

**2025  
2026**

**GOOSE CREEK CISD**  
**Employee Handbook**



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August 2025

Dear Goose Creek CISD Family,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! As we embark on this new year together, I am filled with excitement and gratitude for each of you. Your dedication, passion, and commitment continue to shape the lives of our students and the success of our district.

This year, our theme is “*Our Giant Future.*” It serves as a reminder that what we do today directly impacts the opportunities and successes of tomorrow. Together, we will continue to build a strong foundation for our students, empowering them to achieve greatness in all they pursue.

On behalf of the Goose Creek CISD Board of Trustees and our Executive Leadership Team, we would like to express our gratitude for your commitment to our district and for consistently going above and beyond each day to provide the highest quality education possible for our students.

Have a wonderful school year as we build *Our Giant Future* together!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randal O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Randal O'Brien, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District

# 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. District policies can be accessed Online at [www.gccisd.net](http://www.gccisd.net).

# District Information

## Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

### *Policy AE*

In pursuit of academic excellence for every student, the District is committed to providing an outstanding education for every child by being a nurturing, innovative, and participatory organization that produces citizens who will be equipped to successfully meet the cultural, intellectual, and social challenges of a changing world.

## 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 every other year and serve 4-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

- James "Jim" Campisi, President
- Richard Clem, Vice President
- Tiffany Guy, Secretary
- Helen Berrott-Tims, Board Member
- Jessie Martinez, Board Member
- Mercedes Renteria III, Board Member
- Howard Sampson, Board Member

The board usually meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday 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 Administration Building located at 4544 Interstate 10 East in Baytown, Texas, at least three business days 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 one-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 session 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.

## **Administration**

Dr. Randal O'Brien – Superintendent

Ms. Susan Jackson – Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Matthew Bolinger – Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Dr. Anthony Price – Assistant Superintendent for Operations Services

## **School Calendar**

The 2025-2026 Goose Creek CISD Instructional Calendar is located on the Goose Creek CISD website located at <https://www.gccisd.net/page/sp.calendars>

# Employment

## Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policies DAA, DIA*

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Goose Creek CISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), 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.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not discriminate on the basis of sex and is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The prohibition against discrimination extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the Title IX coordinator for employees to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment: Dr. Matthew Bolinger, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, 4544 Interstate 10 East Baytown, TX 77521, [Matthew.bolinger@gccisd.net](mailto:Matthew.bolinger@gccisd.net), at 281-707-3539. Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, email, or phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: Holli Pharis, Senior Director of Special Education, [Holli.Pharis@gccisd.net](mailto:Holli.Pharis@gccisd.net) at 281-420-4520.

Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent at 281-707-3220.

## Job Vacancy Announcements

*Policy DC*

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the district's website.

## **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. 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. 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. Under our District of Innovation Plan 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 will be three years.

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. All employees will receive a copy of their contract. Employment policies can be accessed online, or copies will be provided upon request.

**Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees.** Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are employed by a two-year contract term that is not subject to the provisions for nonrenewal or termination under the Texas Education Code.

**Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees.** All paraprofessional and auxiliary 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.

## **Certification and Licenses**

*Policies DBA, DF*

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification, or a professional license, are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to the Human Resources Department in a timely manner. Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify the Human Resources Department when there is action against, or revocation of, their license.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without Chapter 21 due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. 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. Contact the Certification Officer if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

## **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. Failure to verify employment authorization may result in termination.

## **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 by a third-party administrator 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. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may result if an employee refuses to submit to testing or is found to violate district policy.

**Employees Required to Have a Commercial Driver's License.** Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to alcohol and drug 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 for the 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 Training**

### *Policies DBA, DMA*

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to the Director of Athletics/ Physical Education by the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of August.

School nurses and employees with regular contact with students must complete a Texas Education Agency approved, Online training regarding seizure disorder awareness, recognition, and related first aid.

## **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 may request a transfer to another campus or department. An assignment change request must be completed electronically through the districts' Employee Service Center. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Human Resources office and must be approved by the 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.

Lunch Breaks. No thirty (30) minute or one (1) hour lunch or part of a lunch may be used to shorten the beginning or the end of the mandatory eight-hour workday unless there are extraordinary circumstances approved by the site supervisor.

## **ADA Accommodations**

*Policies DAA, DBB, DIA*

The district will provide reasonable accommodations to employees with a disability if the accommodation would allow the individual to perform the essential functions of their job, unless doing so would create an undue hardship. An employee or their supervisor may initiate a request for accommodation by contacting Benefits and identifying an adjustment or change at work that is needed because of a disability. An employee also may submit a written request to HR using the ADA Accommodation Request Form, which is available from the Benefits department.

Upon receiving the reasonable accommodation request, Benefits will meet with the employee and conduct an informal, interactive discussion to identify an accommodation that will allow the employee to perform the essential functions of the job effectively. The district may request medical information concerning the employee's disability to assist in determining what accommodation(s) may be available and appropriate. The employee will be responsible for obtaining the information from their health care provider. Medical information received will be confidential and kept separate from the employee's personnel file. After meeting with the employee and reviewing medical documentation, HR will determine whether the employee is a qualified individual with a disability and develop a reasonable accommodation plan for the employee. Accommodation will be determined on a case-by-case basis. HR will work closely with the employee and supervisor to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided and effective.

## **Campus Employee Daily Time Schedules**

Daily assigned time schedules for all employees shall be determined by the Superintendent or designee and principals. The chart below designates the minimal hour assignments for all contract employees. Principals can or may extend time for contract employees to attend meetings, cover duties or assignments as needed.

All paraprofessional campus employees work an eight-hour workday. In addition to the workday, they take a 30-minute duty-free lunch. The duty-free lunch is unpaid. The campus principal determines the assigned workday hours for paraprofessionals.

| Campus Level                         | Campus Administrators/Teachers | Students              |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| SCTHS                                | 7:10 a.m. – 3:25 p.m.          | 7:25 a.m. – 2:55 p.m. |
| High School – Peter E. Hyland Center | 7:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.          | 7:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. |
| High School – Impact ECHS            | 7:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.          | 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. |
| Tier 1                               | 7:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.          | 7:20 a.m. – 2:50 p.m. |
| Tier 2                               | 7:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.          | 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. |
| Tier 3                               | 8:10 a.m. – 4:25 p.m.          | 8:40 a.m. – 4:10 p.m. |

## **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 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.

The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections of Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act) requires an employee to notify the district if they believe the district is out of compliance in providing breaks for a nursing mother. The employee must give the district 10 days to come into compliance before making any claim of liability against the district. An employee with concerns should contact the Benefits Department, (281) 707 - 3601.

## **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act**

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) provides consideration of accommodations to employees who have known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. An employee seeking a PWFA accommodation should contact the Benefits Department, (281) 707 - 3601 to begin the interactive process.



## **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. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call the Human Resources Department.

## **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

*Policy DBD*

All employees are required to complete in writing the notification process using the HR app in the Goose Creek Portal any outside employment that may create a potential conflict of interest with their assigned duties and responsibilities or the best interest of the district. Human Resources will consider outside employment on a case-by-case basis and determine whether it should be prohibited because of a conflict of interest.

**Administrators.** An employee who has significant administrative duties related to the operation of a school district, including the operation for a campus, program, or other subdivision of the district is restricted from outside employment. Administrators may not receive financial benefits for performing personal services for any business entity that conducts or solicits business with the district.

Administrators are also prohibited from receiving financial benefits for performing personal services for any education business that provides services regarding the curriculum or administration of any school district or financial benefits for performing serviced for other school districts, open enrollment charter schools, and educational service centers. An exception applies to an administrator who is not a superintendent, assistant superintendent, or member of a board of managers if the board approves as required by statute. Services must be performed on the administrator's personal time. Contact the Assistant Superintendent of HR for more information.

## **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. Written 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 receive a copy of their written evaluation, participate in a performance conference with their supervisor, and have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Upon receiving a report, a nursing review committee may review a nurse's nursing services, qualifications, and quality of patient care, as well as the merits of a complaint concerning a nurse, and a determination or recommendation regarding a complaint. A nurse may request, orally or in writing, a determination by the committee regarding conduct requested of the nurse believed to violate the nurse's duty to a patient.

## **Employee Involvement**

### *Policies BQA, BQB*

At both the campus and district levels, Goose Creek CISD 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 Curriculum and Instruction Department.

## **Professional Growth/Staff Meetings**

It is important that school employees attend scheduled district/ campus meetings on time and stay until the meetings are completed. If an absence from a meeting is unavoidable, or if it is necessary to arrive late or leave early the person in charge of the meeting and the respective Principal should be given this information prior to the beginning of the meeting.

## **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 noninstructional 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.

## **Mental Health Training**

### **Policy DMA**

All district employees who regularly interact with students are required to complete an evidence-based mental health training program that is designed to provide instruction regarding the recognition and support of children and youth who experience mental health or substance use issues that may pose a threat to school safety. Employees must provide a certificate of completion to the district that includes the name of the training course, along with supporting documentation confirming that the training meets the requirements of the commissioner rules for mental health training.

Campus staff required to complete the training includes, but is not limited to, teachers, coaches, librarians, instructional coaches, administrators, administrative support personnel, school resource officers, paraprofessionals, substitutes, custodians, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, crossing guards, and district special program liaisons, and supervisors of personnel who regularly interact with students.

# 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 nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid semi-monthly salaries. T Exempt employees are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before the start of each school year. 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 extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule.

Employees should contact the Payroll Department for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

## Annual Verification of Compensation

It is the responsibility of the employees to verify their salary and benefits information annually. This information is available through the TEAMS Employment Service Center. The TEAMS Employee Service Center will ask the employee to verify that the information is correct or submit a request for their information to be reviewed by Human Resources. The district will correct salary errors for the current school year only, if reported by November 1<sup>st</sup> for current employees or sixty (60) days after employment for new hires.

## Paychecks and W-2 Forms

All salary and hourly employees are paid semi-monthly. Paychecks and W-2 Forms will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check and W-2 Form. An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated, and is available on the TEAMS Employee Service Center. Employees are responsible for regularly reviewing the accuracy of their pay statement and should contact the payroll department if they have any questions.

## 2025-2026 Payroll Schedule

| START DATE    |       | TIMECARDS<br>APPROVED BY | PAY DAY |
|---------------|-------|--------------------------|---------|
| 05/24 - 06/06 |       | JUN 09                   | JUL 03  |
| 06/07 - 06/20 |       | JUN 23                   | JUL 18  |
| 06/21 - 07/04 |       | JUL 07                   | AUG 04  |
| 07/05 - 07/18 |       | JUL 21                   | AUG 20  |
| 07/19 - 08/01 |       | AUG 04                   | SEP 04  |
| 08/02 - 08/15 |       | AUG 18                   | SEP 19  |
| 08/16 - 08/29 |       | SEP 01                   | OCT 03  |
| 08/30 - 09/19 | 3 wks | SEP 22                   | OCT 20  |
| 09/20 - 10/03 |       | OCT 06                   | NOV 04  |
| 10/04 - 10/24 | 3 wks | OCT 27                   | NOV 20  |
| 10/25 - 10/31 | 1 wk  | NOV 03                   | DEC 04  |
| 11/01 - 11/21 | 3 wks | NOV 24                   | DEC 19  |
| 11/22 - 12/05 |       | DEC 08                   | JAN 02  |
| 12/06 - 01/02 | 4 wks | JAN 05                   | JAN 20  |
| 01/03 - 01/09 | 1 wk  | JAN 12                   | FEB 04  |
| 01/10 - 01/23 |       | JAN 26                   | FEB 20  |
| 01/24 - 02/06 |       | FEB 09                   | MAR 04  |
| 02/07 - 02/20 |       | FEB 23                   | MAR 20  |
| 02/21 - 03/13 | 3 wks | MAR 16                   | APR 03  |
| 03/14 - 03/27 |       | MAR 30                   | APR 20  |
| 03/28 - 04/10 |       | APR 13                   | MAY 04  |
| 04/11 - 04/24 |       | APR 27                   | MAY 20  |
| 04/25 - 05/08 |       | MAY 11                   | JUN 04  |
| 05/09 - 05/22 |       | MAY 26                   | JUN 18  |
| 05/23 - 06/05 |       | JUN 08                   | JUL 03  |
| 06/06 - 06/19 |       | JUN 22                   | JUL 20  |
| 06/20 - 07/03 |       | JUL 06                   | AUG 04  |
| 07/04 - 07/17 |       | JUL 20                   | AUG 20  |
| 07/18 - 07/31 |       | AUG 03                   | SEP 04  |
| 08/01 - 08/14 |       | AUG 17                   | SEP 18  |

## Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employees are required to have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. Changes to an employee's direct deposit account must be submitted ten business days prior to the next pay date for the change to be effective. Final paychecks will be electronically

deposited into the direct deposit account on file once employment has ended. Contact the Payroll Department for more information regarding the automatic payroll deposit service

## **Payroll Deductions**

### *Policy CFEA*

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

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax required for all full-time employees
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986)
- FICA Alternative (part-time employees who are not TRS eligible)
- 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 health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans or prepaid tuition programs. Employees also may request a payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations and certain charitable contributions approved by the Board. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

**Overpayments.** Employees are not entitled to any funds the district overpays. An overpayment occurs if an employee is paid more than the amount the employee should have been paid under the assigned pay grade and applicable supplemental pay.

Generally, an overpayment should be repaid in one pay cycle, however if this creates an undue hardship for the employee, the district has the discretion to develop a repayment plan, and payments will be deducted from employees' pay accordingly. Repayments must be reconciled in the same fiscal year that the overpayment occurred.

## **Overtime Compensation**

### *Policies DEAB, DEC*

The district compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only nonexempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor. A

nonexempt employee who works overtime without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule.

Nonexempt employees whose pay is annualized are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours in the workweek. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins on Saturday and ends on Friday.

## **Compensatory Time**

Employees may be compensated for overtime with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay at the rate of time and a half. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Employees can accumulate up to 60 hours of comp time.
- Once an employee's comp time balance accumulates 60 or more hours, the payroll department will automatically pay down to 30 hours on the next paycheck.
- Comp time must be used in the duty year that it is earned and any unused comp time as of June 30th of each year, will be paid off according to the payroll schedule.
- 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 is required to use comp time before using available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time records will be maintained on all nonexempt 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 and Executive Director 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 and meals.

## **Health, Dental, and Life Insurance**

### *Policy CRD*

Group health insurance coverage is available to all full-time employees. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the board of trustees. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, prices, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees on the benefits webpage at [www.gccisd.net](http://www.gccisd.net).

The health insurance plan year is from January through December. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the first 31 days (about 1 month) of employment. Current employees can make changes to their insurance coverage during a life event or during annual enrollment. Employees should contact the Benefits Department for more information.

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

### *Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, vision, cancer, disability, voluntary life insurance, and hospital indemnity. Premiums for these programs will be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the Benefits 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 pretax basis (i.e., cancer, accident, vision, dental, critical illness, health savings account, flexible health and dependent savings account.). 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 and during the specified time period.

## **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

### *Policy CRE*

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer from a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from TASB, effective date of hire.



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.

Employees must report all injuries or incidents on the job immediately to their supervisor or campus/department secretary. 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.

## **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 Human Resource Department.

## **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. TRS provides members 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.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Human Resources Department as soon as possible. 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)). See page three for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

## **Employee Wellness Clinic**

GCCISD Wellness Clinic is open to all full-time employees of GCCISD. It is not necessary or required to be covered by the district insurance and there is no cost to receive treatment at the Wellness Clinic.

Address:

Education Service Center (side entrance)

2610 N Alexander Dr. Baytown, TX 77520, 281-707-3411

Operating days and times are:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Visits are set up by appointment only. All appointments are subject to the late arrival policy. If you are more than 8 minutes late for your appointment, you will be asked to reschedule. To cancel an appointment, please call (281) 707-3411. For all no-show appointments, you will be subject to the \$25 payroll deduction.

### **Fitness Center**

The GCCISD Employee Fitness Center is open and located at 2610 N. Alexander, Baytown, TX 77520 (Education Service Center, entrance directly under the Fitness Center sign). We are open Monday - Friday from 5 AM - 8 PM and Saturday - Sunday 8 AM - 8 PM. This facility is open to all full-time employees. You will scan your badge at the entrance to gain access to this facility during operating hours. Please use the entrance directly under the Fitness Center sign when entering the building.

The GCCISD Wellness (Fitness) Center is designed to promote a healthy environment for our employees to exercise and reach their fitness goals. The equipment available onsite include cardio equipment, weight machines, free weights, yoga equipment, and customized programs to fit your needs.

Please note the following requirements for this facility:

- Badge is required
- No childcare onsite
- Dress Code: shirt, closed in athletic shoes, proper workout attire and mask (optional). No exposed midriff.
- Bring your own towel

**Employee Assistance Program** resources are available to support you and your family with counseling, legal support, and financial guidance. These resources can help improve your emotional well-being, and address personal, family, and life issues. Information on these resources can be found on the Benefits page of the GCCISD website.

**Voya Travel Assistance** offers you and your dependents services when traveling 100 miles or more from home, including: medical assistance services, emergency medical transport services, travel assistance services such as pre-trip and cultural information, security services and accessible technology. Voya Travel Assistance services are provided by International Medical Group, Inc., Indianapolis, IN

**FinPath** is a financial education program paid for by GCCISD to help you take control of your finances and reduce your financial stress.

**Clever RX** helps you save money by using a prescription drug savings card. They partner with the healthcare community to bring state-of-the-art, money-savings tools to participants. It helps you save up to 80% off prescriptions drugs and often beats the average copay. Plus, it's completely free. Thanks to Clever RX, you will never overpay for prescriptions again!

## Leaves and Absences

*Policies DEC, DECA, DECB*

The district offers employees paid and unpaid leave of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leave of absence. Employees who expect to be absent for an extended period of more than five days should call the Benefits Department for information about applicable leave benefits, payment of insurance premiums, and requirements for communicating with the district.

If a position requires a substitute, only half or whole day increments may be used. If the position does not require a substitute, ¼ hour increments may be used. 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:

- Local Sick
- State Sick
- State Personal

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate form or certification. Any unapproved absences or absences beyond accumulated or available paid leave shall result in deductions from the employee's pay.

If an hourly employee does not report or request leave of absence(s) according to district procedures, the incident is considered a "no call/no show." An employee who is absent for 3 consecutive days without notice is considered to have abandoned their job and may face disciplinary consequences up to and including termination.

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

- Spouse
- Son or daughter, including a 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 another individual who stands *in loco parentis* to the employee.
- Sibling, stepsibling, and sibling-in-law
- Grandparent and grandchild
- Any person residing in the employee's household at the time of illness or death.

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

**Medical Certification.** Any employee, who is absent more than 3 days 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 district may require medical certification due to an employee's questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the supervisor or superintendent. The district may also request medical certification when employee requests leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for the employee's serious health condition, a serious health condition of the employee's spouse, parent, or child, or for military caregiver leave.

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 an individual's family member, or an embryo lawfully held 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 FMLA 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. Employees who exhaust all paid leave time and move into dock status will be required to pay for insurance premiums. Payment must be made prior to the first day of the month for which the employee wishes to retain coverage.

Under TRS-Active Care rules, an employee is no longer eligible for insurance through the district after six months of unpaid leave other than FML. If an employee's unpaid leave extends for more than six months, the district will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

## **Personal Leave**

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of personal leave is equivalent to the number of hours per day in an employee's usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time. 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 may be used in the same manner as state sick leave.

**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 must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor 3 days in advance of the anticipated absence and may not exceed 2 consecutive days. Personal leave are limited to 5 per semester. 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.

**Leave Proration.** If an employee separates from employment with the district before his or her last duty day of the year, or begins employment after the first duty day, state personal leave will be prorated based on the actual time employed. When an employee separates from employment before the last duty day of the school year, the employee's final paycheck will be reduced by the amount of state personal leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rata entitlement for the school year.

## **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 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

- Active military service

## **Local Leave**

All employees shall earn additional workdays of local sick leave as described in policy DEC (Local). Employees who are hired after the beginning of the school year, or leave before the end of the school year, shall earn a prorated number of sick leave days. Local sick leave shall accumulate without limit.

## **Vacation**

### *Policy DED*

Vacation Twelve-month employees of the district shall be eligible for vacation each year with pay. Employees shall earn vacation days based on the number of days employed and the years of service with the District. Vacation days begin to accrue from the first day of employment.

Twelve- month employees with less than 10 years of service in the District shall earn vacation days at the rate of .0417 days of vacation for each day of employment within the period July 1 through June 30. This is a total accumulation of 10 vacation days.

Twelve- month employees with 10 to 19 years of service in the District shall earn vacation days at the rate of .0625 days of vacation for each day of employment within the period July 1 through June 30. This is a total accumulation of 15 vacation days.

Twelve- month employees with 20 or more years of service in the District shall earn vacation day at the rate of .0833 days of vacation for each day of employment within the period July 1 through June 30. This is a total accumulation of 20 vacation days.

In computing the vacation days earned, an employee shall receive a full day of vacation for each fractional day at or above .50.

A maximum of 5 days of vacation may be carried forward to the following fiscal year (July 1- June 30). Therefore, on July 1st, employees with more than 5 unused vacation days will lose excess days.

Those employed after July 1 of a school year shall earn a prorated share of vacation time based on the above formula.

Maintenance, Transportation, and Operations employees who now receive three and four weeks of vacation, and those eligible to receive three and four weeks during the 1989-90 school year will be “grandfathered” under the previous policy. Personnel “grandfathered” at three weeks of vacation will be eligible for four weeks of vacation with their twentieth year of service.

Vacation day requests for one to three days must be submitted to and approved by the immediate supervisor with at least three days' notice. Vacation requests for four or more days should be submitted for approval at least two weeks in advance. Only two weeks of vacation may be taken at a time. No vacations may be taken after the last day of a GCCISD Summer Hours Workweek and the first week of school unless there are extenuating circumstances. Exceptions must be approved by the Superintendent.

## **Sick Leave Bank**

As described in District policy, the Sick Leave Bank (SLB) is a bank of local sick leave days established on a voluntary basis by full-time District staff members and those employed specifically for half-time positions to be used by any member of the SLB who suffers a personal illness/injury and who have exhausted all available paid leave. Sick Leave shall run concurrently with FMLA or TDL leave, if applicable.

Only those employees who have donated leave days and opted to join SLB are eligible for such leave. Employees shall have an opportunity each school year to join the SLB.

### **Purpose**

The Sick Leave Bank (SLB) is established to provide eligible employees with additional paid sick leave after exhausting their own accrued leave, in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury affecting the employee, the employee's spouse, dependent child, or parent.

### **Definitions**

#### **Catastrophic Illness or Injury:**

A severe condition or combination of conditions that:

- Significantly impairs the employee's ability to perform essential job duties
- Requires services of a licensed medical practitioner for a prolonged period
- Typically involves hospitalization or major medical treatment
- Is expected to result in disability or death

### **Eligibility**

An employee must meet the following criteria to be eligible to draw from the SLB:

- Members are eligible for SLB only after 90 business days of employment.
- Exhausted all available paid leave.
- Medical absence of more than eight (8) consecutive workdays.
- Leave request coincides with an approved FMLA or TDL absence, if applicable.
- Only leave for designated workdays may be approved.

- A 12-month waiting period applies after any prior use of SLB benefits.

### **Leave Allotment**

- Up to **15 SLB days** may be granted for catastrophic illness or injury involving care for a spouse, child, or parent.
- Requests for **up to 15 additional days** may be made for a total of **30 days**, contingent on availability.
- The number of days granted shall not exceed the remaining scheduled duty days in the school year.

### **Covered Family Members**

SLB days may be requested for:

- The employee
- Spouse
- Parent
- Son, stepson, daughter, stepdaughter
- Child for whom the employee is the legal guardian

### **Qualified Events and Limitations**

#### **Covered Conditions:**

- Life-threatening illness or injury
- Hospitalization or major surgery
- Pregnancy complications requiring hospitalization or home care

#### **Mental Health Claims:**

- Must be under active care of a licensed mental health provider.
- Must include in-patient overnight hospitalization
- A therapeutic plan, duration of illness, and treatment updates every 20 days are required.
- Maximum of **21 days**

### **Exclusions**

SLB days shall not be granted for:



- Employees receiving TRS, IMRF, Social Security Disability, Short or Long-Term Disability, or Workers' Compensation benefits.
- Routine pregnancies or planned C-sections without complications.
- Requests for Sick Leave Bank days will not be approved for treatment or surgery scheduled for personal convenience. Elective or non-emergency procedures should be planned during non-contractual periods, such as school breaks or summer months. Additionally, any treatment or surgery scheduled during critical times in the school calendar (e.g., state testing windows, start/end of school year) may be excluded from Sick Leave Bank approval. Exceptions will be considered only in cases of documented medical urgency or unforeseen complications as verified by a physician.
- Chronic conditions will not be covered by the Sick Leave Bank unless there are documented complications that result in a significant change in the individual's medical status and prevent them from performing their job duties.

### **SLB Request Process**

1. Submit SLB Request Form to Employee Health and Wellness.
2. Include required healthcare provider certification.
3. Review Committee may request a second medical opinion at district expense.
4. The Sick Leave Bank Committee meets monthly; 3 out of 5 members must approve.
5. If approved, days are credited to the employee's sick leave balance via payroll.

### **Member Conduct While on SLB**

While receiving SLB benefits, employees may not:

- Volunteer or work for GCCISD in any capacity.
- Use district property for personal reasons.
- Accept outside employment or self-employment.

### **Termination of Benefits**

SLB access and membership are forfeited upon:

- Termination or suspension of employment,
- Evidence of misuse or abuse of SLB privileges,
- Voluntary cancellation of membership during open enrollment.

### **Governing Committee**

**Name:** Sick Leave Bank Governing Committee

**Composition:**

- Director of Employee Health and Wellness (Chair)
- District Nurse Coordinator
- Director of Human Resources
- Two rotating campus administrators (annual rotation)

**Authority:**

- Responsible for reviewing and approving all SLB requests.
- Retains discretion to interpret policy and render final decisions.
- Decisions are **final, non-appealable, and not subject to grievance procedures.**

**Waiver of Claims**

By enrolling in the SLB, employees agree to waive all claims, grievances, or causes of action against GCCISD, the SLB Governing Committee, and its members regarding the administration or outcome of SLB requests.

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

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

**What is FMLA leave?**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees with **job-protected leave** for qualifying family and medical reasons.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) enforces the FMLA for most employees. Eligible employees can take **up to 12 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child with you,
- Your serious mental or physical health condition that makes you unable to work,
- To care for your spouse, child, or parent with a serious mental or physical health condition, and
- Certain qualifying reasons related to the foreign deployment of your spouse, child or parent who is a military service member.

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

You have the right to use FMLA leave in **one block of time**. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave **intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule** by working less hours each day or week. Read Fact Sheet #28M(c) for more information.

FMLA leave is **not paid leave**, but you may choose, or be required by your employer, to use any employer-provided paid leave if your employer's paid leave policy covers the reason for which you need FMLA leave.

### **Am I eligible to take FMLA leave?**

You are an **eligible employee** if all the following apply:

- You work for a covered employer,
- You have worked for your employer at least 12 months,
- You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before your leave, and
- Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location

Airline flight crew employees have different "hours of service" requirements.

You work for a **covered employer** if **one** of the following applies:

- You work for a private employer that had at least 50 employees during at least 20 workweeks in the current or previous calendar year,
- You work for an elementary or public or private secondary school, or
- You work for a public agency, such as a local, state, or federal government agency. Most federal employees are covered by Title II of the FMLA, administered by the Office of Personnel Management

### **How do I request FMLA leave?**

Generally, **to request FMLA leave you must:**

- Follow your employer's normal policies for requesting leave,
- Give notice at least 30 days before your need for FMLA leave, or

- If advance notice is not possible, give notice as soon as possible.

You **do not have to share a medical diagnosis** but must provide enough information to your employer so they can determine whether the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. You **must also inform your employer if FMLA leave was previously taken** or approved for the same reason when requesting additional leave.

Your **employer may request certification** from a health care provider to verify medical leave and may request certification of a qualifying exigency.

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

State employees may be subject to certain limitations in pursuit of direct lawsuits regarding leave for their own serious health conditions. Most federal and certain congressional employees are also covered by the law but are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or Congress

### **What does my employer need to do?**

If you are eligible for FMLA leave, your employer **must**:

- Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason,
- Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis as if you had not taken leave,
- After 60 days of leave, you will receive a COBRA notice for the continuation of your benefits
- Allow you to return to the same job, or a virtually identical job with the same pay, benefits, and other working conditions, including shift and location, at the end of your leave.

Your **employer cannot interfere with your FMLA rights** or threaten or punish you for exercising your rights under the law. For example, your employer cannot retaliate against you for requesting FMLA leave or cooperating with a WHD investigation.

After becoming aware that your need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, your **employer must confirm whether you are eligible** or not eligible for FMLA leave. If your employer determines that you are eligible, **your employer must notify you in writing**:

- About your FMLA rights and responsibilities, and

- How much of your requested leave, if any, will be FMLA-protected leave.

### Where can I find more information?

Call **1-866-487-9243** or visit **dol.gov/fmla** to learn more.

If you believe your rights under the FMLA have been violated, you may file a complaint with WHD or file a private lawsuit against your employer in court. **Scan the QR code to learn about our WHD complaint process.**



## Local Procedures for Implementing Family and Medical Leave Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period

- measured forward from the date an individual employee's first FML begins

**Use of Paid Leave.** FML runs concurrently with accrued sick and personal leave, temporary disability leaves, 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. Teachers have the option of not using paid leave during an FML absence for pregnancy or birth or adoption of a child.

**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 caregivers 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. When leave is taken for the employee's own serious health condition, the certification must address the employee's ability to perform essential job functions. 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. Fitness for duty is not required when an employee returns to work following leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition; to care for a child following birth, adoption, or foster care placement; or for qualifying exigency leave.

**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 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 employees 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 can 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 Benefits Department for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Return to Work / Modified Duty Program**

The district offers a Return to Work / Modified Duty Program to transition employees back to work with restrictions. Any employee who has been off work due to an injury or illness under FMLA, TDL, or WC, and has been released to return to work with restrictions is eligible for this program. Any employee who falls in this category should contact the Benefits Department for instructions. The Benefits Department will work with supervisors to accommodate requested restrictions and assist with employees returning to work. All approved accommodation will be subject to 2 week increments not to exceed 60 days.

## **Temporary Disability Leave**

**Certified Employees.** Any full-time educator as defined by TEC 21.409 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 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 the 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, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days.

### **Length of Leave**

TEC establishes the maximum length of TDL as 180 calendar days. The amount of time granted is determined by the medical need established in the medical certification. For example, a teacher requiring six to eight weeks to recover from pregnancy would be limited to six to eight weeks of TDL.

### **Involuntary Placement**

If an educator's medical condition interferes with the performance of his or her regular duties, the individual may be placed on an involuntary TDL without consent. Based on a superintendent's recommendation, the board shall place an eligible employee on TDL if the board determines, in consultation with the physician who performed the medical examination, the employee's condition interferes with the performance of regular duties.

In accordance with Policy DGBA (LOCAL), an employee may file a complaint disputing their placement on TDL. The employee may present testimony or other relevant information to the board regarding their fitness to perform regular duties.

### **Counting TDL**

TDL is granted per incident as one continuous block of time and is not intended to be taken on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis. It's the only leave recorded in calendar days. This means the nonwork days, such as weekends, holidays, and extended breaks (including spring, winter, and summer breaks), are counted toward the employee's total leave entitlement.

### **Other Provisions**

GCCISD requires TDL to run concurrent with other district paid leave and Family Medical Leave (FML). This information may be found in Policy DEC (LOCAL).

TDL is unpaid leave. If an employee is only eligible for TDL, districts are not required to contribute to the employee's health insurance premium. Employees may continue the group health care coverage by paying the total premium themselves. The premium must be received prior to the first day of the month for which the employee wishes to continue coverage.

### **Return-to-Work**

An employee must submit a request to return to work at least 30 days prior to the anticipated return-to-work, when applicable. This request must include a physician's statement regarding the employee's ability to perform his or her regular work duties.

Although TDL provides an educator with a guarantee to return to work the following school year, it does not guarantee the employee will be returned to the same position previously held prior to TDL. Reinstatement requirements at the end of TDL include the following:

The employee must be reinstated to the school he or she was previously assigned to if an appropriate assignment is available.

If an appropriate assignment is not available, the educator may be assigned to another campus, subject to the approval of the campus principal.

If a position is not available at another campus before the end of the school year, the employee must be reinstated to a comparable position at the original campus at the beginning of the next school year.

## **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 calendar days.

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 -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 -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 Benefits Department.

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 non-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**

Approved leave for death in the immediate family shall be for not more than three workdays for each occurrence, subject to the approval of the supervisor/principal and shall not be deducted from state or local sick days. The term "immediate family" is defined as:

1. Spouse.
2. Son or daughter, including a 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.
3. Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, or another individual who stands in loco parentis to the employee.
4. Sibling, stepsibling, sibling-in-law.
5. Grandparent, Grandparent-in-law, and grandchild.
6. Any person in the employee's household at the time of illness or death.

For purposes of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the definitions of spouse, parent, son, or daughter, and next of kin are found in DECA(LEGAL).

## **Jury Duty**

*Policies DEC, DG*

The district provides paid leave to employees who are summoned to jury duty, including service on a grand jury. The district will not discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce any regular employee because of juror or grand juror service or for the employee's attendance or scheduled attendance in connection with the service in any court in the United States.

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 with a copy of the summons 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 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 and will not be required to use personal 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 15 days of paid leave per fiscal year when engaged in authorized training or duty orders by proper authority. An additional seven days of leave per fiscal year are available if called to state on active duty in response to a disaster. 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 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 Benefits Department. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five 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 Benefits Department for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## Mental Health Leave for Peace Officers and Licensed Telecommunicators

A district shall develop and adopt a policy allowing the use of mental health leave by peace officers employed by the district who experience a traumatic event in the scope of that employment. The mental health leave policy must:

1. Provide clear and objective guidelines establishing the circumstances under which a peace officer is granted mental health leave and may use mental health leave;
2. Entitle a peace officer to mental health leave without a deduction in salary or other compensation;
3. Enumerate the number of mental health leave days available to a peace officer; and
4. Detail the level of anonymity for a peace officer who takes mental health leave.

The mental health leave policy may provide a list of mental health services available to peace officers in the district.

## **Quarantine Leave for Peace Officers**

The district shall develop and implement a paid quarantine leave policy for peace officers who are employed by the district and ordered to quarantine or isolate due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty. A paid quarantine leave policy will include:

- Provide that a peace officer on paid quarantine leave receive:
  - All employment benefits and compensation, including leave accrual, pension benefits, and health benefit plan benefits for the duration of the leave;
  - Reimbursement for reasonable costs related to the quarantine, including lodging, medical, and transportation; and
  - Require that the leave be ordered by the person's supervisor or the district's health authority.
- A district will not reduce a peace officer's sick leave balance, vacation leave balance, holiday leave balance, or other paid leave balance in connection with paid quarantine leave taken in accordance with the district's policy.

Local Gov't Code 180.008

## **Leave for Police Officers for Illness or Injury**

A full-time district employed licensed police officer who regularly serves in a law enforcement capacity in a district police department is entitled to a paid leave of absence (LOA) for an illness or injury related to the person's line of duty. If necessary, the leave shall continue for at least one year.

If unable to return to work at the end of the paid leave and any extension, a police officer may use accumulated sick, vacation, and other accrued leave before being placed on unpaid temporary leave. At the end of temporary leave, the police officer will be reinstated at the same rank and with the same seniority the person had before going on temporary leave.

# **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 the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include awards for years of service.

## **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, the Community Engagement 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. They include but are not limited to the following: News of the Week, Goose Creek CISD at A Glance, The GC Journal.

# 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 can be found on the district website, Human Resources page.

# 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 up to and including termination.
- 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.
- 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, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC no later than 48 hours after the superintendent knew of the incident.

The *Educators' Code of Ethics*, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all district employees must adhere to, 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. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification. (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 intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly 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 that are used 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, knowingly, or recklessly 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, abuse, or distribution of controlled substances, 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.

## **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 who provides information for a disciplinary investigation or proceeding under this chapter.

**Standard 2.8** The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly subject a colleague to sexual harassment.

### **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.

## **Employee Standards of Dress**

An employee's dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for his or her assignment, and in accordance with the standards below. To further the expectation of an optimal learning and educational environment, where the public is welcome, employees are to dress with professionalism.

The standard of dress has been established to

- Reflect the high standards of the community, adhering to good taste, modesty, and dignity.
- Create an atmosphere of respect for authority, set a positive role model for the students, promote safety, and encourage proper personal hygiene and grooming; and
- Promote a consistent standard of dress and grooming.

## **Employee Use of Face Coverings**

Appropriate and consistent use of face coverings is more important when students, teachers, and staff are transitioning indoors and/or when social distancing of at least 6 feet is difficult to implement or maintain.

Face coverings are defined as a mask and/or full-face shield. Masks include non-medical and medical grade disposable face masks and cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). Full-face shields may be used in place of a mask to protect eyes, nose, and mouth whenever a mask is not feasible or whenever the education context mix benefits from the ability to see an individual's full face. (TEA SY 20-21 Public Health Planning Guidance, Jul 7 28, 2020, page 6)

ALL employees are welcomed and/or encouraged to wear appropriate face coverings as described above. Face coverings are optional for this year.

These guidelines will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they address the standards of the community and the District. Using the following guidelines, site administrators have the final decision to enforce acceptable employee dress and grooming standards.

## **General Guidelines**

Employees are to wear clothing that is neat and clean. Employees are not to wear clothing that is tight, revealing, torn, tattered, dirty, excessively faded, containing visual or written content, other than authorized district attire, or which is actually or potentially disruptive to the school environment. Sweat suits, jogging/wind suits, overalls, or denim jeans of any color may not be worn.

Jewelry/accessories that could cause a safety hazard may not be worn. In keeping with professional decorum, earrings may be worn by female employees only, and ears are the only exposed areas of the body on which pierced jewelry may be worn. Tattoos must be covered with an appropriate, non-distracting covering.

Footwear must be worn at all times. Shoes traditionally worn around the home (i.e., slippers or house shoes) or to the beach (i.e., rubber flip-flops or rubber croc style shoes) are not permitted. Tennis/athletic shoes that are clean and in good condition may be worn.

Head Coverings such as broad-brimmed or wide-brimmed hats, bucket hats, legionnaire hats may be permitted during outdoor activities on field days, field trips, designated days, and other related outdoor extracurricular activities.

Sunglasses that are 100% UV protective may be worn outside during field days, field trips or other outdoor extracurricular activities.

Employees may bring sunscreen to work without a physician's note or prescription. Note: SPF 30 broad-spectrum sunscreen is recommended. Employees will be encouraged to apply and reapply their own sunscreen as necessary during outdoor activities including field trips and extracurricular activities.

The site administrator may designate up to one day per week as "school spirit" day. On that particular day, it is permissible to wear an approved shirt with a school logo with jeans. On special days/events (i.e., Western Day and Red Ribbon Week, etc.) the site administrator may also designate special attire. This special attire must adhere to general dress code guidelines. The site administrator will determine dress for workdays and site-based staff development days.

## **Classroom and General Guidelines**

### **Women**

Women are to wear dresses, skirts, dress or business casual slacks, or business-appropriate Capri pants with a business or business casual blouse or jacket. Sweaters or turtlenecks may be worn. Shorts and cargo style pants may not be worn. Women's skirts/dresses are to be no shorter than slightly above the knee, and slits, flaps, or openings in skirts/dresses may not be more than fingertip length. Seasonal/decorated shirts and blouses may be worn. Tank tops, backless apparel, midriffs, tops with fewer than two straps, sleeveless tops or tops that are revealing (low cut or transparent) or see through are not acceptable. Spandex or garments that are tightly form fitting are not permitted. Unnatural colored hair is not permitted.

### **Men**

Men are to wear dress or business casual slacks. Shirts with collars, sweaters, or turtlenecks are to be worn. Socks must be worn with shoes. Shorts and cargo style pants may not be worn. Male administrators have the option of wearing a tie or a sports coat/jacket while on duty during regular school hours. Tank tops, sleeveless shirts or shirts that are worn in a revealing (unbuttoned, transparent, or low cut) manner are not acceptable.

Hair must be well groomed and not extend below the base of the neck. Men are permitted facial hair if neatly trimmed and moderate in style. All facial hair, however, must be fully established by the start of the school year or upon return from school breaks.

## **Violations**

Violation of the above Employee Standard of Dress will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

## **Dress Code For Non-Campus/Classroom Areas**

### **Physical Education/Athletics**

Physical Education teachers are expected to wear clothes appropriate for teaching physical education. Collared or crew neck shirts (with sleeves) with shorts no shorter than mid- thigh, coordinated warm-ups or wind suits, and athletic shoes may be worn. Spandex or garments that are too tight are not permitted. Caps/visors/sunglasses may be worn while on duty outside the school building.

### **Guidelines for Personnel Serving in Dual Role (Classroom and Physical Education Teacher/Coach during the school day):**

Coaches who begin their workday as classroom instructors should report to duty dressed according to guidelines for teachers. Coaches may change their dress to "Physical Education/Athletics" guidelines during periods assigned to physical education/athletic classes.

Coaches assigned to a physical education/athletics class during the day who begin the workday in the classroom and then must return to the classroom after teaching the physical education/athletics class will be allowed the option of completing the school day in coordinated warm-ups or wind suits and athletic shoes.

Coaches who begin the workday in physical education/athletics class will be allowed to begin the day in attire listed under physical education/athletics guidelines but will be expected to change into dress guidelines for classroom teachers for their initial daily classroom assignment. After the initial classroom assignment, a coach who returns to physical education/athletic class will be allowed to follow guidelines listed in the second statement above.

## **Technology Support Technicians**

Due to the nature of their work, technology support technicians may wear jeans that are neat and clean and have no tears, holes, or frayed edges.

## **Identification Badges**

All Employees- full-time, part-time, substitute, or temporary- must wear their official GCCISD ID badge while on District property, on duty, or while representing GCCISD off District property. Badges will be visible at all times with the picture facing forward. Wearing ID badges during extracurricular events is voluntary unless the employee is on duty.

The official GCCISD ID badge should be worn only by the individual to whom it was issued.

## **Damaged or Misplaced ID badges**

Employees shall immediately report the loss of an ID badge to Human Resources to request a duplicate. Replacement badges due to damage or legal name change will be provided by the District, however you must present the damaged badge to Human Resources at the time of replacement. If the badge is misplaced or lost, a replacement fee of \$10.00 will be incurred by the employee.

## **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 up to and including termination.

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report 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.

Any district employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, or believes that another employee has experienced such prohibited conduct, should immediately report the alleged acts. The employee may report the alleged acts to his or her supervisor, the campus principal, the Title IX coordinator, or the superintendent. The district's Title IX coordinator's name and contact information is listed in the Equal Employment Opportunity section of this handbook.

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

<http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/591?filter=DIA>

## **Harassment of Students**

*Policies DF, 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. Any district employee who suspects or receives direct or indirect notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, of a student shall immediately notify the district's Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, or superintendent and take any other steps required by district policy.

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 has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect occurred must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

Procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students are listed in the below links:

<http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/591?filter=DHB>

<http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/591?filter=FFH>

<http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/591?filter=DF>

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

*Policies DG, FFG, GRA*

All employees with reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect, as defined by Texas Family Code §261.001, are required by state law to make a report to a law enforcement agency, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering the facility) within **24 hours** after the employee first has reasonable cause to believe that the child has been abused or neglected. Law enforcement agency includes the Texas Department of Public Safety, a municipal police department, a county sheriff's office, or a county constable's office and does not include the district police.

A person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child (including a teacher) is required to report alleged abuse or neglect to DFPS even if a report is made to law enforcement.

Employees are also required to make a report if they have reasonable 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, elderly person, or person with a disability.

Reports to DFPS can be made using the Texas Abuse Hotline

<https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx> or (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, a 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 taking an adverse employment action against a certified or licensed professional 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 make the required report may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. The offense of failure to report by a professional may be a state jail felony if it is shown the individual intended to conceal the abuse or neglect. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report 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.

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.

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

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at Student Services. 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 maltreated. Abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined to include any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual, indecency with a child, improper relationship between an educator and a student, sexual assault, or encouraging a child to engage in sexual conduct, 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 has reasonable cause to believe 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 following the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

## **Reports to Texas Education Agency**

*Policies DF, DHB, DHC*

The conduct of an employee must be reported to 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
- Engaged in inappropriate communication with a student or minor
- Failed to maintain appropriate boundaries with a student or minor

For certified employee the conduct below must also be reported:

- 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
- 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 or engaged in conduct violating the assessment security procedures established under TEC §39.0301. "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).

## **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.

## **Scope and Sequence**

### *Policy DG*

If a teacher determines that students need more or less time in a specific area to demonstrate proficiency in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for that subject and grade level, the district will not penalize the teacher for not following the district's scope and sequence.

The district may take appropriate action if a teacher does not follow the district's scope and sequence based on documented evidence of a deficiency in classroom instruction. This documentation can be obtained through observation or substantiated and documented third-party information.

# Technology Resources

## *Policy CQ*

Goose Creek CISD allows certain employees to utilize different District-owned technology resources (computers, laptops, tablets, cell phones, networks, e-mail accounts, cloud storage, devices connected to GCCISD networks, all district-owned devices used on or off school property, weather connected to the District's network or connected through a personal data plan or other means of access. Use of a District-owned technology resources is a privilege, not a right and are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. With this privilege comes responsibility. Participating employees are responsible at all times for the proper use of the technology resources and are required to abide by the provisions of the acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to comply with the guidelines set forth may result in suspension of access, termination of privileges, and may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district.
- Does not unduly burden the district's technology resources.
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance.
- Has no commercial purpose; and
- Is limited in the same manner as Personal Use of Electronic Communications. An employee shall not use technology resources for personal use while assigned to other duties.

Any user identified as a security risk, as having improperly used District technology resources, or as having violated District and/or campus acceptable use policies or administrative regulations may be denied access to District technology resources.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations, guidelines, and user agreements consistent with the purposes and mission of the District and with law and policy.

Networked communication systems such as ParentSquare, Instant Messaging, Online Chat, Video Conferencing and Web-exing, are real-time network communication systems and are primarily available for instructional and administrative purposes. Information shared using these systems should be transitory in nature, as documented under Email Retention Transitory Information 1.1.057.

Use of any Districts technology resources shall not be considered confidential or private (including but not limited to e-mails, direct messaging, text messages, locally stored files, cloud

stored files, etc). Designated District staff shall be authorized to monitor the District's technology resources at any time to ensure appropriate use.

- 1.** Employees are responsible for the content stored on the technology device. Users may download personal content to the device as long as it meets the expectations set forth in Board Policy, Employee Handbook, Administrative Guidelines and other legal or district requirements. Any personal content on District technology resources shall not be considered private and may be monitored or accessed to ensure appropriate use of the device(s).
- 2.** The technology device must be secured with a passcode/password at all times. Incidents or suspected incidents of unauthorized access and/or disclosure of confidential data are to be immediately reported to the campus principal or immediate supervisor and the Technology Department.
- 3.** Goose Creek CISD reserves the right to remotely wipe, without notice, all data from the technology device if confidential data is suspected to be at risk of disclosure, the Operating System is suspected to have been breached, or a violation of Board Policy or the Employee Handbook. Costs incurred by an employee for personal content on the District device will not be recoverable. For example: if an App is downloaded that is determined to contain inappropriate content (sexually explicit, obscene, etc.) and the device is wiped/reset, the employee will not be reimbursed for any personal purchased App.
- 4.** Users will not change or remove (or attempt to change or remove) security features on the technology device. "Jailbreaking" is not allowed.
- 5.** Users must take reasonable measures to safeguard the device from damage, loss, or theft such as using the district provided protective case. Users must immediately report damage, loss, or theft of the technology device to the campus principal or immediate supervisor and file a police report where appropriate. Users are responsible for the cost of replacing lost or damaged technology resources and associated accessories, such as power cords.
- 6.** When requested by the District, or upon separation of employment, the participating employee agrees to return the technology device, case, charger, and any other District- issued accessories to their campus principal or immediate supervisor in the same condition it was issued, less reasonable wear.
- 7.** If a user fails to return the technology device, case, charger, and any other accessories upon request or upon separation from employment, the employee hereby consents to the District deducting from his or her final paycheck the cost of replacing the technology resource and related accessories. As a means of reference, as of June 2025, iPad cost is \$324.00, power adaptor and cable are \$38.00, and case is \$109.95. This cost is subject to change as equipment costs change.
- 8.** The assigned technology device remains the property of Goose Creek CISD at all times, including while being used or possessed by the participating employee. This includes any technology items that may have been purchased through grants, donations, sponsorships, gifts,

or other District-related activities, such as Classwish.org, Donorpages.com, or Donorschoose.org.

9. If a user is issued a district cell phone, the phone must be turned on and kept with you at all times when on duty or on call. Otherwise, the device must be securely stored.

Employees are required to abide by the provisions of the district's acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Technology Department.

## **Staff Request for Approval of Technology Resources**

Before use in the classroom, use with students, or administrative use, all instructional programs and applications requiring the user to accept terms of service, or a user agreement must be approved by the Technology Department. This includes online learning resources, online applications, digital subscription services, and other programs or technology applications.

To request to use an instructional program or application, staff must complete and submit the Instructional Program/App Request Form. Software applications must not conduct mental health assessments or other assessments unrelated to educational curricula that are intended to collect information about students without direct and informed parental (or person standing in parental relation) consent.

## **User Responsibility**

The individual in whose name a system account is issued will be responsible at all times for its proper use. If inappropriate use or activity is witnessed, it should be reported to a supervisor. User accounts and passwords are not to be shared or disclosed to any other individual. Inappropriate use of personal computing and electronic communication may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

District computers will provide a best effort at filtering access to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, inappropriate for students, or harmful to minors, as defined by the federal Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

Concerns and complaints regarding student use of technology resources, including cybersecurity and online safety concerns should be directed to the Campus Administration. Campus administrative staff must be notified of any activity that poses a risk to student safety. If it is deemed necessary to deactivate the student's technology resource as a result of this activity, campus administrative staff will contact the Technology Department for assistance.

Technology staff shall assist campus administration with reviewing and providing relevant data when an investigation is opened in regards to internet activity and student safety. Technology staff shall deactivate a student's technology resource if campus administration has contacted the Technology Department and deemed the deactivation necessary for student safety. The technology resource shall stay deactivated until campus administration approves it to be reactivated.

Staff should consider necessary adjustments, by age level, to the use of electronic devices in the classroom to foster development of students' abilities regarding spending school time and completing assignments without the use of an electronic device.

Staff should consider appropriate restrictions on student access to social media websites or applications. ParentSquare should be utilized over other social media tools. Student interaction should be on ParentSquare instead of Facebook, Instagram, twitter, etc. Social media tools should be used for broad communication to the public as a whole and not for student educational purposes. Please see CIPA for further details.

Campus Administration is required to notify the student's parent or person standing in parental relation, if a student accesses inappropriate or concerning content, including, but not limited to, content related to: self-harm, suicide, violence to others, or illicit drugs. When a student accesses content involving harmful, threatening, or violent behavior, the school system must follow established suicide prevention programs, intervention policies and procedures, and make appropriate notifications to the Safe and Supportive Schools Program Team established under Texas Education Code, Section §37.115, as applicable.

## **Business Use of Electronic Media**

If an employee adds a picture to District electronic media, the picture must be a professional photo of the employee.

Do not put anything in an e-mail or electronic communication that you would not want published in a public document.

E-mail or electronic communications pertaining to official business carried out on a home computer or personal device may be —public information.

Use the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines in determining the definition of confidential records.

Social Media: Employees shall not use scheduled work time to engage in social media activity that is not job related. Employees may not use District resources to access personal social media platforms of students or other staff members.

When authorized to discuss GCCISD or GCCISD-related matters, employees are required to identify themselves, the campus or department they are representing, and state their job assignment. Employees may not publish confidential information on social media sites. Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, wikis, or any other form of user-generated media.

Employees shall not use personal electronic communications devices to give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of GCCISD unless appropriately authorized to do so.

## **Personal Use of Electronic Communications**

*Policy CQ, CY, DH*

Electronic communications include 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, X, LinkedIn, Instagram). Electronic communications also include all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

While operating District-owned vehicles or power equipment, employees may not use personal electronic communication devices.

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's use of electronic communications violates state or federal law or 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. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, 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.

An employee who uses electronic communications for personal purposes shall observe the following:

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall limit use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos to breaks, mealtimes, and before and

after scheduled work hours, unless there is an emergency, or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.

- The employee shall not use district and campus trademarks, including names, logos, mascots, and symbols or other copyrighted material on social media or in texts without express written consent.
- An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on district business unless the 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 concerns.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas 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 personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. [See DH(EXHIBIT)]
  - Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private email addresses. [See Policy GBA]
  - Copyright law [See Policy CY]
  - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See DH(EXHIBIT)]

See *Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents*, below, for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media.

## **Personal Devices on District Networks**

Connecting to the District's wireless network with personal technology devices, such as laptops and tablets is allowed only for educational purposes and with the Principal and or Supervisor's approval. The district's technology staff will not be allowed to work on personal equipment. Using broadband Internet service or any other ability to connect to the Internet outside of the district's internet filtering or wide area network is prohibited. Teachers and staff must use the district's visitor wireless network and abide by all guidelines included in this handbook.



## **Data Privacy and Information Security**

Employees play an important role in keeping Goose Creek CISD's sensitive information secure. Many employees may come into contact with sensitive information on a daily basis. Examples of "sensitive information" at Goose Creek CISD include:

- addresses;
- dates of birth;
- bank account/routing numbers;
- phone numbers;
- social security numbers;
- driver's license numbers;
- medical records and personnel records of employees/students;
- student grades/work;
- student discipline information and;
- any financial information.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a student's education records without written consent.

"Directory information" is information that, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Examples include:

- A student's photograph (for publication in the school yearbook);
- A student's name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments);
- The name, weight, and height of an athlete (for publication in a school athletic program);
- A student's name and photograph (posted on a district-approved and managed social media platform); and
- The names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication (to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period.)

GCCISD adheres to standards outlined in Texas Education Code Chapter §32 and will minimize data collected on students through all means available.

Employees have a duty to protect the district and keep sensitive information safe. Failure to do so could result in disclosure of student data (whether intentional or unintentional) or a data breach. In reference to FERPA, privacy and data security:

- Users will not disclose or transmit GCCISD confidential or sensitive data on social media, personal email, personal instant messaging, etc.
- Users will not attempt to access or alter any information that they are not authorized to access.

- All users will report to the Technology Helpdesk, unnecessary access to GCCISD Information Systems if the access is not required for their duties (e.g., inadvertent access that has been provisioned but is not necessary).
- Users will not disclose GCCISD information to others without a valid need to know.
- Users will not disclose GCCISD information to Artificial Intelligence sites or other similar websites, as that data could potentially be stored, sold, or used without the consent of GCCISD, students, or parents.
- Users will not post on social media examples of student work, grades, or other confidential information as designated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy act (FERPA) unless prior consent has been given by the parent/guardian in the Release of Student Directory Information during online registration.
- For documented and approved transfer/storage of confidential or sensitive information:
- Users will ensure that any GCCISD confidential or sensitive information stored in any location uses approved disk encryption.
- Users will utilize approved encryption for transmitting GCCISD confidential or sensitive data via email or other file transfer methods including (SFTP, secure copying, API integrations, etc.)

## **Vetting Third-Party Services and Applications**

Goose Creek CISD uses online services and integrations with third-party systems as part of its daily operations. Each of these systems must be vetted for data privacy and security prior to being utilized. It is the responsibility of every district employee to ensure that a system is vetted prior to being utilized and complies with Texas Education Code Chapter 32, Subchapter D. This includes mobile apps, computer programs, online services, etc. that may have access to district data. Before utilizing a third-party service or application, a third-party risk rating must be conducted, and a Data Privacy Agreement signed. Any concerns that arise from the risk rating or DPA will then be addressed with the third-party to try and resolve them. Any remaining risk or concerns that cannot be resolved must be approved by the Superintendent before use. For more information on getting a third party vetted, contact the Technology Department.

### **Guidelines for keeping this information secure are:**

#### **Make sure sensitive information is physically secure.**

- Lock up or password protect documents containing sensitive information when not using them. This includes employee information and any student information.
- Shield information from view when others (non-authorized people) are near.
- Lock cabinets or computer screens before walking away.
- Don't leave sensitive items like employee records or student information on desks or in unlocked cabinets.

- Keep mobile devices (laptops, smartphones, tablets, USB drives, etc.) either within your sight or locked up at all times. Use password protection and auto lock screens to further protect these devices.

### **Manage your passwords.**

- Use strong passwords on systems that contain sensitive information: mix 8 or more (12 is recommended) upper and lower case letters, numbers, and special characters, longer is better and is harder for others to guess.
- Do not reuse passwords on different accounts. Note: Goose Creek CISD does use Single-Sign On integrations between many systems. This is not password re-use as it is still using a single authentication credential.
- Do not use your district password on ANY non-district account.
- Do not share passwords with others.

### **Understand data privacy security to protect student and employee data.**

- FERPA – The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA requires staff to take reasonable steps to protect student records and information. Under FERPA, parents and eligible students may inspect, review, and request to amend education records. Some best practices include verbally discussing student information rather than sending student data via email and checking with the Technology Department to ensure software and websites are properly vetted before allowing students to use them. More information can be found at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html> or by calling 1-800-USA-LEARN
- COPPA – Children's Online Privacy Protection ACT (COPPA) imposes certain requirements on operators of websites or online services directed to children under 13 years of age. Employees can help ensure compliance with COPPA by understanding what data is collected by a website or application, and ensuring the websites or applications are properly vetted by the Technology Department before allowing students to use them. More information can be found at: <http://www.coppa.org/coppa.htm>.
- CIPA – The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was enacted by Congress in 2000 to address concerns about children's access to obscene or harmful content over the internet. CIPA requires that districts have an internet safety policy that includes technology protection measures which block or filter internet access (on computers used by minors) to pictures that are (a) obscene; (b) child pornography; or (c) harmful to minors. Internet safety policies must include monitoring the online activities of minors, and as required by the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.1), must provide for

educating minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms; and cyberbullying awareness and response. More information can be found at:

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/childrens-internet-protection-act>.

- PPRA - The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) is a federal law that requires schools to obtain written consent from parents before minor students are required to participate in any U.S. Dept. of Education funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning the following areas: political affiliations; mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family; sex behavior and attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program.) More information can be found at:  
<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/content/ppra>

### **Guard against social engineering attacks (such as phishing)**

- Carefully review links and attachments in emails before clicking or opening.
- Use bookmarks to safely return to sites visited frequently. Use browser functions that warn of sites with poor reputations.
- Be careful of all requests for sensitive information, whether by e-mail, phone, text message, or in person.
- Independently verify the identity and authority of any requester with your supervisor or a Technology staff member before disclosing sensitive information.

### **Avoid unsecure networks outside the office**

- Don't connect to the office emails or systems from public Wi-Fi.
- If connecting while traveling or working from home, have the Technology Department set you up properly with secure remote access.

### **Securely destroy sensitive information when no longer needed**

- Secure shredding is the preferred disposal method of hard copy documents with sensitive information.
- Destruction of electronic data should be done according to the Technology Department's Data Destruction Guidelines.

Immediately report suspected information security events to the Technology Helpdesk at 281-420-4633 or [helpdesk@gccisd.net](mailto:helpdesk@gccisd.net).

Questions regarding Information Security and Data Privacy may be addressed to the Technology Helpdesk.

## **Data Incident Reporting (Privacy or Security)**

### *Policy CQB*

Any user that becomes aware of a possible data breach/disclosure, indicators of data or technology resource(s) compromise, or any other cybersecurity concerns must notify the Technology Helpdesk so the issues can be documented and investigated according to the Technology Incident Response Plan.

Upon discovering or receiving notification of a breach of system security, the District cybersecurity coordinator shall disclose the breach to affected persons or entities in accordance with the timeframes established by law.

The District shall give notice by using one or more of the following methods:

- Written notice.
- Electronic mail if the District has electronic mail addresses for the affected persons.
- Clear posting on the District's website.
- Publication through broadcast media.

## **Data Retention and Records Management**

### *Policy CPC*

A District employee must make provisions to retain documents and messages in accordance with the district's records retention policy, CPC Legal and Local. Each user is responsible for using the proper records retention practices.

Each individual employee who creates and maintains electronically stored information (ESI), is responsible for determining the retention of the ESI and maintaining it in compliance with District, state, and federal records retention requirements.

In the event the ESI was not created by a District employee, then the employee who received the ESI or responded to the ESI will be responsible for its retention and maintenance. The Technology Department will consider e-mail as administrative correspondence and will, therefore, maintain retention according to the state control schedule.

The individual who creates and maintains ESI or who received or responded to ESI may delete or erase the ESI when it is no longer required to be maintained in connection with a claim or pursuant to District, state, or federal records retention requirements.

For more information, please visit Texas State Library and Archives Commission Records Control Schedules Administrative (GR Schedule): <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slr/recordspubs/gr.html>

The district's email system is a communication system and is not intended to be the primary records retention repository.

- The retention requirement associated with any document is determined by its content, not the method of delivery.
- The responsibility of retaining an internally created and distributed document (or message) most often falls on the author – not the recipients.
- Employees who receive messages from outside the district are responsible for proper records retention of those messages.
- Email that has been requested in a subpoena or public information request must be retained until the request has been addressed, even if the retention period has expired.

The content and function of an email message determines the retention period for that message. All emails sent or received by an agency is considered a state record. Therefore, all email messages must be retained or disposed of according to the agency's retention schedule. Email systems must meet the retention requirements found in Texas Administrative Code 6.94(e).

Email generally falls into several common record series categories. These are:

1. Administrative Correspondence. 1.1.007 – Incoming/outgoing and internal correspondence, in any format pertaining to the formulation, planning, implementation, interpretation, modification, or redefinition of the programs, services, or projects of any agency and the administrative regulations, policies and standards that govern them. Subject to archival review. Retention: 3 years.

2. General Correspondence. 1.1.008 – Non-administrative incoming/outgoing and internal correspondence, in any media, pertaining to or arising from the routine operations of the policies, programs, services, or projects of an agency. Retention: 1 year.

3. Transitory Information. 1.1.057 – Records of temporary usefulness that are not as integral part of a records series of an agency, that are not regularly filed within as agency's recordkeeping system, and that are required only for a limited period of time for the completion of an action by an official or employee of the agency or in the preparation of an on-going records series. Transitory records are not essential to the fulfillment of statutory obligations or to the documentation of agency functions. Examples of transitory information are routine messages such as internal meeting notices, routine slips, incoming letters that add nothing of substance to enclosures; and similar routine information used for communication, but not for the documentation, of a specific agency transaction. Retention: After the purpose of record has been fulfilled.

## **Sensitive Information Storage on Devices**

Employees will not download, save, copy (including Google Takeout), or export any sensitive information, PII (personally identifiable information) of staff/students, or other resources out of any GCCISD computer system unless it is completely necessary and with the Principal or immediate supervisors' approval. Sensitive information will not be emailed or saved to portable storage devices such as cd/dvd, portable flash drives, etc. or copied to cloud service providers such as dropbox.com, box.com, etc. Sensitive information on a district laptop or tablet must be encrypted to prevent information theft. It is the user's responsibility to immediately notify the district's technology department if any sensitive information is lost or stolen.

As part of the District's Information Security Guidelines, data stored on district resources are subject to auditing and/or monitoring to ensure compliance. Employees found storing sensitive data without appropriate approval and without appropriate encryption/security controls may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents**

### *Policy DH*

*ParentSquare* and district-issued email accounts are the only approved platforms for direct communication between staff and students or parents. These tools must be used in place of any other messaging or communication platforms.

Social media may be utilized for general, public-facing communication but should not be used for instructional or educational purposes involving individual students.

Unapproved electronic communication between employees and currently enrolled students is strictly prohibited. Employees may not share their personal phone numbers or personal email addresses with students under any circumstances. If a student initiates inappropriate or unauthorized electronic communication, the employee must report the incident to their supervisor promptly.

An employee is not subject to the provisions regarding electronic communications with a student to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee's child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization. An employee who claims an exception based on a social relationship shall provide written consent from the student's parent. The written consent shall include an acknowledgement by the parent that:

- The employee has provided the parent with a copy of this protocol;

- The employee and the student have a social relationship outside of school;
- The parent understands that the employee's communications with the student are excepted from district regulation; and
- The parent is solely responsible for monitoring electronic communications between the employee and the student.

The following definitions apply for the use of electronic media with students:

- *Electronic communications* means 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 email, text messages, instant messages, and any communication made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*: however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

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

- Employees are strictly prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through any electronic platforms, including mobile apps and websites, that are not approved or accessible by the District.
- All employee-to-student communication must take place through District-approved platforms: ParentSquare or District-issued email accounts (both staff and student email addresses).
- Communication with students must be limited to topics directly related to the employee's professional responsibilities (e.g., instructional matters for teachers such as assignments and assessments; extracurricular matters for staff overseeing activities).



- Employees may not communicate with students through personal social media accounts. If using social media for professional purposes, a separate “professional page” must be created. This page must allow access for campus administrators and parents.
- Employees are prohibited from initiating or responding to direct communication with students between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. Public posts to blogs or social media may occur at any time.
- Employees should have no expectation of privacy in their communications with students and parents conducted through District platforms.
- The employee continues 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 law [Policy CY]
  - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DH]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through email or any other form of one-to-one communication.
- All staff are required to use district (not personal) email accounts for all electronic communications with parents. Communication about school issues through personal email accounts or text messages are not allowed as they cannot be preserved in accordance with the district’s record retention policy.
- An employee shall notify his or her supervisor in writing within one business day if a student engages in an improper electronic communication with the employee. The employee should describe the form and content of the electronic communication.

## **Public Information on Private Devices**

*Policy DH, GB*

Employees should not maintain district information on privately owned devices or cloud storage. Any district information must be forwarded or transferred to the district to be preserved. The district will take reasonable efforts to obtain public information in compliance with the Public Information Act. Reasonable efforts may include:

- Verbal or written directive
- Remote access to district-owned devices and services

## **Guidelines for Use of Artificial Intelligence**

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer applications or programs that are capable of reasoning, decision-making, and solving problems. These applications or programs mimic the way the human brain learns by processing massive amounts of training data, and then using what it “learns” to generate an output that best answers the prompt that it is given.

Goose Creek CISD commits to embracing the transformative potential of AI in education, aligning our approach with our vision and core values of integrity, inclusivity, innovation, and individuality. We are committed to empowering every student with knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a global community, including the use of advanced and evolving technology, such as AI.

As we navigate the evolving landscape of AI in education, Goose Creek CISD will continuously engage with the latest research, collaborate with stakeholders, and adapt our strategies to ensure that our integration of AI aligns with our mission to provide a comprehensive and inclusive educational experience for all. We endorse a human-centered strategy in employing AI, which fosters a learning environment where technology serves to enrich our human qualities, not diminish them.

Guiding Principles:

**Professional Responsibility:** All employees are expected to engage with AI technologies responsibly, ensuring their use enhances educational outcomes and adheres to our district's ethical standards. AI systems have the potential to produce biased or incorrect content. It's crucial for employees to check for accuracy before sharing with others.

**AI Literacy and Professional Development:** We recognize the importance of equipping our students and staff with the necessary skills to understand, interact with, and ethically use AI technologies. This will include instructional lessons and professional development opportunities. Our commitment to AI literacy is integral to our mission of providing a high-quality, future-ready education.

Enhancing Teaching and Learning: Embracing our core value of inclusivity, we pledge to use AI as a tool to foster equitable educational opportunities. We will leverage AI to augment the educational experience, supporting teachers to enhance their instructional strategies and enabling students to achieve personalized learning outcomes. Our goal is to eliminate barriers and create learning experiences that cater to the diverse needs of every student, ensuring no one is left behind in the digital revolution.

Data Privacy: Employees must rigorously uphold our district's data privacy protocols when using AI technologies. The privacy and security of student and staff data are paramount, and any AI tools employed must comply with our stringent data protection policies. When using any AI language model (ChatGPT, MagicSchool, etc.), student work and student/parent/employee personal information (PI) such as the following should NOT be entered/uploaded:

Name, Address, Email address, Phone number, Social Security number, Date of birth, ID Number, Photos, videos, or audio recordings, or any other information that could be used to identify yourself or others.

## **Computer Software Policy**

It is the practice of the district to respect all computer software copyrights and to adhere to the terms of all software licenses to which the district is a party. Technology Department is charged with the responsibility of enforcing these guidelines.

All computer software installed on district equipment must be vetted by, purchased, reported to, and installed by Technology Department, or its designee. Software acquisition is restricted to ensure that the school district has a complete record of all software that has been purchased for district computers and can register, support, and upgrade such software accordingly. Additionally, software used on district computers used for instructional purposes must also be vetted by a district curriculum coordinator.

Students, district employees, and volunteers may not duplicate any licensed software or related documentation for use either on the district's premises or elsewhere unless Technology Department is expressly authorized to do so by agreement with the licensor. Unauthorized duplication of software may subject the employee and/or the school district to both civil and criminal penalties under the United States Copyright Act.

Students, district employees, and volunteers may not give software to any third-party including relatives, clients, contractors, etc. District employees, students, and volunteers may use district approved software on local area networks or on multiple machines only in accordance with applicable license agreements.

For further information regarding the purchase and installation of computer software, please call the Technology Helpdesk at 281-420-4633 or [helpdesk@gccisd.net](mailto:helpdesk@gccisd.net).

## **Intellectual Property Rights**

### *Policy CY*

As agents of the District, employees shall have limited rights to work they create using the District's electronic communications system. The District shall retain the right to use any product created in the scope of a person's employment even when the author is no longer an employee of the District.

## **Recordings in the Workplace**

School employees are prohibited from making video or audio recordings of students unless they have the advance permission of the campus administrator to do so for a permissible reason.

While this is not illegal to secretly record workplace discussions or meetings with adults, the district prohibits this practice unless the employee has the advance consent of the other(s) who are present and/or being recorded. Because it is unprofessional and disruptive to district operations, the Texas Commissioner of Education has stated that secretly recording such conversations may be good cause for termination of employment.

## **Use of Security Cameras**

### *Policy CK*

The District utilizes security cameras and video recording devices at the school campuses and other District facilities. These are located in cafeterias, hallways, classrooms, designated areas, entryways, buses, and parking areas. Information provided by reviewing the videotapes will be utilized, as needed, to help maintain a safe and orderly environment. The District may view recordings to aid in the investigation of employee misconduct and violations of Board Policy, Employee Handbook, Administrative Guidelines and other legal or district requirements.

## **Disclaimer of Liability**

The District shall not be liable for user's inappropriate use of electronic communication resources or violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, users' mistakes or negligence, and costs incurred by users. The District shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy, age appropriateness, or usability of any information found on the internet.

These guidelines apply to stand-alone computers as well as computers connected to the Network/Internet. The district makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the services it is providing and is not responsible for any damages suffered by users. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its negligence or user errors or omissions. The district is not responsible for phone/credit card bills, or any other charges incurred by users. Use of any information

obtained via the Network/Internet is at the user's own risk. The district specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. Opinions, advice, services, and all other information expressed by system users, information providers, service providers, or other third-party individuals in the system are those of the providers and not the district. The district will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the district's electronic communications system.

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

### *Policy DBAA*

All employees are 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 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.

## **Employee Arrests and Convictions**

### *Policy DH, DHB, DHC*

An employee must notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor 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
- Crimes involving moral turpitude.

Moral turpitude includes 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)
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code.

If an employee is arrested or criminally charged, the superintendent is also required to report the educator's criminal history to the Division of Investigations at TEA.

The superintendent and directors are required to report the misconduct or criminal history of an employee to TEA. Information about misconduct or allegations of misconduct of an employee obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse will be reported to TEA. Refer to Policies DHB (LEGAL) and DHC (LEGAL) for timelines and conduct that will result in reporting.

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

### *Policy DH*

Goose Creek 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:

<http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/591?filter=DH>

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

### *Policies DH, FNCD, GKA*

State law prohibits smoking, using tobacco , or e-cigarettes on all district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off school property. 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.

Employees are prohibited from possessing or using any type of nicotine product, including nicotine pouches, regardless of whether the product contains tobacco, while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. Exceptions may be made for smoking cessation products with supervisor approval.

## **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 include 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.
- 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 policy.
- Inappropriately destroying, removing, or 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

- 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
- Non-school employment

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

## **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. 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.

## **Copyrighted Materials**

### *Policy CY*

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of federal copyright law and policy relating to the 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.



## **Associations and Political Activities**

### *Policy DGA*

The district will 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.

The district encourages personal participation in the political process, including voting. Employees who need to be absent from work to vote during the early voting period or on election day must communicate with their immediate supervisor prior to the absence.

## **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 fundraiser. 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 and Security**

### *Policy CK series*

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety and security of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety and security program includes written guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries.

Employees must follow established protocols and response to emergencies for each campus and department. Refer to written security procedures specific to your location and work area.

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.
- 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 judgment on whether to use hands-free technology while the vehicle is in motion.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact Risk Management or the Safe and Secure Schools Department

## **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, 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 supervisor or call GCCISD Police 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 escort him or her to the front office or contact the administrator in charge.

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

*Policy CSC*

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 the Maintenance Department office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

## **Pest Control Treatment**

*Policies CLB, DI*

Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide or herbicide without appropriate training and prior approval of the integrated pest management (IPM) coordinator. Any application of pesticide or herbicide must be done in a manner prescribed by law and the district's integrated pest management program.

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written, or electric means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

# **General Procedures**

## **Emergency School Closing**

*Policy EB*

The district may close schools because of severe weather, epidemics, or other 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 (<https://www.gccisd.net>) and social media pages: Facebook and Instagram.

## **Emergencies**

*Policies CKC, CKD*

All employees should be familiar with the safety procedures for responding to emergencies, including a medical emergency. Employees should locate evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas and be familiar with the Standard Response Protocols and Procedures. 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.

## **Purchasing Procedures**

*Policy CH*

The purchasing department is responsible for the administration and organization of the district's procurement activities in accordance with state law and board policy CH which may be found in its entirety on the GCCISD website. All district purchase commitments shall be made on a properly drawn and fully executed purchase order. District employees shall not be permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's purchasing department. Further, the use of the district's tax-exempt status is prohibited for personal use. Additional information regarding the purchasing process may be obtained by contacting the purchasing department or by visiting the district's purchasing website.

## **Name and Address Changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Human Resources office 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.

## **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 email address 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
- Information that reveals whether they have family members

The choice to not allow public access to this information or change an existing choice may be made at any time by updating the privacy information electronically in TEAMS. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information may be released to the public.

## **Facility Use**

*Policies DGA, GKD*

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established School Dude program. They should contact their campus administrator for these procedures.

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours, for non-campus sponsored events, must follow established procedures in Administrative Guidelines. Faculty and/or Staff may not represent an external client/organization in order to circumvent the facility rental rules, regulations, and related fees. Contact the Facilities Management Department to obtain information on the rules, regulations, and related fees that apply to the rental.

## **GCCISD Memorial Policy & Procedures**

In order to appropriately recognize all students and staff members equitably, the following memorial policy/procedures are to be followed:

The Superintendent's Office will provide a sympathy card immediately following the notification of the death of a student or staff member.

- After approval from the family, a News of the Day announcement will be posted for current and former/retired employees.
- With a family's permission, the campus may purchase a book/card utilizing PTO/campus social funds.
- If the student passes away while enrolled in high school, the high school diploma will be awarded during graduation ceremonies with the student's graduating class/cohort.
- A moment of silence will be held at the first board meeting of each academic year.
- Local memorial scholarships may be provided by the family.
- The Student Memorial Policy and Procedures should be included in the Student/Parent Handbook, Crisis Emergency Plan documents and policy manuals. Memorials are limited to existing structures and plaques already available on campuses. The District will not allow:
  - Funerals on school property;
  - Memorial services that may alter the routine of a regular school instructional day;
  - Memorials that require the altering of school property;
  - Memorials that require the altering of school activities or the activity schedule;
  - Memorials that infringe on the separation of church and state;
  - Memorials that require the use of public funds to purchase, develop, or maintain;
  - Memorials that include plaques attached to any object on school property;
  - Memorials that draw attention or have the potential to glamorize the death;
  - Memorials that consist of a monument on school property;
  - Memorials attached to a wall or in a trophy case All other activities are to be supported by individuals and are not to be associated with the promotion from the district or district employees:
- Local scholarships established in the name of the student are provided by the family;
- Personal/individual donations to a charity or program that is dedicated to helping students;
- Collection of money/fundraisers to be donated to the deceased's family or charity of their choice Additional Administrative Support/Procedures:
- The District Emergency Response Counseling Team will be contacted immediately and be on campus to help students deal with the grief caused by the loss of student or staff member.
- After permission is granted by the family, an administrative visit to the viewing and funeral is encouraged.

- Campus Administrators should oversee the safe return of the student's personal effects that may be in a school locker or classroom.

# Termination of Employment

## Resignations

*Policy DFE, DHB*

**Contract Employees.** Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is submitted electronically ([www.gccisd.net](http://www.gccisd.net), Human Resources) at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the superintendent or the board of trustees.

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 within seven business days of the following:

- Certain misconduct, abuse, unlawful act
- Involvement or solicitation of a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- Solicitation or engaging in sexual conduct with a student or minor
- Inappropriate communications with a student or minor
- Possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- 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
- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on district property or at a school-sponsored event.

The superintendent is required to report such conduct to SBEC.

**Noncontract Employees.** Noncontract employees may resign their position at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to ([www.gccisd.net](http://www.gccisd.net), Human Resources) at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

The principal or director is required to notify the superintendent of a noncertified employee's resignation or termination within seven business days for any of the following:

- Alleged incident of misconduct of abuse or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor,
- Was involved in or solicited a romantic relationship with a student or minor.



- Engaged in inappropriate communication with a student or minor
- Failed to maintain appropriate boundaries with a student or minor

The superintendent is required to report such conduct to SBEC.

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

*Policies DF Series, DHB, DP*

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 nonrenewed at the end of the contract term. 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 timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee.

The reporting requirements for termination of a contract employee are the same as those listed above in Resignations/Contract Employees.

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 timelines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are provided to employees or are available Online.

## **Dismissal of Noncontract Employees**

*Policies DHC, DP*

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, sex, 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 that can be found on the district website, Human Resources page when pursuing the grievance.

The reporting requirements for termination of a noncertified employee are the same as those listed above in Resignations/Noncontract Employees.

## **Discharge of Convicted Employees**

### *Policy DF*

The district shall discharge any employee who has been convicted of a felony under Title 5 Penal Code or convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for the following:

- An offense requiring the registration as a sex offender
- Improper relationship between an educator and a student
- Sale, distribution, or display of harmful materials to a minor
- Public indecency
- A felony offense involving school property

If the Title 5 Penal Code offense is more than 30 years before the date the person's employment began or the person satisfied all terms of the court order entered on conviction the requirement to discharge does not apply.

## **Exit Interviews and Procedures**

Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on his or her employment experience. All district keys, books, property, including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting reference will be provided at this time. An individual's network account will be disabled the day following the employee's last day of employment. If the employee has any personal electronic records, they need to make copies of them before their account is disabled.

## **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
- Name and address of the employee's new employer, if known



# Student Issues

## Equal Educational Opportunities

*Policies FB, FFH*

In an effort to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Goose Creek CISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) 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 of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to Carrie Smith, Director of Student Services, 4544 Interstate 10 East Baytown, TX 77521, [carrie.smith@gccisd.net](mailto:carrie.smith@gccisd.net), (281) 420-4800.

## 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.
- 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 Director of Student Services 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, FFAF*

Only designated employees may administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Exceptions apply to the administration of medication for respiratory distress, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., EpiPen®), opioid antagonists, and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is administered in accordance with district policy and procedures. A student who must take any other medication during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine in its original, properly labeled container. 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
- 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. Other 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 send a written note within three days to explain the nature of 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 cyberbullying, to the Campus Principal. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is reprinted below:

<https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=591&code=FFI#localTabContent>

## **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.