

# Conroe ISD 2018–2019

## Employee Handbook

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3205 W. Davis  
Conroe, Texas 77304  
(936) 709-7752



**CONROE**  
**INDEPENDENT**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# Table of Contents

<b>Employee Handbook Receipt 2018-2019 .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>District Information .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Conroe ISD Vision Statement .....	7
District Goals.....	7
Board of Trustees .....	8
<b>Employment .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Equal Employment Opportunity.....	9
Job Vacancy Announcements.....	9
Employment after Retirement .....	9
Contract and Noncontract Employment .....	10
Certification and Licenses.....	11
Recertification of Employment Authorization .....	11
Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing .....	12
Health Safety Certification and Training .....	12
Reassignments and Transfers.....	13
Workload and Work Schedules .....	14
Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk.....	14
Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications.....	14
Outside Employment and Tutoring .....	15
Performance Evaluation .....	15
Employee Involvement.....	15
Staff Development.....	16
<b>Compensation and Benefits .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Salaries, Wages, and Stipends.....	16
Transcripts and Service Records.....	17
Paychecks.....	17
Address/Name Change .....	18
Automatic Payroll Deposit.....	18
Payroll Deductions.....	18
Overtime Compensation .....	19
Travel Expense Reimbursement .....	19
Health, Dental, and Life Insurance .....	20
Guidelines for Change of Election .....	20
Supplemental Insurance Benefits.....	21
Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125).....	21
Workers' Compensation Insurance .....	22
Unemployment Compensation Insurance .....	22
Teacher Retirement.....	22

Other Benefit Programs.....	23
<b>Leaves and Absences .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Personal Leave.....	25
State Sick Leave .....	26
Local Leave.....	26
Sick Leave Pool .....	27
Local Extended Sick Leave .....	27
Unpaid Medical Leave .....	28
Family and Medical Leave (FML)—General Provisions .....	29
Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions.....	31
Temporary Disability Leave .....	32
Expiration of Leave .....	33
Workers’ Compensation Benefits.....	33
Assault Leave .....	33
Bereavement Leave .....	34
Jury Duty.....	34
Compliance with a Subpoena .....	34
Truancy Court Appearances .....	34
Religious Observance .....	34
Military Leave .....	35
School Business Leave .....	35
Off-duty/Vacation Days.....	35
<b>Employee Relations and Communications .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Employee Recognition and Appreciation .....	36
District Communications .....	36
<b>Complaints and Grievances .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Level One .....	39
Level Two.....	39
Level Three .....	40
<b>Employee Conduct and Welfare .....</b>	<b>41</b>
Standards of Conduct .....	41
Texas Educators’ Code of Ethics .....	42
District Investigations .....	45
Fraud and Ethics Violations .....	45
Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.....	45
Harassment of Students .....	49
Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children .....	54
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse .....	54
Reporting Crime.....	55
Alcohol- and Drug-Abuse Prevention .....	55
Drug-Free Workplace Requirements.....	56

Mandatory Training .....	56
Fraud and Financial Impropriety .....	57
Conflict of Interest.....	57
Gifts and Favors .....	58
Associations and Political Activities.....	58
Charitable Contributions .....	58
Safety .....	58
Conroe ISD Classroom Safety Rules.....	59
Safe Operation of District Vehicles.....	60
Asbestos Management Plan .....	61
Integrated Pest Management .....	61
Bloodborne Pathogens/Exposure Control Plan.....	63
Pre-Employment Drug Testing .....	68
Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use .....	68
Employee Arrests and Convictions.....	69
Criminal History Background Checks.....	70
Identification Badges .....	70
Possession of Firearms and Weapons .....	70
Visitors in the Workplace .....	70
Copyrighted Materials .....	71
Employment Policies: Dissemination of Required Information .....	71
<b>Electronic Media, Communications Systems, and Technology Resources .....</b>	<b>72</b>
Acceptable Use Guidelines .....	72
Overview.....	72
Internet Filter.....	72
Email .....	73
Electronic Storage.....	73
Network Behavior .....	73
Inappropriate Use.....	74
Inappropriate Language .....	74
Commercial Use.....	74
Vandalism/Mischief.....	74
Security .....	75
Transmitting/Storing/Accessing Confidential Information .....	75
Modification of Computer .....	75
Campus, District, or Organizational Websites.....	75
External Links.....	76
Cell Phones and Smart Phones .....	76
Electronic Recording.....	76
Electronic Media & Communications.....	77
Electronic Media Use and Communications Between Employees and Students .....	77
Personal Use of Electronic Media and Communications .....	79
<b>General Procedures .....</b>	<b>80</b>

Bad Weather Closing .....	80
Inclement Weather Day – 2018-2019 Plans for Employees.....	81
Emergencies .....	81
Purchasing Procedures .....	81
Name and Address Changes .....	81
Personnel Records .....	82
Building Use .....	82
<b>Termination of Employment .....</b>	<b>82</b>
Resignations.....	82
Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees .....	83
Dismissal of Noncontract Employees .....	83
Exit Interviews and Procedures .....	84
Reports to Texas Education Agency .....	84
Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding .....	84
<b>Student Issues .....</b>	<b>85</b>
Equal Educational Opportunities.....	85
Student Records .....	85
Parent and Student Complaints .....	86
Administering Medication to Students .....	86
Dietary Supplements .....	86
Psychotropic Drugs .....	86
Student Conduct and Discipline .....	87
Student Attendance.....	87
Bullying .....	87
Hazing .....	88
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>89</b>
Conflicts of Interest .....	89

# Employee Handbook Receipt 2018-2019

Name \_\_\_\_\_

EIN \_\_\_\_\_ Campus/Department \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy or electronic version of the Conroe ISD Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

The Conroe ISD Employee Handbook can be accessed online at [www.conroeisd.net](http://www.conroeisd.net) under the "Employees" link. However, employees may request a personal copy.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in District policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this book. As the District provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will employment relationships are intended by this handbook.

I agree to comply with the District's policies and procedures, including those related to harassment of employees and students and reporting known or suspected student neglect and abuse. If requested to do so, I will cooperate with any District investigation of a possible violation of District policies or procedures by providing complete and truth information in an oral and/or written statement. I understand that failure to do so may subject me to discipline or termination from employment.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my supervisor or department head of any changes in personal information such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor or the Human Resources Department if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please electronically sign and date this receipt as part of the Safe Schools training.

# Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all District policies and procedures are included. Those that are have been summarized. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to the Human Resources Department.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official District policy manual, nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of noncontract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of District policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate District office. Policy manuals can be accessed through the CISD homepage at [www.conroeisd.net](http://www.conroeisd.net) or in the CISD Legal Office in the Dr. Deane L. Sadler Administration/Technology Building during normal working hours.

## District Information

### Conroe ISD Vision Statement

*Policy AE*

#### A Vision for CISD

CISD is a learning community united in its commitment to ensuring all students graduate with confidence and competence. The schools and communities work together to provide performance standards which can be applied to the real world. This is achieved through the implementation of quality in instruction, operations, and leadership.

### District Goals

*Policies AF, AB*

**Goal 1.0** CISD will maintain rigorous standards of achievement to prepare all students for graduation and post-secondary success.

**Goal 2.0** CISD will maintain efficient and effective fiscal management of resources and operations to maximize learning for all students.

**Goal 3.0** CISD will employ, develop, and retain highly qualified staff to maximize learning for all students.

**Goal 4.0** CISD will work jointly with parents and the community to maximize learning for all students through collaborative partnerships and unity of purpose.

**Goal 5.0** CISD will strive to ensure a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning for all students and staff.

**Goal 6.0** CISD will provide technology infrastructure, tools, and solutions to meet the administrative requirements of the District and to maximize learning for all students.

**Goal 7.0** CISD will promote and enhance two-way communication among our staff and our community to maximize the success of all students.

## **Board of Trustees**

*Policies BA, BB series, BD series, and BE series*

Texas law grants the Board of Trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the District's schools. The Board is the policy-making body within the District and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, employment of the Superintendent and other professional staff, and facilities. The Board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal laws and regulations. The Board of Trustees is elected by the citizens of the District to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the District's children. Board members are elected biannually and serve four-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the District.

The Board usually meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the District website and at the Dr. Deane L. Sadler Administration/Technology Building at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the Board to go into a closed session from which the public and others are excluded. Closed sessions may occur for such things as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real-property acquisition, certain personnel matters including employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or consulting with attorneys regarding pending litigation.



# Employment

## Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policies DAA, DIA*

Conroe ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, gender, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Additionally, the District does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities. Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any of the reasons listed above should contact the CISD Legal Office.

## Job Vacancy Announcements

*Policy DC*

To the extent possible, announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted a minimum of ten (10) days on the CISD homepage at [www.conroeisd.net](http://www.conroeisd.net).

## Employment after Retirement

*Policy DC*

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed under certain circumstances on a full- or part-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and state law. However, beginning July 1, 2015, the District will collect any surcharge and other fees it is required to pay to TRS or any other retirement program on behalf of any employee who is currently receiving benefits from TRS or another retirement program. Because the District does not incur such expenses in the employment of any other staff member, the employee's pay will be reduced to offset this expense. The deduction from the employee's pay will not be in the amount that will cause the employee to fall below the state minimum salary schedule, if the minimum salary schedule applies to the employee's position. Should the employee owe an amount greater than what can be deducted from the employee's pay check, the District will require the employee to submit payment to the District by personal check. If after receiving notice that the employee owes reimbursement to the District, the employee fails to pay, the employee may be terminated or suspended without pay until all outstanding balances are paid. It is the employee's responsibility to understand when and how surcharges will be applied.

Detailed information about employment after retirement is available in the TRS publication *Employment After Retirement*. Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. Information is also available on the TRS website ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

## **Contract and Noncontract Employment**

### *Policy DC series*

State law requires the District to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term, or continuing contracts. Full-time employees are those employees who are regularly scheduled to work 18.75 hours or more per week. Employees may view their employment contracts in their Employee Access Center.

Employees in all other positions are employed at-will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewal or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide a general description of the employment arrangements used by the District.

**Probationary Contracts.** Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the District and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive a probationary contract during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after a two-year lapse in District employment or employees who move to a position requiring a new class of certification may also be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the District may not exceed one school year. For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three school years (i.e., three one-year contracts) with an optional fourth school year if the Board determines it is doubtful whether a term or continuing contract should be given.

**Term Contracts.** Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by term contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. Employment policies can be accessed online or copies will be provided upon request. All employees will receive an electronic copy of their contract.

**Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees.** Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are employed on a non-certified contract that is not subject to the provisions for nonrenewal or termination under the Texas Education Code, or on no contract at all, depending on the position.

**Paraprofessional, Auxiliary, and Substitute Employees.** All paraprofessional, auxiliary, and substitute employees, regardless of certification, are employed at-will and not by contract.

Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the District. Not accepting substitute assignments in Absence Management online or by phone is considered a voluntary quit until the substitute accepts another substitute assignment.

## **Certification and Licenses**

*Policies DBA, DF*

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. It is imperative that teachers hold a valid teaching certificate at all times and that instructional aides have a current educational aide certificate. Employees will be notified via Conroe ISD email when their certificate will be expiring. Upon notification, employees must renew immediately. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/ or obtained or renewed their credentials in a timely manner to Claire Amos in the Human Resources Department. Questions about certificate renewal should be directed to [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us) or 512-936-8400.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without due process pursuant to Texas Education Code, Section 21.0031 and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to extend a temporary or emergency certificate or permit, or if the employee's certification or permit expires or is canceled, relinquished, or revoked. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks.

## **Recertification of Employment Authorization**

*Policy DC*

At the time of hire, all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present documents to verify identity and employment authorization.

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact the Human Resources Department if you have any questions regarding reverification of employment authorization.

## **Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing**

*Policy CQ, DHE*

Non-investigatory searches in the workplace, including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the District reserves the right to conduct searches when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The District may search the employee, the employee's personal items, and work areas including District-owned technology resources, lockers, and private vehicles parked on District premises or work sites or used in District business.

**Employees Required to Have a Commercial Driver's License.** Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people counting the driver, drivers of large vehicles, or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements if their duties include driving a commercial motor vehicle.

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted if an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs is allowed to return to duty.

All employees required to have a CDL or who otherwise are subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the District's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact the Human Resources Department.

## **Health Safety Certification and Training**

*Policies DBA, DMA*

Section 22.902 and Section 33.086 of the Texas Education Code requires certain school district employees who are involved in physical activities for students to be certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), First Aid, and concussion and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Conroe ISD has identified additional employees that are required to hold CPR/AED/First Aid certification, including athletic trainers, athletic coaches, PE teachers, marching band instructors, band directors (junior high and high school), color

guard instructors, cheerleading sponsors, dance/drill team instructors, JROTC instructors, debate coaches, theatre arts instructors, school nurses, clinic assistants, choir directors (intermediate, junior high, and high school), orchestra directors (junior high and high school), CTE instructors (who work with power tools), agricultural science instructors, cosmetology teachers, auto tech/auto collision teachers, robotics sponsors, and child development lab teachers and aides.

American Red Cross and Pediatric CPR/AED/First Aid certification is offered free of charge to Conroe ISD employees who are required to hold these certifications. Adult and Pediatric CPR/AED/First Aid certification can also be obtained from outside entities that provide certification from American Red Cross, American Heart Association, American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI), National Safety Council (NSC), University Interscholastic League (UIL), and MEDIC First Aid. No other outside entity certifications are accepted. The cost of outside Adult & Pediatric CPR/AED/First Aid certification is the responsibility of the employee. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification to a Department Head, Program Director, or designee during the onset of activities for the students at the beginning of each school year. Questions regarding CPR/AED/First Aid certification requirements should be directed to the CISD Health Services Department.

## **Reassignments and Transfers**

### *Policy DK*

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent or designee when the Superintendent or designee determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the District. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract. Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the District process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and District policy DGBA (LOCAL).

An employee with the required qualifications for a position within the District may apply for that position using the District's internal job posting site. An employee applying for an internal job will only be considered when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Human Resources Department via the internal job posting site and must be approved by both the sending and receiving supervisor.

## **Workload and Work Schedules**

*Policies DEAB, DK, DL*

**Professional Employees.** Professional employees and academic administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the District. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including start and end dates and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year.

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation including conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level but must provide at least 450 minutes within each two-week period in blocks not less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. Teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The District may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one day a week when no other personnel are available.

**Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees.** Support employees are employed at-will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. Employees are required to use District time clocks or time sheets to record time worked. *See Overtime Compensation for additional information.*

## **Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk**

*Policies DEAB, DG*

The District supports the practice of expressing breast milk and makes reasonable accommodations for the needs of the employees who express breast milk. A place, other than a multiple user bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from other employees and the public where the employee can express breast milk will be provided.

A reasonable amount of break time will be provided when the employee has a need to express milk. For nonexempt employees, these breaks are unpaid and are not counted as hours worked. Employees should meet with their supervisor to discuss their needs and arrange break times.

## **Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications**

*Policies DK, DBA*

In schools receiving Title I funds, the District is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. ESSA also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements.

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notice under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request.

## **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

*Policy DBD*

Employees are required to disclose in writing to their immediate supervisor any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the District. Supervisors will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

## **Performance Evaluation**

*Policy DN series*

Evaluation of an employee's job performance is a continuous process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. Evaluations will be completed on forms approved by the District. Reports, correspondence, and memoranda also can be used to document performance information. All employees will have electronic access to their evaluation, participate in a performance conference with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

## **Employee Involvement**

*Policies BQA, BQB*

At both the campus and District levels, Conroe ISD offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influence the instructional effectiveness of the District. As part of the District's planning and decision-making process, employees are elected to serve on District- or campus-level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision-making process are available in each campus office or from the Communications Department.

## **Staff Development**

### *Policy DMA*

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the District. Staff development for instructional personnel is predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, addressed in the campus improvement plan, and approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Staff development for non-instructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers) and continued employee skill development. Individuals holding renewable SBEC certificates are responsible for obtaining the required training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation.

## **Compensation and Benefits**

### **Salaries, Wages, and Stipends**

#### *Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB*

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The District's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All District positions are classified as exempt or non-exempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid semi-monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt, are paid an hourly wage or salary, and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a work week.

The District has implemented the KRONOS electronic timekeeping system in order to automate the timekeeping process. This system will be used to replace the handwritten timesheets for all non-exempt employees of the District. Absence records (e.g. vacation, sick days) will also be recorded in KRONOS.

It is recognized that in certain situations (e.g. clock malfunction) that it will be necessary to correct or enter missing data. These changes will be carefully documented on the MISSED PUNCH/EXCEPTION FORM so that it will be possible at all times to determine how a time detail record was computed.

To ensure consistency of treatment for employees, the data recorded in the KRONOS system shall be considered as the "official" record of the workday. Any disputes over actual hours worked or attendance will be resolved by referring to the official KRONOS records.

Since KRONOS timekeeping records are considered an employee's official time record, falsification of time, tampering with timekeeping records, tampering with timekeeping equipment/hardware/software, or punching in for another employee is considered a serious offense and may require disciplinary action up to and including termination.



Employees may access their work schedule, salary, and payroll checks in Employee Access Center. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extra-curricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the District's extra-duty pay schedule. Classroom teachers are awarded stipends for doctorate degrees if the degree is in the subject area taught and from an accredited university.

## **Transcripts and Service Records**

Employees have 60 calendar days from the date of hire to furnish the Human Resources Department with official college transcript(s) for professional positions, or a copy of the high school diploma for other positions where required. In addition, employees have 60 calendar days from the date of hire to furnish official service record(s) from school district(s) where the employee has worked previously (if applicable). If transcripts and/or service records are not provided to the Human Resources Department within 60 calendar days from the date of hire, no changes will be made to an employee's salary/wages for the remainder of the employee's check cycle in the current school year. If service records are provided after the 60 calendar day period, changes in salary/wages will not be made until the following school year. Employees with additional creditable years of service will be paid according to the following school year's pay plan, but adjustments in salary/wages will not be applied retroactively.

## **Paychecks**

All employees are paid on the 1st and 15th of each month. If a pay date falls on a weekend or holiday, the employee will be paid on the previous work day. All District employees are required to authorize the District to initiate credit entries directly to their financial institution account(s) for making payroll deposits in accordance with standardized employee practices. The authorization will also permit the District to make debit entries and adjustments for credit entries made in error to employee-designated accounts.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the employee's pay, leave, and other information on each paycheck are correct. Employees are responsible for reviewing their payroll statement each pay day for accuracy, including but not limited to compensation, leave, federal withholding status, and deductions. All employees can access their pay information, which includes itemized statements of wages, using the Employee Access Center. Paychecks or direct deposit vouchers will not be released to any person other than the District employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization.

Employees who leave CISD will be paid their final check in accordance with the District pay schedule, unless doing so will result in overpayment. The final pay statement will be mailed to the address listed on the employment separation form, which should be completed in advance to allow time for processing.

## **Address/Name Change**

It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Human Resources Department of address or name changes. Address changes can be made by the employee by accessing the Employee Access Center on the District's website. Forms for name changes can be obtained on the District's website.

## **Automatic Payroll Deposit**

The District established a direct deposit pay system to improve its payroll delivery service and increase efficiency. All District employees are required to authorize the District to initiate credit entries directly to their financial institution account(s) for making payroll deposit. This structure helps the District pay its employees faster and more accurately. Direct deposit forms may be found online, or you may contact the Payroll Department for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

Employee pay information is available online by logging on to the Employee Access Center on the CISD website. A printed voucher will not be provided.

Employees are responsible for notifying the Payroll Department, in writing, at least 10 business days before a scheduled pay day of any changes in the employee's banking status. If the change constitutes the closing of a currently designated account, an alternate account must be specified. If funds cannot be deposited in an account and are returned by the bank for any reason, a replacement check will not be issued until the funds are credited back to the District's bank account. Additionally, a \$20.00 replacement fee may be applied. The replacement check will be issued after the funds have been returned. The employee will need to pick up the replacement check from the Finance Office and should bring a new, valid direct deposit form.

## **Payroll Deductions**

*Policy CFEA*

The district is required to make the following automatic payroll deductions:

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS);
- Federal income tax required for all full-time employees;
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986);
- Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable;
- Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable.

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for medical, dental, life, vision, and other supplemental insurance, as well as

retirement savings plan contributions. Employees may also request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations, United Way contributions, CISD Education Foundation, and payments to the Smart Financial Credit Union. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

## **Overtime Compensation**

### *Policy DEAB*

The District compensates overtime for non-exempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only non-exempt employees (paraprofessional and auxiliary employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Non-exempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor. A non-exempt employee who works overtime without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Non-exempt employees do not earn overtime pay unless they work more than 40 hours.

For the purpose of calculating overtime, a work week begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday and ends at midnight Saturday.

Employees may be compensated for overtime (i.e., hours beyond 40 in a workweek) at time-and-a-half rate, with compensatory time off (comp time), or direct pay. The following applies to all non-exempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of comp time, with supervisory approval obtained in advance.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned.
- Use of comp time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval, as workload permits, or at the supervisor's direction.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all non-exempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

### *Policy DEE*

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the District. Employees must submit receipts, to the extent possible, to be reimbursed for allowable expenses other than mileage.

## Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

### *Policy CRD*

Group health insurance coverage is available to all employees. The District's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the Board of Trustees. Descriptions of insurance coverage, prices, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate *Employee Benefits* booklet and online at <http://www.conroeisd.net/departments/hr/benefits/>.

The health insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. New employees must complete online enrollment within the first 31 calendar days of employment. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage only during the annual enrollment period, or as a result of a qualifying event, as described in the following section entitled *Guidelines for Change of Election*. Employees should contact the Benefits Office in the Human Resources Department for more information.

### **Guidelines for Change of Election**

Any premiums deducted on a pre-tax basis from the employee's paycheck will be "locked in" for the duration of the plan year, which begins September 1 and ends August 31. New enrollments and changes may only be requested during the annual enrollment period in July unless a family status change or other qualified event, as identified by Internal Revenue Code Section 125, occurs such as\*:

- Change in employee's legal marital status (i.e., marriage, divorce, death);
- Change in the number of employee's dependents (i.e., birth, adoption, death,);
- Change in employment status of employee, spouse, or dependent affecting eligibility;
- Dependent satisfies or ceases to satisfy eligibility requirements;
- HIPAA special enrollment rights;
- Judgments, decrees, or orders;
- Medicare or Medicaid entitlement;
- Family Medical Leave Act;
- COBRA qualifying events;
- Cancellation due to reduction in hours of service;
- Cancellation due to enrollment in a Qualified Health Plan;
- Change in coverage under another employer's plan (e.g., open enrollment of spouse's employer); or
- Loss of group health coverage sponsored by a governmental or educational institution.

*\*Please note this is an outline only and does not indicate special facts and circumstances for various events and benefits.*

A change of election must be related to the reason for the change. The employee must request a change of election no later than 30 calendar days after the date of the qualifying event. For

changes related to Medicaid and CHIP eligibility, the notification period is 60 days. Changes requested after this time frame will not be permitted until the next annual enrollment period.

Verifiable documentation of the qualifying event must be provided by the employee to the CISD Benefits Office in order for a request to be processed. For the loss or gain of employment by a spouse or dependent, verification from the other employer must include the following information:

- The effective date of employment or the date employment terminated; and
- The effective date of insurance coverage or the date coverage terminated/will terminate. The type of coverage must be specified (e.g., medical, dental, and vision).

If verification is provided in the form of a letter, it must contain a signature from an official of the company or the benefits counselor. If verification is provided in an email message, the other employer must send it directly to [benefitsoffice@conroeisd.net](mailto:benefitsoffice@conroeisd.net).

Premiums deducted on a post-tax basis may be canceled at any time.

Approved change of election requests for enrollment are effective the first day of the month on or following the date all required documents are submitted to the CISD Benefits Office (exceptions may apply based on the qualifying event).

Approved change of election requests for cancelation of coverage are effective the last day of the month in which all required documents are submitted to the CISD Benefits Office.

Employees must contact the CISD Benefits Office for a change of election.

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

### *Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, vision, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer, critical illness, disability, legal, hospital indemnity, long term care, and life. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Benefits Office in the Human Resources Department for more information.

## **Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)**

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis (i.e., medical, dental, vision, cancer, and hospital indemnity). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

New employees must accept or reject this benefit during their first month of employment. All employees must accept or reject this benefit on an annual basis during the specified time period.

## **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

### *Policy CRDE*

The District, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The District has workers' compensation coverage from the Political Subdivision Workers' Compensation Alliance (the Alliance), which includes a list of health care providers who are trained in treating work related injuries and getting people back to work safely. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. *See Workers' Compensation Benefits for information on use of paid leave for such absences.*

If you are injured at work, tell your supervisor immediately. For emergencies, you may go to the nearest emergency room. Otherwise, you must choose a treating doctor from the provider directory available online at [www.pswca.org](http://www.pswca.org). You may contact the Human Resources Department with any questions about how to obtain treatment for a work-related injury. You may also contact your claim adjuster at the TASB Risk Management Fund (the Fund), the District's workers' compensation coverage provider, at 800-482-7276.

## **Unemployment Compensation Insurance**

### *Policy CRF*

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year, or the summer months, if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the Texas Workforce Commission.

## **Teacher Retirement**

### *Policy DEG*

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are eligible to purchase a year of creditable service in

TRS. To earn a year of TRS membership credit, an employee must work in a TRS-eligible position or receive paid leave from a TRS-eligible position for at least 90 days during the school year. If an employee will not meet the 90-day requirement and has worked in excess of five days in a work week, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure the additional day(s) have been reported. Members should carefully review years of service reported when TRS provides them with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

## **Other Benefit Programs**

### *Deferred Compensation and Annuities Policy CRG*

The District makes available to all employees, including full-time, part-time, and substitutes, voluntary 403(b) and 457 plans. These plans allow employees to save a portion of their income for retirement without paying tax on the contributions until they are withdrawn from the plan. Maximum deferral amounts are set by the IRS for each calendar year, and deferrals may not exceed 100 percent of an employee's wages. Establishment of these accounts and changes in contribution amounts may be made at any time.

Additional information about the provisions and options for these plans is available in a separate *Employee Benefits* booklet, online, and also by contacting First Financial Administrators, Inc. at 800-523-8423 or visiting their website, [www.ffga.com](http://www.ffga.com).

Note: Conroe ISD does not hire or contract with any financial agent other than First Financial Administrators, Inc. No financial agent "representing" Conroe ISD will ever call you at home or send you an email. Further, agents are prohibited from soliciting or conducting business on District property. Because investment strategies are a personal decision that each employee should investigate on his/her own, Conroe ISD makes no recommendation or approval of individual 403(b) plans, their sales representatives, agents, or financial advisors.

## **Leaves and Absences**

### *Policies DEC, DECA, DECB*

The District offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence.

Employees who expect to be absent for an extended period of more than five (5) consecutive workdays for a personal or family illness should call the Human Resources Department for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the District.

Paid leave must be used in half-day increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

- Leave entered as local personal;
- If no local personal available, rolls to off-duty or vacation leave;
- If no off-duty or vacation leave available, rolls to state personal leave;
- If no state personal leave available, rolls to local sick leave;
- If no local sick leave available, rolls to state sick leave;
- If no state sick leave available, rolls to extended leave;
- If no extended leave available, rolls to dock.

Employees are required to report all absences through the automated substitute system in the Human Resources Department **prior to their absence**. Employees should enter their own absences and select the type of leave day that should be used. In the event that an employee is unable to report an absence through the automated substitute system as required, the employee must make arrangements with campus/department administrators to have the absence entered into the automated substitute system immediately. Leave is posted based on information provided through this system. Leave will not be changed at a later date if incorrect information was submitted, except under special circumstances. Therefore, it is imperative that the absence is carefully selected and employees review the order of usage as outlined above. The initial submission of the leave type determines how leave is applied based on the balance in leave banks. If an employee takes leave in excess of the amount earned, the employee's pay will be deducted for the time missed based on their pay rate. **An employee who has available state and/or local leave may not elect to be docked in lieu of using paid leave.** Employees should use the Employee Access Center to review leave balances.

Employees must follow District and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate form or certification. Forms for leaves of absence may be downloaded and printed from the CISD website under the Human Resources Department section. Once completed, applications for leaves of absence should be submitted to the Human Resources Department. When the leave of absence is foreseeable, the application should be submitted prior to the employee's absence; otherwise, the application should be submitted as soon as possible once the need for leave is determined. The local extended sick leave paid benefit cannot be applied retroactively.



**Immediate Family.** For purposes of leave other than family and medical leave, immediate family is defined as the following:

- Spouse;
- Son or daughter, including biological, adopted, or foster child, a son- or daughter-in-law, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis;
- Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, or other individual who stands in loco parentis to the employee;

For purposes of family and medical leave, the definition of family is limited to spouse, parent, son or daughter, and next of kin. The definition of these are found in Policy DECA (LEGAL).

**Medical Certification.** Any employee who is absent more than five (5) consecutive workdays because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and in the case of personal illness – the employee’s fitness to return to work.

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits covered employers from requesting or requiring genetic information of an individual or family member of the individual, except as specifically allowed by this law. To comply with this law, we ask that employees and health care providers do not provide any genetic information in any medical certification. ‘Genetic information,’ as defined by GINA, includes an individual’s family medical history, the results of an individual’s or family member’s genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual’s family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.

**Continuation of Health Insurance.** Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the District as they were prior to the leave. Otherwise, the District does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave.

## Personal Leave

Employees may earn up to five (5) days of paid personal leave per year, depending on start date and percentage worked. Employees hired to work less than 100 percent of the day but at least 50 percent shall be granted state personal leave in proportion to the percentage of time they are employed.

Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally

transfers to education service centers. Personal leave may be used for two general purposes: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

**Nondiscretionary.** Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave allow very little, if any, advance planning. Nondiscretionary leave may be used in the same manner as state sick leave (see below).

**Discretionary.** Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave in increments greater than two (2) days must submit a written request to his or her principal or supervisor five (5) days in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

Discretionary leave may not be taken on the following key days:

- The day before a school holiday;
- The day after a school holiday;
- Days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams;
- Days scheduled for state assessments;
- Professional or staff development days; or
- Times determined by the principal or supervisor.

## **State Sick Leave**

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in half-day increments, except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

State sick leave may be used for the following reasons only:

- Employee illness;
- Illness in the employee's immediate family;
- Family emergency (i.e., natural disasters or life-threatening situations);
- Death in the immediate family; or
- Active military service.

## **Local Leave**

Full-time employees (100 percent) receive two local personal leave days annually. Employees hired to work less than 100 percent of the day but at least 50 percent shall be granted local personal leave in proportion to the percentage of time they are employed. Local personal leave days do not carry over from one school year to the next. Employees are paid on the August 15

paycheck for any unused local personal leave days at the substitute pay rate. Local leave may also be used by employees who are called to active military service.

## **Sick Leave Pool**

### *Policy DEC (LOCAL)*

An employee who has exhausted all paid leave and who suffers from a catastrophic illness or injury or is absent due to the catastrophic illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family may request the establishment of a sick leave pool, not to exceed 30 donated days, to which District employees may donate local leave or state personal leave for use by the eligible employee. A catastrophic illness or injury is defined as a severe medical condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family, from which recovery and/or return to work is not likely. The following procedures apply to the creation and administration of campus and District based sick leave pools:

- Requests for the establishment of a campus sick leave pool are available only to employees who are currently on an approved medical leave. Requests must be electronically submitted through the Employee Access Center (EAC). The request must include the catastrophic condition for which the leave is being requested, and required documents must be submitted.
- The Human Resources Department will provide notice for the approval/denial of the sick leave pool.
- Campus and department employees may use the Donated Day Program to donate state personal or local personal days.
- A District pool will be created only after the campus/department leave pool has been exhausted, an electronic request from the administrator has been submitted to the District's Human Resources Department, the catastrophic condition still exists, and the employee is unable to return to work.
- Only current employees may make donations to a sick leave pool. Days must be donated prior to a donor's final check. An unused day will not be returned to the donor after the donor's last day of employment.

## **Local Extended Sick Leave**

The District provides an extended sick leave benefit program through local funds for full-time employees who have exhausted all available state, local, vacation, and off-duty days. To qualify for this program, employees must have worked for the District at least 12 consecutive months prior to the need for leave, and the absence must be for at least five (5) consecutive workdays.

Extended sick leave days may be used for the employee's personal illness or injury, including pregnancy-related illness or injury; for the illness, injury, or disability of a member of the

employee's immediate family; or for the birth or adoption of a child. The employee must provide verification of the illness, injury, birth, or adoption from the treating physician or adoption agency.

Extended sick leave days are paid at one-half of the employee's daily rate, up to a maximum of 30 workdays per school year, defined as July 1 through June 30. If an employee does not return from local extended sick leave for at least five (5) days during the school year in which the leave began, the employee must return to work for at least 30 consecutive workdays in the next school year to be eligible for additional days of extended sick leave in the new school year. Employees will be docked at their full daily rate for each day of absence after extended sick leave benefits have been exhausted.

Once the employee has met the minimum absence requirement, extended sick leave days may be taken intermittently for the same condition so long as the employee provides supporting documentation from the treating physician. Employees hired to work less than 100 percent of the day but at least 50 percent shall be granted extended sick leave in proportion to the percentage of time they are employed.

Applications for leaves of absence should be submitted to the Human Resources Department prior to the employee's absence or as soon as possible once the need for leave is determined. Extended sick leave benefits may begin the first day after all other paid leave has been exhausted; however, they cannot be applied retroactively.

## **Unpaid Medical Leave**

A full-time employee who has worked for the District for less than 12 consecutive months preceding the need for leave, in a full-time capacity, shall be granted in a school year a maximum of 30 workdays of unpaid leave to be used for the employee's personal illness or injury, including pregnancy-related illness or injury, for absences related to the illness, injury, or disability of a member of the employee's immediate family, or for the birth or adoption of a child.

To be eligible for unpaid leave, the employee shall have been absent for at least five consecutive workdays. Once the employee has met this minimum absence requirement, unpaid leave days can be taken intermittently for the same condition, so long as the employee provides the District with supporting documentation from the treating physician.

Employees on an approved leave of absence other than family and medical leave may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health insurance benefits for employees on paid leave and leave designated under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the District as they were prior to the leave.

Otherwise, the District does not pay any portion of insurance premiums for employees who are on unpaid leave.

## Family and Medical Leave (FML)—General Provisions

The following text is from the federal notice, *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Under the Family and Medical Leave Act*. Specific information that the District has adopted to implement the FMLA follows this general notice.

**Leave Entitlement.** Eligible employees who work for a covered employer can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for the following reasons:

- The birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- To bond with a child (leave must be taken within 1 year of the child’s birth or placement);
- To care for the employee’s spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a qualifying serious health condition;
- For the employee’s own qualifying serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee’s job; and
- For qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military member who is the employee’s spouse, child, or parent.

An eligible employee who is a covered service member’s spouse, child, parent, or next of kin may also take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member with a serious injury or illness.

**Benefits and Protections.** While employees are on FMLA leave, employers must continue health insurance coverage as if the employees were not on leave. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to the same job or one nearly identical to it with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

An employer may not interfere with an individual’s FMLA rights or retaliate against someone for using or trying to use FMLA leave, opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA, or being involved in any proceeding under or related to the FMLA.

**Eligibility Requirements.** An employee who works for a covered employer must meet three criteria in order to be eligible for FMLA leave. The employee must:

- Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months;
- Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the last 12 months before taking leave;\* and
- Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee’s worksite.

\* **Special hours of service eligibility requirements apply to airline flight crew employees.**

**Requesting Leave.** Generally, employees must give 30-days’ advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days’ notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible and, generally, follow the employer’s usual procedures.

Employees do not have to share a medical diagnosis, but must provide enough information to the employer so it can determine if the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. Sufficient information could include informing the employer that the employee is or will be unable to perform his or her job functions, that a family member cannot perform daily activities, or that hospitalization or continuing medical treatment is necessary. Employees must inform the employer if the need for leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employers can require a certification or periodic recertification supporting the need for leave. If the employer determines that the certification is incomplete, it must provide a written notice indicating what additional information is required.

**Use of Leave.** An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, employees may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

**Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave.** Employees may choose, or employers may require, use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA Leave. If an employee substitutes accrued paid leave for FMLA leave, the employee must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

**Employer Responsibilities.** Once an employer becomes aware that an employee's need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, the employer must notify the employee if he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and, if eligible, must also provide a notice of rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. If the employee is not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for ineligibility.

Employers must notify its employees if leave will be designated as FMLA leave, and if so, how much leave will be designated as FMLA leave.

**Enforcement.** Employees may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

For additional information:

1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627

<https://www.wagehour.dol.gov>

## Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period from July 1 through June 30. Employees may be required to provide the following:

- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member;
- Second or third medical opinions and periodic recertification of the need for leave;
- Periodic reports during the leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work;
- Medical certification from a qualified health care provider at the conclusion of leave of an employee's ability to return to work; or
- Certification of the need for family military leave.

**Use of Paid Leave.** FML runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leave, compensatory time, assault leave, and absences due to a work-related illness or injury. The District will designate the leave as FML, if applicable, and notify the employee that accumulated leave will run concurrently.

**Combined Leave for Spouses.** Spouses who are employed by the District are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of FML to care for a parent with a serious health condition; or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. Military caregiver leave for spouses is limited to a combined total of 26 weeks.

**Intermittent Leave.** When medically necessary, or in the case of a qualifying exigency, an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule. The District does not permit the use of intermittent or reduced-schedule leave for the care of a newborn child or for adoption or placement of a child with the employee.

**Fitness for Duty.** An employee that takes FML due to the employee's own serious health condition shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification from the health care provider. If certification of the employee's ability to perform essential job functions is required, the District shall provide a list of essential job functions (e.g., job description) to the employee with the FML designation notice to share with the health care provider.

**Reinstatement.** An employee returning to work at the end of FML will be returned to the same position held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

In certain cases, instructional employees desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue on family and medical leave until the end of the semester. The additional time off is not counted against the employee's FML entitlement, and the District will maintain the employee's group health insurance and reinstate the employee at the end of the leave according to the procedures outlined in policy (see DECA [LEGAL]).

**Failure to Return.** If, at the expiration of FML, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the District may require the employee to reimburse the District's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FML when the employee was on unpaid leave. If the employee fails to return to work for a reason beyond the employee's control, such as a continuing personal or family serious health condition or a spouse being unexpectedly transferred more than 75 miles from the District, the District may not require the employee to reimburse the District's share of premiums paid.

**District Contact.** Employees that require FML or have questions should contact the Human Resources Department for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Temporary Disability Leave**

**Certified Employees.** Any full-time employee whose position requires certification from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) is eligible for temporary disability leave. The purpose of temporary disability leave is to provide job protection to full-time educators who cannot work for an extended period of time because of a mental or physical disability of a temporary nature. Temporary disability leave must be taken as a continuous block of time. It may not be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule. Pregnancy and conditions related to pregnancy are treated the same as any other temporary disability.

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. An employee's notification of need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, it is unpaid and the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days. Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence may continue their insurance at their own expense.

If an employee is placed on temporary disability leave involuntarily, he or she has the right to request a hearing before the Board of Trustees. The employee may protest the action and present additional evidence of fitness to work.

When an employee is ready to return to work, the Superintendent or designee should be notified at least 30 days in advance. The return-to-work notice must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming that the employee is able to resume regular duties. Certified employees returning from leave will be reinstated to the school to which they were previously assigned if an appropriate position is available. If an appropriate position is not available, the employee may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the campus principal. If a position is not available before the end of the school year, the employee will be reinstated to a position at the original campus at the beginning of the following school year.



## **Expiration of Leave**

After an employee has exhausted all available paid and unpaid leave, the District will provide the employee, at the last known home address, written notice that his or her leave has expired. The employee has five (5) workdays from the date on the written notice to inform the District in writing that he or she is ready, willing, and able to return to work.

The employee must provide medical clearance that he or she is physically able to perform the essential functions of his or her position, with reasonable accommodations if necessary.

A contract employee who does not report and document his or her availability and fitness to return to work within the time specified in this policy shall resign or shall be subject to termination of employment by the District. All other employees who do not report and document their availability and fitness to return to work within the time specified in this policy shall be subject to termination of his or her position with the District effective with the expiration of the five-workday period.

An employee must return to work for at least 30 consecutive workdays in order to be considered as having returned to work.

## **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly income benefits if the absence exceeds seven (7) calendar days. Weekly income benefits are paid at 70 percent of the employee's average weekly wage or up to the maximum state average weekly wage.

An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury may choose to use accumulated sick leave or any other paid leave benefits. An employee choosing to use paid leave will not receive workers' compensation weekly income benefits until all paid leave is exhausted or to the extent that paid leave does not equal the pre-illness or pre-injury wage. If the use of paid leave is not elected, then the employee will only receive workers' compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury, which may not equal his or her pre-illness or pre-injury wage.

## **Assault Leave**

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An incident involving an assault is a work-related injury and should be immediately reported to a supervisor. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person not responsible for purposes of criminal liability.

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At the request of an

employee, the District will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

Upon investigation the District may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

## **Bereavement Leave**

An employee may use accrued state and local personal leave benefits for death in the immediate family. Leave in excess of five (5) days for each occurrence must be approved by the campus principal or supervisor as necessary.

## **Jury Duty**

The District provides paid leave to employees who are summoned to jury duty. Employees who report to the court for jury duty may keep any compensation the court provides. An employee should report a summons for jury duty to his or her supervisor as soon as it is received and may be required to provide the District a copy of the summon to document the need for leave.

An employee may be required to report back to work as soon as they are released from jury duty. The supervisor may consider the travel time required and the nature of the individual's position when determining the need to report to work. A copy of the release from jury duty or of documentation of time spent at the court may be required.

## **Compliance with a Subpoena**

Employees will be paid while on leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding, regardless of whether or not the matter is related to school business, and will not be required to use paid leave. Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

## **Truancy Court Appearances**

An employee who is a parent, guardian of a child, or a court-appointed guardian ad litem of a child who is required to miss work to attend a truancy court hearing may use personal leave or compensatory time for the absence. Employees who do not have paid leave available will be docked for any absence required because of the court appearance.

## **Religious Observance**

The District will reasonably accommodate an employee's request for absence for a religious holiday or observance. Accommodations such as changes to work schedules or approving a day of absence will be made unless they pose an undue hardship to the District. The employee may

use any accumulated personal leave for this purpose. Employees who have exhausted applicable paid leave may be granted an unpaid day of absence.

## **Military Leave**

**Paid Leave for Military Service.** Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized Urban Search and Rescue Team is entitled to paid leave when engaged in authorized training or duty ordered by proper authority. Paid military leave is limited to 15 days each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

**Reemployment after Military Leave.** Employees who leave the District to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the District will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact the Human Resources Department. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five (5) years.

**Continuation of Health Insurance.** Employees who perform service in the uniformed services may elect to continue their health plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months. Employees should contact the Human Resources Department for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **School Business Leave**

*Policy DEC*

School business leave with full pay may be granted to employees by the Superintendent or designee for short periods of time for the purpose of attending professional meetings or other school-related responsibilities. School business leave shall be granted only for school-related purposes. Such leaves are limited by the budgetary allotment and in most cases must be planned during the spring prior to budget preparation. There are two categories of school leave:

- Leave where individuals pay all or part of their own expenses;
- Leave where individuals attend meetings at District expense as an official representative of the school system.

## **Off-duty/Vacation Days**

Employees who work a 217- or 226-day work schedule are entitled to off-duty days each year. Off-duty days are not paid leave; they are non-work days. The total number of off-duty days may vary from year to year depending on the school calendar. Off-duty days may be taken at any time during the calendar year, but prior approval is required by the employee's supervisor. Non-

exempt employees must use off-duty days by June 30th each year. Exempt employees must use off-duty days by August 31st each year.

Employees who start work after the work schedule has begun for the school year may or may not be eligible for off-duty days. For example, if a 226-day employee were to be hired after the start of the work schedule, and only 192 possible work days remained in the current year's work schedule, no off-duty days would be available to the employee for the remainder of the year's work schedule.

Auxiliary employees who work a 261-day work schedule are entitled to up to 10 paid vacation days each year. Vacation days must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor, and the days must be taken by the end of the employee's annual work schedule. Refer to the CISD work schedule for start and end dates for employee groups.

## **Employee Relations and Communications**

### **Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the District. Employees are recognized at Board meetings, in newsletters, and through special events and activities. Service pins are given to employees in five-year increments after five years of employment with the District.

### **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, the Communications Department publishes newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

## **Complaints and Grievances**

### *Policy DGBA*

In an effort to hear and resolve employee concerns or complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the Board has adopted an orderly grievance process. Employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

The formal process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, employees can bring concerns or complaints to the Board of Trustees. For ease of reference, the District's policy concerning the process of bringing concerns and complaints is reprinted as follows:

**Informal Process.** The Board encourages employees to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with their supervisor, principal, or other appropriate administrator. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

**Direct Communication with Board Members.** Employees shall not be prohibited from communicating with a member of the Board regarding District operations except when communication between an employee and a Board member would be inappropriate because of a pending hearing or appeal related to the employee.

**Formal Process.** If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the employee, he or she may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint form. Even after initiating the formal complaint process, employees are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. An employee whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time. The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or “mini-trial” at any level.

**Notice to Employees.** The District shall inform employees of this policy.

**Freedom from Retaliation.** Neither the Board nor any District employee shall unlawfully retaliate against an employee for bringing a concern or complaint.

**Whistleblower Complaints.** Whistleblower complaints shall be filed within the time specified by law and may be made to the Superintendent or designee beginning at Level Two. Time lines for the employee and the District set out in this policy may be shortened to allow the Board to make a final decision within 60 calendar days of the initiation of the complaint. [See DG]

**Complaints Against Supervisors.** Complaints alleging a violation of law by a supervisor may be made to the Superintendent or designee. Complaints alleging a violation of law by the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board or designee.

**Complaints.** In this policy, the terms “complaint” and “grievance” shall have the same meaning. This policy shall apply to all employee complaints, except as provided below. This policy shall not apply to:

- Complaints alleging discrimination, including violations of Title IX (gender), Title VII (sex, race, color, religion, national origin), ADEA (age), or Section 504 (disability); [See DIA]
- Complaints alleging certain forms of harassment, including harassment by a supervisor and violations of Title VII; [See DIA]
- Complaints concerning retaliation relating to discrimination and harassment; [See DIA]
- Complaints concerning instructional materials; [See EFA]
- Complaints concerning a commissioned peace officer who is an employee of the District; [SeeCKE]

- Complaints arising from the proposed nonrenewal of a term contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code; [See DFBB]
- Complaints arising from the proposed termination or suspension without pay of an employee on a probationary, term, or continuing contract issued under Chapter 21 of the Education Code during the contract term; [See DFAA, DFBA, or DFCA, respectively]
- Complaints regarding the use or disclosure of protected health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, in accordance with CRD (LOCAL).

**Filing.** Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, fax, or U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate administrator or designee by the close of business on the deadline. Fax filings shall be timely filed if they are received on or before the deadline, as indicated by the date/time shown on the fax copy. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate administrator or designated representative no more than three days after the deadline.

**Response.** At Levels One and Two, “response” shall mean a written communication to the employee from the appropriate administrator. Responses may be hand-delivered or sent by U.S. Mail to the employee’s mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

**Days.** “Days” shall mean District business days, unless otherwise noted. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day a document is filed is “day zero.” The following business day is “day one.”

**Representative.** “Representative” shall mean any person who, or an organization that does not claim the right to strike and is designated by the employee to represent him or her in the complaint process. The employee may designate a representative through written notice to the District at any level of this process. If the employee designates a representative with fewer than three days’ notice to the District before a scheduled conference or hearing, the District may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the District’s counsel. The District may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

**Consolidating Complaints.** Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. Employees shall not bring separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint. When two or more complaints are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy sought to permit their resolution through one proceeding, the District may consolidate the complaints.

**Untimely Filings.** All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent. If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the employee, at any point during the complaint process. The employee may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within 10 days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

**Costs Incurred.** Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

**Complaint Form.** Complaints under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District. Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the employee does not have copies of these documents, they may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the employee unless the employee did not know documents existed before the Level One conference. A complaint form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be re-filed with all the required information if the re-filing is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

## Level One

Complaint forms must be filed:

- Within 15 days of the date the employee first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and
- With the District Legal Department.

If the complaint is not filed with the District's Legal Department, the receiving administrator must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the Legal Department.

The appropriate administrator shall be appointed to serve as the Level One hearing officer. The hearing officer shall investigate as necessary and hold a conference with the employee within 10 days after receipt of the written complaint. The hearing officer may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The hearing officer shall provide the employee a written response within 10 days following the conference. In reaching a decision, the hearing officer may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the hearing officer believes will help resolve the complaint.

## Level Two

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may request to appeal the Level One decision. Requests to appeal under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the District. The appeal form must be filed with the District's Legal Department within 10 days of the date of written Level One response or, if no response was received, within 10 days of the Level One response deadline. After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One hearing officer shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One complaint to the Legal Department. The employee may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

- The original complaint form and any attachments;
- All other documents submitted by the employee at Level One;
- The written response issued at Level One and any attachments; and
- All other documents relied upon by the Level One hearing officer in reaching the Level One decision.

The Level Two hearing officer shall hold a conference within 10 days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues presented by the employee at Level One and identified in the Level Two appeal notice. At the conference, the employee may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the administration for the Level One decision. The Level Two hearing officer may set reasonable time limits for the conference.

The Level Two hearing officer shall provide the employee a written response within 10 days following the conference. In reaching a decision, the hearing officer may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the hearing officer believes will help resolve the complaint. Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

### **Level Three**

If the employee did not receive the relief requested at Level Two or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may appeal the decision to the Board. The appeal notice must be filed with the District's Legal Department, in writing, on the District's appeal notice form, within 10 days of the date of the written Level Two response or, if no response was received, within 10 days of the Level Two response deadline.

The Legal Department shall inform the employee of the date, time, and place of the Board meeting at which the complaint will be on the agenda for presentation to the Board. The Legal Department shall provide the Board the record of the Level Two complaint. The employee may request a copy of the Level Two record.

The Level Two record shall include:

- The Level One record;
- The written response issued at Level Two and any attachments; and
- All other documents relied upon by the hearing officer in reaching the Level Two decision.

If at the Level Three hearing the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the Level Two record, the administration shall provide the employee notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the hearing.



The District shall determine whether the complaint will be presented in open or closed meeting in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law. [See BE]

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for the presentation, including an opportunity for the employee and administration to make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board. The Board shall hear the complaint and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

In addition to any other record of the Board meeting required by law, the Board shall prepare a separate record of the Level Three presentation. The Level Three presentation, including the presentation by the employee or the employee's representative, any presentation from the administration, and questions from the Board with responses, shall be recorded by audio recording, video/audio recording, or court reporter.

The Board shall then consider the complaint. It may give notice of its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the Board does not make a decision regarding the complaint by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting, the lack of a response by the Board upholds the administrative decision at Level Two.

## **Employee Conduct and Welfare**

### **Standards of Conduct**

#### *Policy DH*

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the District and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct:

- Recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community;
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers;
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule;
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action;
- Know and comply with department and District policies and procedures;
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels;
- Observe all safety rules and regulations, and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately; and
- Use District time, funds, and property for authorized District business and activities only.

All District employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the Superintendent knew of the incident. The *Educators' Code of Ethics*, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, to which all District employees must adhere, is reprinted below:

## Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

### Purpose and Scope

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. (19 TAC 247.1(b))

### Enforceable Standards

#### 1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

**Standard 1.1** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district, educational institution, educator preparation program, the Texas Education Agency, or the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and its certification process.

**Standard 1.2** The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

**Standard 1.3** The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses, or pay.

**Standard 1.4** The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

**Standard 1.5** The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents of students, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

**Standard 1.6** The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

**Standard 1.7** The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other state and federal laws.

**Standard 1.8** The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

**Standard 1.9** The educator shall not make threats of violence against school district employees, school board members, students, or parents of students.

**Standard 1.10** The educator shall be of good moral character and be worthy to instruct or supervise the youth of this state.

**Standard 1.11** The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly misrepresent his or her employment history, criminal history, and/or disciplinary record when applying for subsequent employment.

**Standard 1.12** The educator shall refrain from the illegal use or distribution of controlled substances and/or abuse of prescription drugs and toxic inhalants.

**Standard 1.13** The educator shall not be under the influence of alcohol or consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

**Standard 1.14** The educator shall not assist another educator, school employee, contractor, or agent in obtaining a new job as an educator or in a school, apart from the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files, if the educator knows or has probable cause to believe that such person engaged in sexual misconduct regarding a minor or student in violation of the law.

## *2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues*

**Standard 2.1** The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

**Standard 2.2** The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

**Standard 2.3** The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

**Standard 2.4** The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

**Standard 2.5** The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, disability, family status, or sexual orientation.

**Standard 2.6** The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

**Standard 2.7** The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC or provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

*3. Ethical Conduct toward Students*

**Standard 3.1** The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

**Standard 3.2** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly treat a student or minor in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning, physical health, mental health, or safety of the student or minor.

**Standard 3.3** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

**Standard 3.4** The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in a program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, family status, or sexual orientation.

**Standard 3.5** The educator shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in physical mistreatment, neglect, or abuse of a student or minor.

**Standard 3.6** The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.

**Standard 3.7** The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child or knowingly allow any person under 21 years of age unless the educator is a parent or guardian of that child to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

**Standard 3.8** The educator shall maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standard.

**Standard 3.9** The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
- (iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;

- (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

## **District Investigations**

### *Policy DH*

When the District investigates a complaint of misconduct, including but not limited to complaints of student abuse or any type of sexual harassment, it expects and requires the cooperation of all employees including the complainant, witnesses, and the accused. During an investigation, the District may interview employees privately and take oral and/or written statements from them. Any employee who fails to cooperate with such an investigation or to provide complete and truthful information may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

## **Fraud and Ethics Violations**

In order to improve CISD and to demonstrate a commitment to high ethical standards, the District has selected EthicsPoint, a third-party confidential hotline provider, to provide employees with a simple, risk-free way to anonymously and confidentially report activities that may involve criminal, unethical, or otherwise inappropriate behavior in violation of public law and/or Conroe ISD policies. Employees can file a report on-line at [www.ethicspoint.com](http://www.ethicspoint.com), through a link under “Employees” on the CISD website, or by dialing toll-free 1-866-294-9305. If you choose to remain anonymous, the hotline provider will not request identifying information, and their phone and computer systems do not collect that type of information. The District guarantees that reports submitted via the hotline will be handled promptly and discreetly. No *retaliatory* action will be taken against anyone for reporting or inquiring in good faith, or for seeking guidance on how to deal with potential or suspected wrongdoing.

## **Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

### *Policies DH, DIA*

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees, unpaid interns, student teachers, or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons including Board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action.

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to report promptly such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, or appropriate

District official. If the campus principal, supervisor, or District official is the subject of a complaint, the complaint should be made directly to the Superintendent. A complaint against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board.

The District's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation is reprinted below:

**Statement of Nondiscrimination.** The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy.

**Discrimination.** Discrimination against an employee is defined as conduct directed at an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the employee's employment.

**Harassment.** Prohibited harassment of an employee is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on an employee's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee's work performance;
- Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive work environment; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the employee's performance, environment, or employment opportunities.

**Examples:** *Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, gender identity, or need for workplace accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other stereotypes; or other types of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.*

**Sexual Harassment.** Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct, or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a condition of an employee's employment, or when submission to or rejection of the conduct is the basis for an employment action affecting the employee; or
- The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive work environment.

**Examples:** *Examples of sexual harassment may include sexual advances, touching intimate body parts, coercing or forcing a sexual act on another, jokes or conversations of a sexual nature, and other sexually motivated conduct, communication, or contact.*

**Retaliation.** The District prohibits retaliation against an employee who makes a claim alleging to have experienced discrimination or harassment, or another employee who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation.

An employee who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding harassment or discrimination is subject to appropriate discipline.

**Examples:** *Examples of retaliation may include termination, refusal to hire, demotion, and denial of promotion. Retaliation may also include threats, unjustified negative evaluations, unjustified negative references, or increased surveillance.*

**Prohibited Conduct.** In this policy, the term “prohibited conduct” includes discrimination, harassment, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

**Reporting Procedures.** An employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another employee has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts. The employee may report the alleged acts to his or her supervisor or campus principal.

Alternatively, the employee may report the alleged acts to one of the District officials below.

**Definition of District Officials.** For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX Coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, and the Superintendent.

**Title IX Coordinator.** Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name:	Carrie Galatas
Position:	General Counsel
Address:	3205 W Davis, Conroe, TX 77304
Telephone:	(936) 709-7700

**ADA/ Section 504 Coordinator.** Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the ADA/ Section 504 Coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Name: Teresa Canon  
Department: Special Education  
Address: 3205 W Davis, Conroe, TX 77304  
Telephone: (936) 709-7670

**Superintendent.** The Superintendent shall serve as coordinator for purposes of District compliance with all other antidiscrimination laws.

**Alternative Reporting Procedures.** An employee shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed it. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX coordinator or ADA/ Section 504 Coordinator, may be directed to the Superintendent. A report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

**Timely Reporting.** Reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to report promptly may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

**Notice of Report.** Any District supervisor who receives a report of prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed above and take any other steps required by this policy.

**Investigation of the Report.** The District may request, but shall not insist upon, a written report. If a report is made orally, the District official shall reduce the report to written form. Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District official shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation, regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending. If appropriate, the District shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent prohibited conduct during the course of an investigation.

The investigation may be conducted by the District official or a designee, such as the campus principal, or by a third party designated by the District, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the campus principal or supervisor shall be involved in or informed of the investigation. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.

**Concluding the Investigation.** Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within 10 District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the District official overseeing the investigation.



**District Action.** If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct. The District may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the conduct did not rise to the level of prohibited or unlawful conduct.

**Confidentiality.** To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

**Appeal.** A complainant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through DGBA (LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. The complainant may have a right to file a complaint with appropriate state or federal agencies.

**Records Retention.** Copies of reports alleging prohibited conduct, investigation reports, and related records shall be maintained by the District for a period of at least three years. [See CPC]

**Access to Policy.** This policy shall be distributed annually to District employees. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District administrative offices.

## Harassment of Students

*Policies DH, DHB, FFG, FFH, FFI*

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and District employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate District official. All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. The District's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is reprinted below:

**Statement of Nondiscrimination.** The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. The District prohibits dating violence, as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy.

**Discrimination.** Discrimination against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or on any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the student.

**Prohibited Harassment.** Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

Prohibited harassment includes dating violence as defined by this policy.

**Examples:** *Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person’s religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, need for accommodation, threatening or intimidating conduct, offensive jokes, name calling, slurs or rumors, physical aggression or assault, display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes, or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.*

**Sexual Harassment by an Employee.** Sexual harassment of a student by a District employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct, or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- A District employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
- The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
- Affects the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities; or
- Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and District employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

**Sexual Harassment by Others.** Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

- Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

**Examples:** *Examples of sexual harassment of a student may include sexual advances, touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature, jokes or conversations of a sexual nature, and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.*

Necessary or permissible physical contact such as assisting a child by taking the child's hand, comforting a child with a hug, or other physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature is not sexual harassment.

**Dating Violence.** Dating violence occurs when one partner in a dating relationship, either past or current, intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner. Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors. For purposes of this policy, dating violence is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

**Retaliation.** The District prohibits retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation. A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is subject to appropriate discipline.

**Examples:** *Examples of retaliation include threats, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances, such as negative comments that are justified by a student's performance in the classroom.*

**Prohibited Conduct.** In this policy, the term "prohibited conduct" includes discrimination, harassment, dating violence, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

**Reporting Procedures.** Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee. Alternatively, a student may report prohibited conduct directly to one of the District officials below:

**Definition of District Officials.** For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX Coordinator, the Section 504 Coordinator, and the Superintendent.

**Title IX Coordinator.** Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator. The District designates the following employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name: Carrie Galatas  
Position: General Counsel  
Address: 3205 W Davis, Conroe, TX 77304  
Telephone: (936) 709-7700

**Section 504 Coordinator.** Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the Section 504 Coordinator. The District designates the following employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended:

Name: Teresa Canon  
Department: Special Education  
Address: 3205 W Davis, Conroe, TX 77304  
Telephone: (936) 709-7670

**Superintendent.** The Superintendent shall serve as coordinator for purposes of District compliance with all other antidiscrimination laws.

**Alternative Reporting Procedures.** A student shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX coordinator or Section 504 coordinator, may be directed to the Superintendent. A report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

**Timely Reporting.** Reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to promptly report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

**Notice of Report.** Any District employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed above and take any other steps required by this policy.

**Notice to Parents.** The District official or designee shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by a District employee or another adult.

**Investigation of the Report.** The District may request, but shall not insist upon, a written report. If a report is made orally, the District official shall reduce the report to written form. Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would

constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District official shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation, regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending. If appropriate, the District shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent prohibited conduct during the course of an investigation.

The investigation may be conducted by the District official or a designee, such as the campus principal, or by a third party designated by the District, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the campus principal shall be involved in or informed of the investigation. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.

**Concluding the Investigation.** Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within 10 District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the District official overseeing the investigation.

**District Action.** If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct. The District may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the conduct did not rise to the level of prohibited or unlawful conduct.

**Confidentiality.** To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

**Appeal.** A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG (LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

**Records Retention.** Retention of records shall be in accordance with FB (LOCAL) and CPC (LOCAL).

**Access to Policy.** Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to District employees and included in the Student Handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

Policies DF, DH, FFG, FFH

## **Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children**

The District has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS). Employees are required to follow the procedures described below in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

*Policies DF, DG, DH, FFG, GRA*

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §26.001, to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering the facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion.

Employees are also required to make a report if they have cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child and they determine in good faith that the disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child or person with a disability.

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to local offices or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the District is prohibited from retaliating against an employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect.

Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report it to the appropriate state agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

## **Reporting Crime**

### *Policy DG*

The Texas Whistleblower Act protects District employees who make good faith reports of violations of law by the District to an appropriate law enforcement authority. The District is prohibited from suspending, terminating the employment of, or taking other adverse personnel action against an employee who makes a report under the Act. State law also provides employees with the right to report a crime witnessed at the school to any peace officer with authority to investigate the crime.

## **Alcohol- and Drug-Abuse Prevention**

### *Policy DH*

CISD is committed to maintaining an alcohol- and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The District's policy regarding employee drug use follows:

**Tobacco Use.** Employees shall not use tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, vapors, and smokeless tobacco on District premises, in District vehicles, nor in the presence of students at school or school-related activities. [See DH and GKA]

**Alcohol and Drugs.** Employees shall not unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours while at school or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours:

- Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate;
- Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage;
- Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation; or
- Any other intoxicant or mood-changing, mind altering, or behavior-altering drugs.

An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered "under the influence" of a controlled substance.

**Exception.** An employee who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for that employee's use shall not be considered to have violated this policy. **Notice** See DI (Exhibit) below.

## **Drug-Free Workplace Requirements**

The District prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances, illegal drugs, inhalants, and alcohol in the workplace. 41 U.S.C. 702(a)(1)(A); 28 TAC 169.2 The District shall establish a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the District's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace, any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance abuse programs, and the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations. 41 U.S.C. 702(a)(1)(B); 28 TAC 169.2 Employees who violate this prohibition shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Such sanctions may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs or employee assistance programs, termination from employment with the District, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution. [See policies DH and DHE] 41 U.S.C. 702(a)(1)(A); 28 TAC 169.2

Compliance with these requirements and prohibitions is mandatory and is a condition of employment. As a further condition of employment, an employee shall notify the Superintendent of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction. Within 10 days of receiving such notice from the employee or any other source—the District shall notify the granting agency of the conviction. 41 U.S.C. 702(a)(1)(D), (E) Within 30 calendar days of receiving notice from an employee of a conviction for any drug statute violation occurring in the workplace, the District shall either (1) take appropriate personnel action against the employee, up to and including termination of employment, or (2) require the employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state, or local health agency, law enforcement agency, or other appropriate agency. 41 U.S.C. 703

## **Mandatory Training**

A requirement of employment is to participate in computerized staff development training in Sexual Harassment and Bloodborne Pathogens. The training can be completed on a computer either at work or from home at the following website: <http://conroe.tx.safeschools.com>. Employees are required to complete Bloodborne Pathogens training and the Sexual Harassment training in alternate years.



## **Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

### *Policy CAA*

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the District's financial resources. The District prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below. Fraud and financial impropriety includes the following:

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the District;
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document;
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other District assets, including employee time;
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of District financial transactions;
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of District information or activities;
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties;
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the District, except as otherwise permitted by law or District policy;
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the District, except as otherwise permitted by law or District policies;
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment;
- Failing to provide financial records required by federal, state, or local entities;
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or District policy;
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the District; and
- Failure to comply with requirements imposed by law, the awarding agency, or a pass-through entity for state and federal awards.

## **Conflict of Interest**

### *Policy CB, DBD*

Employees are required to disclose in writing to the District any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the District. This includes the following:

- A personal financial interest;
- A business interest;
- Any other obligation or relationship; and
- Non-school employment.

An employee with a substantial interest in a business entity or interest in real property must disclose the interest to the District prior to the award of a contract or authorization of payment. This is done by filing an affidavit with the Superintendent, Board President, or designee.

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional clarification. For more information about conflicts of interest, please see Appendix A of this handbook.

## **Gifts and Favors**

### *Policy DBD*

Employees may not accept gifts or favors that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's discharge of assigned duties. Gifts with a value of \$50.00 or more per student are presumed to be inappropriate. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an administrator or teacher that might reasonably tend to influence the selection of textbooks, electronic textbooks, instructional materials, or technological equipment may result in prosecution of a Class B misdemeanor offense. This does not include staff development, teacher training, or instructional materials, such as maps or worksheets, that convey information to students or contribute to the learning process.

## **Associations and Political Activities**

### *Policy DGA*

The District does not directly or indirectly discourage employees from participating in political affairs or require any employee to join any group, club, committee, organization, or association. Employees may join or refuse to join any professional association or organization. An individual's employment will not be affected by membership or a decision not to be a member of any employee organization that exists for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work. Use of District resources, including work time, for political activities is prohibited.

## **Charitable Contributions**

### *Policy DG*

The Board or any employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce an employee to make a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fund raiser. Employees cannot be required to attend a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions. In addition, the Board or any employee may not directly or indirectly require or coerce an employee to refrain from making a contribution to a charitable organization or in response to a fundraiser or attending a meeting called for the purpose of soliciting charitable contributions.

## **Safety**

### *Policy CK series*

The District has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for

responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students, and to protect and conserve District equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

- Observe all safety rules;
- Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times;
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor; and
- Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization.

While driving on District business, employees are required to abide by all state and local traffic laws. Employees driving on District business are prohibited from texting and using other electronic devices that require both visual and manual attention while the vehicle is in motion. Employees will exercise care and sound judgement on whether to use hands-free technology while the vehicle is in motion.

This information can be found in the CISD Crisis Management Plan; a copy is located at each campus/department.

## **Conroe ISD Classroom Safety Rules**

1. No pesticides/air fresheners/essential oils are allowed.
2. No open flames at any time. (No candles) Fire code
3. All glass in doors must be free of any visual obstruction.
4. All exits from the room (including exit windows) must be kept clear for egress.
5. Hallways and classrooms must maintain an 80% paperfree environment to maintain the fire resistant integrity of the area.
6. Nothing will be within 24" of the ceiling if your area does not have a fire sprinkling system or 18" if you have a fire sprinkler system.
7. Quick flash fire hazards cannot be stored or maintained in the school; e.g., wood huts, live cut Christmas trees, hay bales.
8. All door exits from room must be free of combustible, non- fireproofed material.
9. No silencing of the fire alarm until the hazard has been identified. In the event of a fire, only a fire official is permitted to silence an alarm.
10. All aerosol cans must be under lock and key when not in use by teacher. Try to purchase non-aerosol and non-toxic products.
11. Learn the location of the nearest fire extinguisher and how to use the extinguisher. The local fire department will provide training.
12. Do not hang any items from the ceiling or ceiling tiles.
13. Home appliances (coffee pots, toaster ovens, heaters, refrigerators, etc.) are prohibited in the classroom, except with prior Principal approval.
14. Use of rubber cement is prohibited. Purchase non-toxic and safe products for classroom use.
15. Learn and use safe chemical storage procedures (MSDS).
16. All extension cords:

- a. Must not be over 7' long;
  - b. Used for temporary use only;
  - c. Have an in-line circuit breaker;
  - d. No household extension cords are allowed; and
  - e. No daisy chain of cords or surge protectors.
17. All electrical panel boxes must have a three-foot clearance from any materials.
18. Prevent injuries:
- a. Do not stand on chairs or desks. Obtain a step stool or ladder from the custodians;
  - b. Do not lift heavy objects by yourself. Get assistance from someone to avoid injuries;
  - c. Desk drawers, cabinet doors, and file drawers should not be left open while unattended. Pull only one drawer at a time. Heavier items should be loaded in the lower file drawers to prevent the file cabinet from tipping over;
  - d. Chairs, wastebaskets, electrical cords, rugs, and other articles should not be left where they will become a tripping hazard; and
  - e. Do not sit on the edge of a chair. Do not sit in a straight chair tilted back. Do not sit or stand on a student desk. Do not attempt to roll your chair across the room while in the chair.
19. Report all work related accidents to the school nurse or a supervisor immediately.
20. Ensure you have an evacuation plan posted near the door, clearly showing primary and secondary routes of evacuation.
21. All electrical equipment shall be turned off when not in use.
22. Make certain televisions on portable carts are strapped down securely. Do not allow students to move equipment.
23. Keep personal belongings under lock and key.
24. No self-defense sprays are allowed.
25. Ensure all doors and windows are locked when you leave your room.
26. Review the District Emergency Procedures Manual (Tornado, hurricane, shelter-in-place procedures, etc.).
27. Take your class roster with you if you evacuate your room.
28. Report any unsafe condition(s) to the Principal or your supervisor.

## **Safe Operation of District Vehicles**

All District vehicles will be operated in the safest manner possible. The following guidelines will apply:

- When driving, employees must be physically and mentally capable of operating any vehicle safely. No employee should operate a District vehicle after having consumed alcoholic beverages or having taken medication that may cause drowsiness;
- Drivers will obey all traffic laws and observe legal speed limits at all times;
- Any traffic citations will be the responsibility of the driver and shall be reported to their immediate supervisor as soon as possible;

- Employees will be responsible for maintaining in good mechanical operating condition any vehicles assigned to them. Necessary repairs may be requested on a transportation department work order;
- Employees will comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the use of mobile technology devices, including cellular telephones;
- Use of cellular telephones while driving is discouraged; and
- Employees will not send or read text messages or emails, dial cell phones, or view any type of electronic device, including GPS type systems and computers, while driving.

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

*Policy CKA*

The District is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the District's management plan is kept in each principal's office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

## **Integrated Pest Management**

*Policies CLB, DI*

Conroe Independent School District believes that structural and landscape pests, along with pesticides, can pose a risk to people, property, and the environment. It is the directive of the District to incorporate integrated pest management (IPM) procedures for the control of structural and landscape pests and pesticide applications.

**Definition of Pests.** Pests are populations of living organisms (animals, plants, or microorganisms) that interfere with the use of District buildings and grounds for school purposes. Strategies for managing pest populations will be determined by the pest species and/or whether that pest species or the population of that species poses a threat to people, property, or the environment.

**Pest Management.** Pests will be managed to:

- Reduce any potential health hazard and to protect against a threat to public safety;
- To enhance the quality of life for students, staff, and others;
- To prevent loss or damage to District property; and
- To prevent the spread of pests to the community.

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Procedures.** IPM procedures will determine when to control pests and whether to use mechanical, physical, cultural, chemical, or biological means, or any combination of these. IPM practitioners depend on current, comprehensive information of the pest and its environment and the best pest control method available to present the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment.

The choice of using a pesticide will be made after a review of all other available options and a determination that these options are not acceptable. Staffing and costs will not be adequate reasons for use of chemical control. Non-chemical methods will be implemented whenever possible to control the pests. IPM principles will be employed to manage pest populations. The full range of alternatives, including no action, will be considered.

When it is determined that a pesticide must be used to meet the management goals, the least hazardous material will be used.

All applications of pesticides will be applied in accordance with the Federal Insecticides, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 USC 136 et seq.) and District policies and procedures, Environmental Protection Agency regulations in Chapter 40 Code of Federal Regulations, Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations, and state and local regulations.

All records of pesticide use and treatment will be maintained in accordance with the Texas Department of Agriculture Structural Pest Control Service. All other records required by regulatory agencies will be maintained as required by the appropriate agency. All pest surveillance data information will be maintained to verify the need for treatment.

The District will notify the school, staff, and students of pesticide treatment. The District will provide parents, who wish to be informed in advance of pesticide application, with notification and supply them with information as needed. All notification will be done in accordance with Texas Department of Agriculture Structural Pest Control Service regulations.

Currently in Texas, pesticides are classified in order of least toxic to most toxic: green, yellow, or red. It is the District's position that pesticide purchases will be limited to the amount authorized for use during one year or less (the District will regularly purchase only chemicals that are on the green or yellow list). All chemicals on the red list will be purchased when needed and in the amount needed. All pesticides will be stored and disposed of in accordance with EPA registered label directions and state regulations. Pesticides must be stored on an appropriate, secure site not accessible to students or unauthorized personnel.

All pesticide applications will be applied by licensed applicators, educated and trained in the principles and practices of IPM. All applications comply with product labels and District policies and procedures.

All District employees are responsible for complying with the District's IPM policy and should assist in its implementation by following these rules:

- All snack foods must be stored in storage containers. Metal or glass jar containers are best;
- No foods, such as cakes, cookies, or pies should be left out in break rooms or classrooms overnight; and
- Do not apply any insecticides on school grounds including, but not limited to: roach and ant sprays, wasp sprays, or roach bait stations, etc.

**Pest Control Treatment.** Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a District building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally posted on main entrances and in administrative offices, workrooms, and cafeterias. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notices will be notified by telephone, written, or electronic means. Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide without appropriate training and prior approval of the IPM coordinator. Any application of pesticide or herbicide must be done in a manner prescribed by law and the District's IPM program. Pest control information sheets are available from the IPM coordinator in the CISD Maintenance Department.

## **Bloodborne Pathogens/Exposure Control Plan**

In accordance with Health and Safety Code, Chapter 81, Subchapter H, and analogous to OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard, the following exposure control plan exists:

**Exposure Determination.** The Texas Department of Health Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan requires employers to perform an exposure determination for employees who have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials. The exposure determination is made without regard to the use of personal protective equipment. This exposure determination is required to list all job classifications in which employees have occupational exposure, regardless of frequency. The following job classifications apply:

- Campus nurses and clinic aides
- LVNs
- Life Skills teachers and Life Skills teacher aides
- Custodians
- PPCD teachers and PPCD teacher aides
- Plumbers
- SDC teachers and SDC teacher aides
- Culinary Arts teachers
- Speech, physical, and occupational therapists
- CPI team
- Child Care teachers and Child Care teacher aides
- Conroe ISD Police Department
- School bus drivers
- Special Ed bus monitors
- All athletic trainers, lifeguards, and high school and junior high coaches.

The job descriptions for the above employees encompass the potential occupational exposure risks to bloodborne pathogens.

**Implementation Schedule and Methodology.** The department's plan outlines a schedule and method of implementation for the various elements of the exposure control plan.

**Compliance Methods.** Universal precautions are observed to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. All blood or other potentially infectious materials are considered infectious regardless of the perceived status of the source individual. Engineering and work practice controls are used to eliminate or minimize exposure to employees. Where occupational exposure remains after institution of these controls, personal protective equipment is used.

Supervisors and workers examine and maintain engineering and work practice controls within the work center on a regular schedule.

Hand washing facilities are also available to the employees who incur exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials. The department's plan requires that these facilities be readily accessible after incurring exposure. If hand washing facilities are not feasible, the employer is required to provide either an antiseptic cleanser in conjunction with clean cloth/paper towels, antiseptic towelettes, or waterless disinfectant. If these alternatives are used, then the hands are to be washed with soap and water as soon as feasible. After removal of personal protective gloves, employees wash hands and any other potentially contaminated skin area immediately or as soon as feasible with soap and water. If employees incur exposure to their skin or mucous membranes, then those areas are washed with soap and water or flushed with water as appropriate as soon as feasible following contact.

**Needles.** Contaminated needles and other contaminated sharps are not bent, recapped, removed, sheared, or purposely broken. The department's plan allows an exception to this if no alternative is feasible, and the action is required by a specific medical procedure. If such action is required, then the recapping or removal of the needle must be done by the use of a device or a one-handed technique.

**Contaminated Sharps Discarding and Containment.** Contaminated sharps are discarded immediately or as soon as feasible in containers that are closable, puncture resistant, leak-proof on sides and bottom, and biohazard labeled or color-coded.

During use, containers for contaminated sharps are easily accessible to personnel, located as close as is feasible to the immediate area where sharps are being used or can be reasonably anticipated to be found (e.g., laundries), maintained upright throughout use, are not allowed to overfill, and replaced routinely.

**Work Area Restrictions.** In work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials, employees are not to eat, drink, apply cosmetics or lip balm, smoke, or handle contact lenses. Food and beverages are not to be kept in refrigerators, freezers, shelves, cabinets, or on counter/bench tops where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present. All procedures are conducted in a manner to minimize splashing, spraying, splattering, and generation of droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials.

**Contaminated Equipment.** Equipment which may become contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials is examined prior to servicing or shipping and decontaminated as necessary, unless the decontamination of the equipment is not feasible. Employers place a



biohazard label on all portions of contaminated equipment that remain to inform employees, service representatives, and/or the manufacturer, as appropriate.

**Personal Protective Equipment.** All personal protective equipment used is provided without cost to employees. Personal protective equipment is chosen based on the anticipated exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials. All garments which are penetrated by blood are removed immediately or as soon as feasible and placed in the appropriate container. Gloves are worn where it is reasonably anticipated that employees will have hand contact with blood, other potentially infectious materials, non-intact skin, and mucous membranes.

Latex sensitive employees are provided with suitable alternative personal protective equipment. Disposable gloves are not to be washed or decontaminated for reuse and are to be replaced as soon as practical when they become contaminated or as soon as feasible if they are torn, punctured, or when their ability to function as a barrier is compromised.

**Housekeeping.** Employees shall ensure that the worksite is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. The employer shall determine and implement an appropriate written schedule for cleaning and method of decontamination based upon the location within the facility, the type of surface to be cleaned, type of soil present, and tasks or procedures being performed in the area. All contaminated work surfaces are decontaminated after completion of procedures immediately or as soon as feasible after any spill of blood or other potentially infectious materials and at the end of the work shift. Protective coverings (e.g., plastic wrap, aluminum foil, etc.) used to cover equipment and environmental surfaces are removed and replaced as soon as feasible when they become contaminated or at the end of the work shift. All bins, pails, cans, and similar receptacles are inspected and decontaminated on a regularly scheduled basis. Any broken glassware which may be contaminated is not picked up directly with the hands.

**Regulated Waste Disposal.** All contaminated sharps are discarded as soon as feasible in sharps containers located as close to the point of use as feasible in each work area. Regulated waste other than sharps is placed in appropriate containers that are closable, leak resistant, labeled with a biohazard label or color coded, and closed prior to removal. If outside contamination of the regulated waste container occurs, it is placed in a second container that is also closable, leak proof, labeled with a biohazard label or color-coded, and closed prior to removal. All regulated waste is properly disposed of in accordance with federal, state, county, and local requirements.

**Laundry Procedures.** Although soiled linen may be contaminated with pathogenic microorganisms, the risk of disease transmission is negligible if it is handled, transported, and laundered in a manner that avoids transfer of microorganisms to patients, personnel, and environments. Rather than rigid rules and regulations, hygienic and common sense storage and processing of clean and soiled linen is recommended. The methods for handling, transporting, and laundering of soiled linen are determined by the agencies' written policy and any applicable regulations.

**Hepatitis B.** The Texas Department of Health Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Plan requires the Conroe Independent School

District to perform an exposure determination for employees who have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials. The exposure determination is made without regard to the use of personal protective equipment. The District must identify all job classifications in which employees have occupational exposure, regardless of frequency, and offer the Hepatitis B vaccine, at no cost to the employee, under the supervision of a licensed healthcare professional. The Conroe ISD Bloodborne Pathogen Committee has determined that the following job classifications apply:

- Campus nurses and clinic aides
- LVNs
- Life Skills teachers and Life Skills teacher aides
- Custodians
- PPCD teachers and PPCD teacher aides
- Plumbers
- SDC teachers and SDC teacher aides
- Culinary Arts teachers
- Speech, physical, and occupational therapists
- CPI team
- Child Care teachers and Child Care teacher aides
- Conroe ISD Police Department
- School bus drivers
- Special Ed bus monitors
- All athletic trainers, lifeguards, and high school and junior high coaches.

Please see your supervisor for more information.

***Post Exposure Evaluation and Follow Up.*** When the employee incurs an exposure incident, the employee reports to the Director of Health Services. All employees who incur an exposure incident are offered a confidential medical evaluation and follow up as follows:

- Documentation of the route(s) of exposure and the circumstances related to the incident;
- Identification and documentation of the source individual, unless employer can establish that identification is infeasible or prohibited by state or local law. After obtaining consent, unless law allows testing without consent, the blood of the source individual should be tested for HIV/HBV infectivity, unless the employer can establish that testing of the source is infeasible or prohibited by state or local law;
- The results of testing of the source individual are made available to the exposed employee with the employee informed about the applicable laws and regulations concerning disclosure of the identity and infectivity of the source individual;
- The employee is offered the option of having his/her blood collected for testing of the employee's HIV/HBV serological status. The blood sample is preserved for at least 90 days to allow employee to decide if the blood should be tested for HIV serological status.

If the employee decides prior to that time that testing will be conducted, then testing is done as soon as feasible;

- The employee is offered post exposure prophylaxis in accordance with the current recommendations of the U.S. Public Health Service; and
- The employee is given appropriate counseling concerning infection status, results and interpretations of tests, and precautions to take during the period after the exposure incident. The employee is informed about what potential illnesses can develop and to seek early medical evaluation and subsequent treatment. The department head is designated to assure that the policy outlined here is effectively carried out and maintains records related to this policy.

***Interaction with Healthcare Professionals.*** A written opinion is obtained from the healthcare professional who evaluates employees of this facility or organization after an exposure incident. In order for the healthcare professional to adequately evaluate the employee, the healthcare professional is provided with:

- A copy of the CISD exposure control plan;
- A description of the exposed employee's duties as they relate to the exposure incident;
- Documentation of the route(s) of exposure and circumstances under which the exposure occurred;
- Results of the source individual's blood tests (if available); and
- Medical records relevant to the appropriate treatment of the employee.
- Written opinions are obtained from the healthcare professional in the following instances:
  - When the employee is sent to obtain the Hepatitis B vaccine; or
  - Whenever the employee is sent to a healthcare professional following an exposure incident.

Healthcare professionals are instructed to limit their written opinions to:

- Whether the Hepatitis B vaccine is indicated;
- Whether the employee has received the vaccine;
- The evaluation following an exposure incident; Whether the employee has been informed of the results of the evaluation;
- Whether the employee has been told about any medical conditions resulting from exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials which require further evaluation or treatment (all other findings or diagnoses shall remain confidential and shall not be included in the written report); and,
- Whether the healthcare professional's written opinion is provided to the employee within 15 days of completion of the evaluation.

***Use of Biohazard Labels.*** Training for all employees is conducted prior to initial assignment to tasks where occupational exposure may occur. All employees also receive annual refresher training. This training is to be conducted within one year of the employee's previous training.

Training for employees is conducted by a person knowledgeable in the subject matter and includes an explanation of the following:

- Chapter 96. Bloodborne Pathogen Control;
- OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Final Rule;
- Epidemiology and symptomatology of bloodborne diseases;
- Modes of transmission of bloodborne pathogens;
- CISD's exposure control plan (i.e., points of the plan, lines of responsibility, how the plan will be implemented, where to access plan, etc.);
- Procedures which might cause exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials at this facility;
- Control methods which are used at the facility to control exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials;
- Personal protective equipment available at this facility (types, use, location, etc.);
- Hepatitis B vaccine program at the facility;
- Procedures to follow in an emergency involving blood or other potentially infectious materials;
- Procedures to follow if an exposure incident occurs, to include
- U.S. Public Health Service Post Exposure Prophylaxis Guidelines;
- Post exposure evaluation and follow up; and
- An opportunity to ask questions with the individual conducting the training.

## **Pre-Employment Drug Testing**

*Policies DHE (L), DF*

Employees whose position requires the transportation of students are required to pass a pre-employment alcohol and controlled substances test, as well as be subject to random drug testing during the school year. This testing provision applies to bus drivers, police officers, and athletic coaches who may transport students. Employees who test positive in a random alcohol or controlled substances test are subject to any appropriate discipline from suspension without pay during the period of removal from safety sensitive functions, up to and including termination of employment.

## **Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use**

*Policies DH, FNCD, CKA*

State law prohibits smoking or using tobacco products or e- cigarettes on all District-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off school property. Additionally, employees shall not smoke or use tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, vapors, and smokeless tobacco, at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property, in District vehicles, nor in the presence of students at school or school-related activities. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for

athletics and other activities. Drivers of District-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking, using tobacco products, or e-cigarettes while inside the vehicle. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in all school buildings.

## **Employee Arrests and Convictions**

### *Policy DH*

An employee must notify the Director of Human Resources in writing within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any felony, and any of the other offenses listed below:

- Crimes involving school property or funds;
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator;
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity; and
- Crimes involving moral turpitude.

Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Dishonesty;
- Fraud;
- Deceit;
- Theft;
- Misrepresentation;
- Deliberate violence;
- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor;
- Crimes involving any felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance;
- Felonies involving driving while intoxicated (DWI); and
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under SBEC rules.

Employees who have engaged in conduct that is defined as a felony offense in Title 5, Penal Code or that is considered a crime of moral turpitude, regardless of the level of the offense, that results in an arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest plea, or other adjudication are subject to disciplinary action, including termination from employment. If an educator is arrested or criminally charged, the Superintendent is also required to report the educator's criminal history to the Division of Investigations at the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

### *Policy DBAA*

Employees may be subject to a review of their criminal history record information at any time during employment. National criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on certain employees and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the District and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history. The District obtains criminal history record information on persons it intends to employ. Employees are required to disclose a prior record when requested to do so at the time of employment. Failure to do so could result in termination of employment. A review committee assesses the records of employees found to have criminal records that may bar them from continued employment in the District.

## **Identification Badges**

Employees will be issued an identification badge at no cost to the employee. Each employee must wear the ID badge at all times while on District property when conducting District business. The badge must be clearly visible, except in cases where the type of work does not permit the display. Replacement badges will be printed at a nominal cost.

## **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

### *Policies DH, FNCG, GKA*

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, location-restricted knives, clubs, or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e. building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. A person, including an employee, who holds a license to carry a handgun may transport or store a handgun or other firearm or ammunition in a locked vehicle in a parking lot, garage, or other District provided parking area, provided the handgun or firearm or ammunition is properly stored and not in plain view. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the District's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors or call the CISD Police Department immediately.

## **Visitors in the Workplace**

### *Policy GKC*

All visitors are expected to enter any District facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the building's main office. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the District premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

## **Copyrighted Materials**

### *Policy CY*

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of federal copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Electronic media, including motion pictures and other audiovisual works, are to be used in the classroom for instructional purposes only. Duplication or backup of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

## **Employment Policies: Dissemination of Required Information**

The District is required to disseminate employment information to all employees. If you would like a hard copy of this information, please contact your supervisor. You may also find these policies in their entirety on the CISD website under the CISD Policy link.

### **For All Employees:**

Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation (DH, FNC, DIA [LOCAL], FFH [LOCAL])

Bullying (FFI [LOCAL])

Child abuse and neglect (DH [LOCAL], FFG [LEGAL], GRA [LEGAL] and [LOCAL])

Drug Free Workplace (DH [LOCAL]) 2016-2017 Employee Handbook

### **For Teachers and Administrators:**

Student Discipline (FO, FOA, FOB, FOC, FOCA, FOD, FODA, FOE, FOF)

Elementary and Secondary Student Handbooks Student Code of Conduct

### **For Term Contract Employees:**

Employment Policies (DAA, DBAA, DBD, DC, DCB, DEA, DEAA, DEC, DECA, DECB, DFAC, DFB, DFD, DFE, DFF, DG, DGBA, DH, DHE, DI DIA, DK, and DN)

# Electronic Media, Communications Systems, and Technology Resources

## Acceptable Use Guidelines

The Conroe Independent School District makes a variety of communications and information technologies available to students and District employees. These technologies, when properly used, promote educational excellence in the District by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. Illegal, unethical, or inappropriate use of these technologies can have dramatic consequences, harming the District, its students, and its employees. These Acceptable Use Guidelines are intended to minimize the likelihood of such harm by educating Conroe ISD students and employees and setting standards which will serve to protect students and staff. Any attempt to violate the provisions of these guidelines may result in revocation of the user's access to the Network/Internet, regardless of the success or failure of the attempt. In addition, disciplinary action consistent with the District's employment policies and/or appropriate legal action, which may include restitution, may be taken. District administrators will make the final determination as to what constitutes inappropriate use. The System Administrator or other administrator may deny, revoke, or suspend Network/Internet/ resource access as necessary, pending the outcome of an investigation. The expectations of the District are that all network and technology resource users will comply with all policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined below:

## Overview

The District expects that teachers will blend thoughtful use of the Internet and technology resources throughout the curriculum and will provide guidance and instruction to students in its use at all times that students utilize the Internet. The District also expects the prudent exercise of good judgment by administration, support staff, and teachers while using the District's technology resources, including the Internet and associated email, as tools in the day-to-day administration of their employment with the Conroe ISD and in the classroom environment. The District's technology resources, including its networks, computer systems, e-mail accounts, devices connected to its networks, and all District-owned devices used on or off school property are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use of the resources is permitted with the exception of cell phones, which are for business use only, if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the District;
- Does not unduly burden the District's technology resources; and
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or a student's academic performance.

## Internet Filter

CISD uses a web filter to manage access to various inappropriate locations. However, even with a filter, there may still be sites accessible via the Internet that contain material that is illegal,



defamatory, inaccurate, or controversial. Although the District will attempt to limit access to objectionable material by using software, controlling all materials on the Internet is impossible. Employees are expected to monitor student Internet use and to report inappropriate Internet sites not filtered to administration.

## **Email**

Email is a District service provided by public funds. Email is for instructional and administrative use. Sending jokes, chain letters, unsolicited junk mail, and the like is considered an inappropriate use of District equipment. Email transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by employees is not considered confidential, and all communications are archived as records in accordance with the District's records retention schedule. Email may be monitored at any time by designated District staff to ensure appropriate use. This monitoring may include activity logging, virus scanning, and content scanning. District email signatures should not contain quotations or any non-school related information. Each summer, the Technology Department will reset all email signatures to name, title, campus/department, phone number, and email address.

Any memo correspondence sent via email must follow the same District guidelines as is used for other correspondence distribution.

Records retention guidelines apply to email correspondence and must be followed. Email is viewed as a public document and can become part of a legal process. Care should be given to the tone of the email. Also, grammar and spelling should be checked before an email is sent. Be mindful of the unique forwarding properties associated with email.

## **Electronic Storage**

The District has provided technology users with access to network storage locations for files (U: drive). The storage area provides a place where school-related items can be stored from year to year.

To maintain the integrity of the District's technology resources, shared network space, District storage space, and to enforce the Acceptable Use Guidelines, storage space will be monitored by District staff. Inappropriate files such as games, music, inappropriate images, movies, videos, and files that consume storage space will be deleted. External electronic storage devices are subject to monitoring if used or purchased with District resources or attached to District devices.

## **Network Behavior**

Network/Internet users are responsible for their actions in accessing available resources. The following standards will apply to all users of the Network/Internet:

- The user in whose name a system account is issued will be responsible at all times for its proper use. Users may not use another person's account;

- The system may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by District policy;
- Users may not redistribute copyrighted programs or data without the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. If using copyrighted material in Canvas, user must ensure they have digital rights. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the copyright holder or designee in accordance with applicable copyright laws, District policy, and administrative regulations; and
- Computers are joined to either a student or employee domain for management and inventory. Computers should not be removed from these domains.

## **Inappropriate Use**

Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to, those uses that violate the law or District policy, that are specifically named as violations below, that violate the rules of network etiquette, or that hamper the integrity or security of the District's network or any networks connected to the District's network.

## **Inappropriate Language**

Using obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language in emails distributed through District email is prohibited. Sending messages that could create danger, cause disruption, or contain personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks, are prohibited.

## **Commercial Use**

Use for commercial, income-generating or "for-profit" activities, product advertisement, or political lobbying is prohibited. Use of the District's resources for promoting activities or events for individuals or organizations not directly affiliated with or sanctioned by the District is prohibited.

## **Vandalism/Mischief**

- Vandalism and mischief are prohibited. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the Network/Internet, or any networks that are connected to the Network/Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the creation or propagation of computer viruses, spyware, and malware. Any interference with the work of other users, with or without malicious intent, is construed as mischief and is strictly prohibited;
- Deleting, examining, copying, or modifying files and/or data belonging to other users, without their permission, is prohibited;
- Forgery of email messages is prohibited. Reading, deleting, copying, or modifying the email of other users without their permission is prohibited, unless permitted by District policy or authorized by the Superintendent or his designee;

- Deliberate attempts to exceed, evade, or change resource quotas are prohibited. The deliberate causing of network congestion through mass consumption of system resources is prohibited; and
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding students and employees are prohibited.

## **Security**

If a user identifies or has knowledge of a security problem on the Network/Internet, such as filtering software not working, the user should immediately notify the campus/department administrator or the System Administrator. The security problem should not be shared with others. Attempting to bypass security and filtering software is prohibited.

Attempts to log on to the Network/Internet impersonating a system administrator or CISD employee may result in revocation of the user's access to the Network/Internet.

## **Transmitting/Storing/Accessing Confidential Information**

Teachers, staff, and students may not redistribute or forward confidential information (i.e. educational records, directory information, personnel records, etc.) without proper authorization. Confidential information should never be accessed, transmitted, redistributed, or forwarded to outside individuals who are not expressly authorized to receive the information. Revealing such personal information as home addresses or phone numbers of users or others is prohibited. In order to reduce the loss of confidential information due to theft or misplacement, student/staff confidential information should not be stored on portable devices such as memory sticks, laptops, or on hard drives or home machines. This information should be stored on the U: drive. Extreme caution should be used if data is stored on cloud storage (Google docs, drop box, Office 365, etc.). This storage is not provided by the District and is subject to the Terms of Use of the particular site being used.

## **Modification of Computer**

Modifying or changing computer settings and/or internal or external configurations without appropriate permission is prohibited.

## **Campus, District, or Organizational Websites**

Web pages hosted on the CISD web server or embedded on other websites and hyperlinks from these pages must be accessible in accordance with Policy CQA. They cannot contain information that is in violation of (or promotes the violation of) any District policy or regulation, nor any local, state, or federal regulation or law.

Web pages that contain time-sensitive information, such as calendars, school events, staff information, etc., must be updated on a scheduled basis. Web pages must be checked periodically to make sure that links are current and operable.

## **External Links**

Extreme caution should be used when adding a link to an external web page. In all cases where an external link (link to a site external to CISD domain) is used, special precautions should be made to ensure the accessibility, appropriateness, and the trustworthiness of the site. It is the responsibility of the person who authorized the links to check them frequently and to verify the site.

## **Cell Phones and Smart Phones**

All cell phones and other smart phone devices issued to employees by the District are intended to be used for District business only. District cell phones may not be used to call directory assistance unless it is an emergency situation. District cell phones may not be taken out of the United States unless permission is granted by the Superintendent or his designee. All data generated, received, or stored on District owned equipment, including text messages, is the property of the District and generally is considered public information that is subject to public inspection.

Employees may not use personal electronic communication devices (tablets, cellular phones, etc.) that interfere with his/her performance of job responsibilities. Teachers may use cellular phones in the instructional process. Teachers may also use cellular phones for business calls, including parent contacts, only during planning periods and other off-duty times during the instructional day. Personal calls may not be made or received during class periods.

## **Electronic Recording**

Employees shall not electronically record by audio, video, or other means, any conversations or meetings with other employees unless each and every person present has been notified and consents to being electronically recorded. Persons wishing to record a meeting must obtain consent from anyone arriving late to any such meeting. Employees shall not electronically record telephone conversations with other employees unless all persons participating in the telephone conversation have consented to be electronically recorded. These provisions are not intended to limit or restrict electronic recording of publicly posted Board meetings, grievance hearings, and any other Board sanctioned meeting recorded in accordance with Board Policy. These provisions are not intended to limit or restrict electronic recordings involving authorized investigations conducted by District personnel.

## **Electronic Media & Communications**

*(See also Board Policies CQ, DH)*

The following terms used in this section are defined as follows:

- ***Electronic communications*** mean any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes e-mail, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.
- ***Electronic media*** includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (email), Web logs (blogs), wikis, electronic forums (chat rooms), video sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic communications also include all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.
- ***Professional electronic media*** is any form of electronic media as defined above that is established by an employee using his/her District email address, credentials, or contact information, and that is used to communicate with, instruct, or provide information to parents and/or students.
- ***Personal electronic media*** is any form of electronic media as defined above that is established by an employee with his/her personal email account and is not used to communicate with parents or students about any school related matters.

## **Electronic Media Use and Communications Between Employees and Students**

*(See also Board Policy DH)*

The District realizes that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students, and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is part of 21st century learning.

A certified or licensed employee, an employee whose position requires a certification or license, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may use electronic communications with students who are currently enrolled in the District. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. Electronic communications between all other employees and students who are enrolled in the District are prohibited. Employees are not required to provide students with their personal phone number or e-mail address.

No picture of a student with a privacy flag may be posted on professional electronic media. Employees are responsible for ensuring that no student in a picture posted to a professional electronic media account has a privacy flag.

Only audio/video recordings of students that comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirements can be posted to professional electronic media accounts. Additionally, if the audio/video recording was not made for instructional purposes or a purpose related to a co-curricular or extracurricular activity, the employee must obtain written parent permission from each student participating in the recording before making the recording and/or posting it.

An employee who communicates electronically with students shall observe the following:

- Personal electronic media accounts may not be associated with professional electronic media accounts. Employees are prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through personal electronic media accounts; Employees must create separate professional electronic media accounts for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee's professional electronic media account.
- Employees shall limit electronic communications with students to matters within the scope of their professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- All communication through electronic media by staff with parents and students must be professional and of the appropriate nature, purpose, timing, and amount.
- Employees do not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- Employees shall not post any information that could compromise student safety, such as changes in arrival and departure times, to professional electronic media accounts that are open to the public.
- All parents and students participating in a course or activity for which an employee's professional electronic media account is established must have an opportunity to join and have equal access to communications made through the account.
- Employees continue to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educators' Code of Ethics including:
  - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records (see Policies CPC and FL);
  - Copyright laws (see Policy CY);
  - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student (see Policy DH).

Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with a student through electronic media.

Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), electronic media, or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently enrolled students.

An employee shall notify his or her supervisor or principal in writing within one business day if a student engages in an improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee must describe the specific form and content of the electronic communication and provide copies of the electronic communication to his or her supervisor or principal.

## **Personal Use of Electronic Media and Communications**

Employees in a public school system are responsible for modeling and teaching high standards of decency and civic values. District employees must model the character they are expected to teach, both on and off the worksite. This applies to material which is posted on personal electronic media accounts, such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, or Facebook. As role models for the District's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct, even when they are not acting as District employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic communications as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee wishes to use an electronic media site or similar communications for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content of the employee's account, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content. Employees who have electronic media accounts for their private use should not share those sites with students.

If an employee posts messages or pictures which diminish the employee's professionalism or discredits the employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents, the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job will be impaired. This type of material includes, but is not limited to, text or pictures involving hate speech, nudity, obscenity, vulgarity, conduct illegal for a minor, or sexually explicit content. If an employee's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees who use electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following:

- Employees may not set up or update personal electronic media using the District's computers, network, or equipment.
- Employees shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to sending or receiving calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct District business.
- Employees shall not use the District's logo or other copyrighted material of the District without the District's express, written consent.

- Employees are prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal electronic media account. Rather, employees must create separate electronic media accounts using their District email address if they intend to communicate with students through electronic media.
- Employees may not post student names, photographs, or videos in which students appear on personal electronic media accounts.
- Employees may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on District business on any personal electronic media account unless an employee first obtains written approval from the employee’s immediate supervisor. Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy laws and policies.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and The Educators’ Code of Ethics, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:
  - Confidentiality of student records; [See Policy FL] Confidentiality of health or personal information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law; [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)] Confidentiality of District records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses; [See Policy GBA] Copyright law; [See Policy CY] and
  - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]

## General Procedures

### Bad Weather Closing

The District may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the District’s facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release students early, or to cancel school, District officials will post a notice on the District’s website, as well as the District’s Facebook and Twitter accounts, and notify the following television and radio stations:

**Television:**

2 (NBC)	11 (CBS)	13 (ABC)
26 (FOX)	51 (KNWS)	39 (CW)

**Radio:**

KTRH (740 AM)	KJOJ (880 AM) K	SBJ (89.3 FM)
KKHH (95.7 FM)	KILT (100.3 FM)	KVST (99.7 FM)

**[www.conroeisd.net](http://www.conroeisd.net)**



## **Inclement Weather Day – 2018-2019 Plans for Employees**

**First Inclement Weather Day.** For employees with work schedules of 182, 183, 187, 190, 193, 197, 202, 217, and 226 days, the first make-up day will be June 1, 2019. For employees on a 261-day work schedule, the make-up day will be the next scheduled holiday.

**Second Inclement Weather Day.** For employees with work schedules of 182, 183, 187, 190, 193, 197, 202, 217, and 226 days, the second make-up day will be determined by the District. For employees with work schedules of 261 days, the second make-up day will be on the next scheduled holiday.

## **Emergencies**

*Policies CKC, CKD*

All employees should be familiar with the safety procedures for responding to emergencies, including a medical emergency, and the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with safety and evacuation procedures. Each campus is equipped with an automatic external defibrillator. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all District buildings. Employees should know the location of these devices and procedures for their use.

### **Conroe ISD Police Department**

2900 N. Loop 336 East • Conroe, TX 77301 936-709-8900 – General Business Calls

936-709-8911 – Request for Immediate Police Response 911 - Emergency

## **Purchasing Procedures**

*Policy CH*

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the Finance Department using the District's MIS requisition with the appropriate approval. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the District can be made without a PO number. The District will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the District's business office. Contact the Finance Department for additional information on purchasing procedures.

## **Name and Address Changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Human Resources Department if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. The form to process a change in personal information can be obtained from the Human Resources Department or online

at the District's website. Alternatively, employees may electronically update their home address, contact telephone number, and emergency contact through Employee Access Center. Names cannot be changed without a corrected Social Security card.

## **Personnel Records**

*Policy DBA, GBA*

Most District records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. In most cases, an employee's personal e-mail is confidential and may not be released without the employee's permission. Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

- Address;
- Phone number, including personal cell phone number;
- Emergency contact information; and
- Information that reveals whether they have family members.

The choice not to allow public access to this information may be made at any time by submitting a written request to the Human Resources Department. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public until a request to withhold the information is submitted.

## **Building Use**

*Policies DGA, GKD*

Employees who wish to use District facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The campus principal is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the campus principal to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

# **Termination of Employment**

## **Resignations**

*Policy DFE*

**Contract Employees.** Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted electronically through Employee Access Center. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the Superintendent or the Board of Trustees. Resignation without consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The principal is required to notify the Superintendent of an educator's resignation following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in *Reports to Texas Education Agency*. The Superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the same acts.

**Noncontract Employees.** Noncontract employees may resign their position at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted electronically through Employee Access Center.

Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided in the acknowledgement letter you receive upon acceptance of your electronic separation form.

Employee electronic accounts will be disabled immediately after the last day worked and will be deleted completely 15 days after the last day worked.

## **Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees**

### *Policy DF Series*

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in District policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be non-renewed at the end of the contract term. The Board shall give the employee notice of its decision to terminate the employment not later than the tenth day before the last day of instruction required under the contract. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The time lines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee.

Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the time lines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are in the policy manuals located at the CISD Legal Department, any principal's office, or on the CISD homepage.

## **Dismissal of Noncontract Employees**

### *Policy DCD*

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the District to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to

grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the District process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance.

## **Exit Interviews and Procedures**

If possible, exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the District. All District keys, books, property, including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

Depending on the circumstances of an employee's separation from employment, the employee may be designated as ineligible for rehire.

## **Reports to Texas Education Agency**

*Policy DF, DHB*

The resignation or termination of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA if there is evidence that the employee was involved in any of the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor, or any other unlawful conduct with a student or a minor;
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual contact or a romantic relationship with a student or minor;
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance;
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of District or school property or funds;
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation; and
- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on District property or at a school-sponsored event.

The reporting requirements above are in addition to the Superintendent's ongoing duty to notify TEA when a certified employee or an applicant for certification has a reported criminal history. "Reported criminal history" means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions, including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction that is obtained by a means other than the Fingerprint-based Applicant Clearinghouse of Texas (FACT).

## **Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding**

The District is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance. Notice of the following must be sent to the support recipient and the court or, in the case of child support, the Texas Attorney General Child Support Division:

- Termination of employment not later than the seventh day after the date of termination;
- Employee’s last known address; and
- Name and address of the employee’s new employer, if known.

## **Student Issues**

### **Equal Educational Opportunities**

*Policies FB, FFH*

The CISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination against students based on sex, including sexual harassment, should be directed to the District Title IX Coordinator. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to the District ADA/Section 504 Coordinator. All other questions or concerns relating to discrimination based on any other reasons should be directed to the Superintendent.

### **Student Records**

*Policy FL*

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. The following people are the only people who have general access to a student’s records:

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights;
- The student: The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student’s records before this time; and
- School officials with legitimate educational interests.

The Student Handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

## **Parent and Student Complaints**

### *Policy FNG*

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the Board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus office or the Superintendent's office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teacher or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved to their satisfaction should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response.

## **Administering Medication to Students**

### *Policy FFAC*

Only designated employees may administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Exceptions apply to the self-administration of asthma medication, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., EpiPen®), and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is self-administered in accordance with District policy and procedures. Any other medication a student must take during the school day must be brought to school by the parent or guardian in its original, properly labeled container, along with a written request from the parent or guardian. Contact the principal or school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

## **Dietary Supplements**

### *Policies DH, FFAC*

District employees are prohibited by state law from knowingly selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to a student with whom the employee has contact as part of his or her school district duties. In addition, employees may not knowingly endorse or suggest the ingestion, intranasal application, or inhalation of a performance-enhancing dietary supplement to any student.

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

### *Policy FFAC*

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

District employees are prohibited by state law from doing the following:

- Recommending that a student use a psychotropic drug;
- Suggesting a particular diagnosis; and
- Excluding from class or school-related activity a student whose parent refuses to consent to a psychiatric evaluation or to authorize the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student.

## **Student Conduct and Discipline**

*Policies in the FN series and FO series*

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by the District. Please refer to the Student Handbook, located on the District website, for specific guidelines regarding the Student Code of Conduct and appropriate disciplinary measures. Employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal.

## **Student Attendance**

*Policy FEB*

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the District's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student, upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the Student Handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

## **Bullying**

*Policy FFI*

Bullying is defined by TEC §37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyber bullying, to the campus principal. The District's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and can be found on the District's homepage.

## **Hazing**

### *Policy FNCC*

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of “initiation rites” of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or permitting “hazing” is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.



# Appendix A

## Conflicts of Interest

Real or perceived conflicts of interest undermine the public's trust of government and can damage the reputation of a governmental entity, like a school district. The Conroe Independent School District takes seriously its fiduciary, legal, and ethical responsibilities, to its students, parents, employees, and tax payers. In Conroe ISD all employees are expected to respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty. Avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest or disclosing them when they exist assures that employees comply with the law and meet the District's expectations for integrity and honesty. The purpose of this document is to help you understand the District's expectations as well as state and federal laws relating to conflicts of interest.

What constitutes a conflict of interest will depend on the circumstances and definitions found in both state and federal law. But generally, a conflict of interest is when a person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity. Conflicts of interest have the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person's self-interest and the public's interest.

Under state and federal law and District policy, CISD employees are prohibited from engaging in certain acts that are considered conflicts of interest. Employees are also required to notify the District of certain business and family relationships that could be real or perceived conflicts of interest.

While some circumstances could require an employee to disclose to his or her immediate supervisor, in writing, a real or potential conflict of interest, other situations may require that a sworn statement be filed with the District's business office for posting on the District's website. These rules could apply to employees as well as to members of their families.

Certain employees must disclose in writing when they receive income, gifts, and/or have family relationships with District vendors or potential vendors. If federal funds are used to pay a District vendor, certain employees and their families are prohibited from accepting any income, gifts or other benefits from that vendor or potential vendor and are also prohibited from participating in the selection of the vendor.

Written disclosures must be made as soon as an employee becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest. Generally, employees have seven business days from the time the employee first becomes aware of the conflict of interest to submit the required written disclosure. Failing to disclose a conflict of interest could result in criminal charges being brought against an employee, as well as disciplinary consequences or termination from employment.

All District employees, regardless of their position, are required to make written disclosure under the following circumstances:

- All employees must **disclose** in writing to their supervisor any personal financial interest, any business interest, or any other obligation or relationship that in any way creates a potential conflict of interest with the proper discharge of the employee's assigned duties and responsibilities or with the best interests of the District. An example of a required disclosure would be if a teacher's husband works at a t-shirt company from which the teacher's campus frequently buys t-shirts. The teacher should disclose her husband's employment in writing to her principal and should not participate in the selection of which t-shirt company the campus uses.
- All employees must **disclose** in writing to their supervisors any outside employment that in any way creates a potential conflict of interest with the proper discharge of the employee's assigned duties and responsibilities or with the best interests of the District. A coach who is a part owner of a personal training business that students at the coach's school frequent should notify his supervisor in writing that he is part owner of the business and should never recommend his business to any student or student's family.

Gifts or benefits given to District employees because of their position in the District are generally prohibited. Consider the following questions when determining if you can accept a gift or benefit: Who is the gift/benefit from? What is the gift or benefit? Why is the gift/benefit being offered to me? Generally, if the gift is from a vendor, a potential vendor or a subordinate, has more than a nominal value, and is only offered because of the employee's position in the District, it should not be accepted.

The following rules apply to gifts and benefits offered to District employees:

- Employees are prohibited from accepting gifts, favors, services or any other benefit from any District vendors, contractors or subcontractors. Gifts do not include items of nominal value such as pens, pads of paper, and the like. However, accepting items like gift cards, clothing, jewelry, electronic devices, tickets to sporting or other events, trips, or rounds of golf from a vendor are prohibited. This prohibition is particularly important when the employee is participating in the selection of a vendor or a product paid for with federal funds. Vendors can give gifts to recognized tax exempt charitable organizations affiliated with the District such as PTOs, PTAs, Booster organizations, or the District's Education Foundation.<sup>1</sup> An example of an improper gift/benefit would be if a local car dealer, who is a vendor of the District, gave, loaned, leased or sold at below market value, a vehicle to the head football coach. If the vendor/car dealer is typically paid with federal funds, this could violate federal law. Even if the car dealer was not a District vendor, the head football coach could not accept this gift because it violates District policy. The gift/benefit could also have UIL implications.
- Employees are prohibited from accepting or soliciting any gift, favor, service or other benefit with a value of \$50 or more from an employee they supervise, a student or parents of a student, if the gift, favor, service or benefit could reasonably be construed to influence the employee's discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities, impair his

or her professional judgment, or give the appearance of special advantage. Examples of this are a parent offering a teacher the use of the family's beach house at no cost or below market value. The teacher could not accept this gift. However, a teacher can accept a gift from the class or team that is worth more than \$50 dollars so long as the value does not exceed \$50 per student, such as when a class collects monetary donations from the students to buy the teacher or coach a gift. Coaches and sponsors of UIL sports and activities must also comply with UIL rules which may be stricter than CISD rules.

- All employees of the District are considered “public servants” and are subject to Title VIII of the Texas Penal Code. This means that generally an employee cannot take anything from anyone. Employees can never take items or benefits as consideration for an official act nor can an employee accept honorariums for services the employee would not have been asked to provide but for his/her position with the District. An example of this would be if a vendor promised a District employee a job for the employee's spouse or child if the employee helped the vendor get selected to perform work for the District. Another example would be if an employee in his or her capacity as an employee of the District is asked to give a speech or presentation. The employee cannot be paid to give the speech or presentation, but the District can accept reimbursement for the costs related to your travel. Even if the employee takes a personal day to give the speech or presentation, if the employee was asked to give the speech or presentation because of his/her position with the District, the employee cannot accept an honorarium.
- Employees are prohibited from recommending, endorsing, or requiring students to purchase any product, material, or service in which the employee has a financial interest. An example of this would be a coach recommending that his players purchase a certain brand of shoe and the shoe vendor giving the coach a monetary or other benefit for making the recommendation.
- Employees are prohibited from using their position with the District to attempt to sell products or services. An example of this would be an employee putting fliers in campus mailboxes for their lawn mowing service or using their access to employee or student contact information for the purpose of selling their product or service or the product or service of a friend, family member, or business associate.
- Employees are prohibited from tutoring their current students for pay.
- District employees who are members of booster or other school related groups cannot solicit donations from District vendors on behalf of a school organization. An example of this would be an employee who is also the parent of a student in CISD is asked to solicit donations from businesses on behalf of the booster club. Because the employee could not solicit from any vendor of the district or potential vendor of the district, the employee must decline to do this for the booster club.

- Employees can accept a meal provided by a vendor if the value of each employee’s meal is less than \$50, work on behalf of the District is occurring, and the vendor is present. A District vendor providing training to employees on how to use their product, purchases lunch for the employees attending the training, would not be a conflict of interest.
- Employees who exercise discretion or participate in the selections of and/or awards, purchases, payments, or the administration of any transactions by or with the District cannot solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit/gift from a person the employee knows is interested in becoming a District vendor or is a District vendor or the agent of a District vendor. This prohibition applies to the employee’s family members as well. An example of this would be an employee serving on a committee to make a recommendation regarding which architectural firm should design a new school. The employee’s daughter is offered a job with the architectural firm. The employee’s daughter should not accept the job, the employee must disclose in writing to his/her supervisor that his daughter has been offered a job by the firm, and the employee should excuse him or herself from serving on the selection committee.
- If it is not possible to return an unsolicited benefit /gift from a vendor or potential vendor, an employee must disclose the gift in writing to the employee’s supervisor and can donate the benefit /gift to a recognized tax exempt charitable organization affiliated with the District such as the PTO or a booster club. An example of this would be if a campus principal received a gift basket worth more than \$50 from a local hospital. Rather than returning the gift basket, the principal can donate the basket to the PTO silent auction.
- Employees involved with the selection of instructional materials commit a criminal offense if they receive a gift, favor, or service that is given to them or their school to influence their selection recommendation and that could not lawfully be purchased with instructional materials funds. This does not include staff development, in-service or teacher training, or ancillary materials that contribute to the learning process such as maps, worksheets, and the like. An example of this would be if any member of the District’s instruction materials selection committee received a gift from one of the instructional materials vendors such as jacket, gift card, or electronic equipment. This is prohibited. A vendor can give the committee members teaching materials.
- Employees who help select, recommend, or contract with a vendor must complete and file with the District’s Business Office, *Texas Ethics Commission Form CIS*, if any of the following situations exist:
  - If the employee or member of his/her family has an employment or business relationship with a vendor and the employee or his/her “family member”<sup>2</sup> receives taxable income from the vendor, other than investment income, that exceeds \$2,500 during the preceding 12-month period; or

- If a vendor has given to an employee or an employee’s “family member” one or more gifts with an aggregate value of more than \$100 in the preceding 12-month period; or
- If an employee has a “family relationship”<sup>3</sup> with a vendor or the vendor’s employees or agents regardless of any monetary amount. *(Note that the vendor must also complete and submit Texas Ethics Commission Form CIQ.)*

An example demonstrating this requirement would be an Assistant Superintendent’s brother getting a job with ABC Construction Company. ABC Construction Company submits a bid to build a new school. The Assistant Superintendent must submit form CIS to the District’s Business Office and not participate in the selection of the construction company to build the new school. ABC Construction Company must submit form CIQ to the District’s Business Office. Both forms must be posted on the District’s website.

**Sometimes it can be hard to know if a conflict of interest exists. If you are unsure, talk to your supervisor. He or she should be able to help you determine if a disclosure is required or if any prohibition exists. You may also review CISD Board Policies CAA *Fiscal Management Goals and Objectives -Financial Ethics*, CB *State and Federal Revenue Sources*, CBB *State and Federal Revenue Sources - Federal*, and DBA *Employment Requirements and Restrictions – Credentials and Records* for more information.**

**Maintaining trust is vital to succeeding in providing a quality education to the children of the Conroe Independent School District. The District appreciates the role you play and is confident that all of its employees will do the right thing and avoid conflicts of interest or report them when the law requires.**

<sup>1</sup> The booster club could pay for a school employee to play on a team in a booster event such as a golf tournament, even if the team is purchased by a District vendor, so long as the booster club, not the vendor, makes the decision to give the spot on the team to a school employee. Likewise, a vendor could buy a table for a CISD Education Foundation event and give extra tickets back to the Foundation to disperse as they deem appropriate. An employee accepting a ticket to a Foundation event from the Foundation or a spot on a team from a parent organization would not be considered in violation of the District’s conflict of interest policies.

<sup>2</sup> “Family member” is defined as a person related by blood or marriage in the first degree, which generally includes parents, children, spouse, spouse’s parents, or spouse’s children.

<sup>3</sup> “Family relationship” has a broad definition to include parents, children, spouse, spouse’s children, spouse’s parents, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, great grandparents, great grandchildren, and first cousins.