes associated with education.**

If an absence is necessary, fill out an absence request on **Frontline Absence Management website** (<https://app.frontlineeducation.com>) several days in advance of the scheduled absence. Each employee will have their own Frontline ID username and password. If the absence is unplanned and you cannot enter an absence in Absence Management, contact your school absence approver. If you have any questions or problems with the platform that cannot be solved internally, email Support@ESS.com and notify your immediate supervisor. Lesson plans must be provided for substitutes. **All employees are required to use the Frontline portal for leave requests including sick leave that occurs on the same day as an absence.**

Employees who must leave school for more than two hours must secure a substitute (as appropriate for job role) and request the appropriate leave time. If an employee wishes to secure a personal leave day, employees should follow the procedures in the **Frontline Absence Management System**. All employees are encouraged to review the sick and personal leave policy of the Chattahoochee County Board of Education. An employee cannot be absent with pay for a reason that is not covered by this policy. **An employee's absentee record and reasons for being absent will be considered during evaluation and at the time of contract renewal.** Employees will be required to provide a written doctor's excuse for any absence after 5 sick days have been used. **Attendance is part of the annual evaluation.**

Employees must email/contact the immediate supervisor and building administrator requesting the use of a personal day before the personal day is needed. It is recommended to request the personal leave day at a minimum of five days prior to needing the personal day. Employees do not need to state the purpose of the personal time desired. The administration will only deny a request for personal time if it will jeopardize the effectiveness of the school operation. Enter your request using the Frontline employee portal. **The supervisor must approve personal leave in advance.** Personal leave taken without prior approval will be reported as unauthorized absence and result in pay being docked. Personal leave should not be taken during preplanning, post-planning, teacher workdays, or on a day before or after a holiday per board policy.

Reference: Policy GARH

This policy shall apply to all employees of the Chattahoochee County Board of Education. Deductions in pay will be made for absences not covered by this policy. Incentives for perfect attendance are at the discretion and approval of the Board of Education.

● **PERSONAL LEAVE**

Three (3) days of an employee's accumulated sick leave may be utilized during each school year for personal reasons provided prior approval from the Superintendent or authorized supervisor is obtained. The principal or supervisor shall withhold approval of personal leave when the absence of the employee would jeopardize the effectiveness of the school operation.

Any personal leave taken by an employee beyond that accumulated will result in the loss of pay for those days. Personal leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days or on the day before or day after holidays, unless the principal in his or her discretion recommends that such leave should be granted. Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought.

● **ACCRUAL OF SICK LEAVE, ABSENCE FOR MEDICAL AND RELATED REASONS**

Benefits-eligible employees of Chattahoochee County School District shall be entitled to annual sick leave with pay to be accrued at the rate of one and one-fourth (1 1/4) days for each completed month. All employees' unused sick leave shall be accumulated from one fiscal year to the next up to a maximum of ninety (90) unused sick leave days, although the Teacher Retirement System of Georgia allows participating employees to accumulate an unlimited number of unused sick leave days for credit towards retirement. All certified employees may transfer ninety (90) unused sick leave days from another system. Accumulated sick leave may be transferred to another Georgia school system within the limits set by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-850.

The leave provided for under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness or death in the employee's family. For purpose of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents, grandchildren, in-law equivalents of the above, other relatives living in the household, or any individual listed on the employee's most recent tax return.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. However, if the local school Board disagrees with the doctor's statement of disability or ability, it may appoint a physician for the purpose of receiving independent medical judgment.

It will be the responsibility of the employee to fill out a report for the days absent for sick leave.

Employees may be required, at the discretion of the supervisor, to provide a written doctor's excuse for any absence after five (5) sick days have been used.

Chattahoochee County School District does not pay for unused sick leave when an employee leaves the system. The District follows guidelines from TRS and/or other retirement entities regarding sick leave procedures.

● **PROFESSIONAL LEAVE**

The Superintendent of Schools may authorize professional leave for attendance of personnel at state, regional, and national meetings without pay deduction and with expenses paid by the district according to established allowances. The number of absences for professional leave is a judgment value on the part of the Superintendent of Schools and is subject to budget limitations for employing substitutes and reimbursement for travel, meals and lodging. All professional leave must be pre-approved and align with the system's professional learning comprehensive plan.

● **OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

Employees may use personal leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. If an employee desires to take leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays in excess of the days allowed for personal leave, the employee may take unpaid leave for such purposes provided that such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

● **PAID PARENTAL LEAVE**

The Board of Education shall make paid parental leave equally available to all eligible employees of the Board of Education under the following terms:

1. An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for paid parental leave for qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:
 - a. The employee is classified as full-time by the District and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System of Georgia) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and
 - b. The employee has six continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether he or she is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee paid on an hourly basis must have worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.
2. A qualifying life event means:
 - a. The birth of a child of an eligible employee;
 - b. The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
 - c. The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.
3. The maximum amount of paid parental leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12 month period is 120 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur during such period.
 - a. The rolling 12 month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave.
 - b. Parental leave may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of less than eight hours. The smallest increment of parental leave that may be taken is 2 hours
 - c. Any unused paid parental leave that remains 12 months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use.
 - d. Unused paid parental leave shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education.
4. Paid parental leave under state law shall run concurrently with any leave provided under federal law.

Paid Parental Leave may be accessed through the FMLA request process

● **JURY AND WITNESS LEAVE**

Each person employed by the Chattahoochee County School District shall be allowed leave with pay for the purpose of serving as a juror in any court or when attending a judicial proceeding in response to a subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of the employee's duties. Any employee who serves as juror or witness shall not have the jury or witness leave deducted from sick, personal or professional leave. Employees who serve on juries or who are subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of their duties shall be allowed to keep any jury/witness pay they receive.

Employees who are subpoenaed to appear in court for reasons that are not job related may use any unused personal leave or be docked for such absence.

● **MILITARY LEAVE**

Employees of the Board of Education are entitled to take leave for the purpose of complying with ordered military duty with full employment and reinstatement rights as provided by law. The term “ordered military duty” shall mean any military duty performed in the service of the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including but not limited to, attendance at any service school or schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States by an employee as a voluntary member of any force of the organized militia or any reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia pursuant to orders issued by the competent state or federal authority, without the consent of the employee.

An employee shall be paid regular salary for a period or periods of absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from such duty, not to exceed a total of eighteen (18) days in any one federal fiscal year.

In the event the Governor of Georgia declares an emergency that results in an employee being ordered to military duty, the employee is entitled to leave not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one federal fiscal year. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the Superintendent or designee annually and shall cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of the Board of Education.

A request for military leave (paid or unpaid) must be submitted to the employee's supervisor and the appropriate personnel administrator with a copy of the official military orders.

● **ANNUAL LEAVE**

Annual leave is granted only to 12-month, annual (240-day) employees. Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or the Board, annual leave shall be accumulated not to exceed 10 days per year.

An employee will be paid for accrued, unused annual leave only if the employee leaves employment in good standing. Annual leave will be paid at the current rate of pay. If the employee is terminated, no payment for unused annual leave will be made.

● **SICK LEAVE POOL**

Employees who are eligible for sick leave accrual may join the Chattahoochee County Sick Leave Pool for the purpose of applying for additional sick leave after their own accrued leave has been exhausted. Employees who elect to become members of the Sick Leave Pool are required to contribute part of their accumulated sick leave to the Pool. Withdrawals from the Sick Leave Pool will be granted for catastrophic illness, injury, or non-elective surgery with debilitating consequences in accordance with guidelines established by the Sick Leave Pool Committee.

Reference: Policy GBRIB

● **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

To the extent that any provision in this handbook conflicts with FMLA or the regulations of any other federal or state law, the provision of FMLA is promulgated. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) is a federal law that helps employees balance work responsibilities with family and medical needs. At times, employees may need to take leave from their jobs for a temporary period to address certain family responsibilities or their own serious health conditions. Employees of the Board who have been employed by the Board for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave are eligible to take 12 weeks unpaid leave under the FMLA subject to certification by appropriate health care provider.

If an employee is eligible for FMLA and needs to be out 10 or more consecutive days for one of the reasons listed, an FMLA Request must be completed, submitted and sent. The FMLA Request is available on the system site at FMLA processes

Even if the employee has sick leave, the employee is required to submit an FMLA requesting FMLA. FMLA is regarding time and job security, not pay. FMLA runs concurrently with sick leave, sick leave pool, and unpaid leave. If you have any questions, contact the Business Office.

An employee may request FMLA leave for one or more of the following reasons:

- Birth of a son or daughter and to care for the newborn child;
- Adoption or foster placement of a son or daughter with the employee;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent, if the person has a serious health condition; and
- Serious health condition of employee that prevents the employee from performing his/her job functions.
- Any qualifying exigency arising from the fact that the employee's family member (the covered service member) is on covered active duty. Qualifying exigencies are defined as short-notice deployment (seven or less calendar days); military events and related activities; childcare and school activities; financial and legal arrangements; counseling; rest and recuperation (up to five days per instance); post-deployment activities; additional activities where the employer and employee agree that the leave is an exigency and agree to both timing and duration of the leave; and
- Military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of the service member.

If the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, an employee requesting leave should seek to provide at least 30 days advance notice to the immediate supervisor and the system's Business Office. If such advance notice is not possible, the employee must give notice to the Business Office as soon as possible, ordinarily within one or two working days of the need for leave. When planning medical treatment, the employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment, subject to the approval of the health care provider, so that corresponding leave will not unduly disrupt the operations of the school district.

Upon return from leave, the employee is entitled to be reinstated to his/her previous position and school or department held when he/she left on FMLA leave, with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment.

Reference: Policy GBRIG

THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

Note: Code of Ethics for Educators applies to ALL employees of Chattahoochee County Schools.



*Search **CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS** on our website www.chattco.org for most current listing.

The information in this handbook does not create or amend any contract of employment.

Changes made in Board Policy subsequent to the distribution of this handbook take priority.

All employees are expected to adhere to Board Policy.

Acceptance of employment for any employee is an agreement to approved Board Policy and the Code of Ethics.



CHATTAHOOCHEE COUNTY SCHOOLS



326 Broad Street, Cusseta, Georgia. 31804

www.chattco.org

Board Office: 706.989.3774

High School: 706.989.3678

Middle School: 706.989.3678

Education Center: 706.989.3648

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