



Classified Employee Handbook

Hamilton County Schools
3074 Hickory Valley Road
Chattanooga, TN 37421

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction	1
Non-Discrimination Notice	1
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	2
E-Verify	2
Board Goals	3
Employment	4
Classification and Qualifications	4
Employee Classifications	4
Employee Identification (ID) Badge	5
Employee Identification Number	5
Employee Self-Service	5
Employee Records	5
Changes in Personal Information	6
Outside Employment or Non-School Employment	6
Required Certifications to Perform Work	6
Resignation	6
Termination	6
Compensation	7
Expanded Pay	7
Employee on Call	7
Garnishments	7
Holidays—Non-school based employees	7
Holiday-School based employees	8
Personal Leave Not Used	8
Overtime	8
Timekeeping Procedures	9
Retirement	9
Benefits	10
Benefit Eligibility	10
Open Enrollment	10
Benefit Qualifying Life Events	10
Contact Info	10
Leave	11
Bereavement Leave	11
Jury Duty	11
Emergency Leave	11
Leave of Absence	12
Extended Leaves of Absence	12

Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)-----	12
Eligibility for FMLA-----	13
Employment and Benefit Protection-----	13
Military Leave-----	13
Personal Leave-----	14
Sick Leave-----	14
Student Teaching-----	15
Job Postings, Vacancies, and Transfers-----	16
Job Postings-----	16
Open Positions-----	16
How to Apply for Positions-----	16
School-Based Vacancies-----	16
Eligibility to Apply for a Position-----	16
Transfers-----	17
HCS Guidelines, Working Conditions, and Expectations-----	18
Appropriate Use of Technology and Other Business Systems-----	18
Arrests and Convictions-----	19
Attendance-----	19
Performance Evaluation-----	19
Communicable Diseases-----	20
Conflict of Interest-----	20
Discussions with Media-----	20
Dress Code-----	21
Duty Free Lunch-----	21
Drug and Alcohol Testing-----	21
Inclement Weather-----	22
Job Abandonment-----	22
Nepotism-----	22
On-the-Job-Injury-----	23
Personal Phone Calls and Cell Phones-----	23
Political Activities-----	24
Record Tampering-----	24
Relationships with Students-----	24
Safety-----	24
Smoking-----	24
Work Assignment-----	25
Violence in the Workplace-----	25
Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal-----	26
Suspension/Dismissal of Classified Employees-----	26
Corrective Action Procedure-----	26
Employee Grievances-----	27

Open Door Policy-----	27
Grievance Procedure	
Refer to Board Policy 5.501, Employee Grievances-----	27
Harassment and Discrimination Complaints-----	29
Harassment and Discrimination-----	29
Harassment/Discrimination Defined-----	29
Sexual Harassment Defined/Conduct Prohibited-----	29
Reporting Procedure-----	30
Reprisal-----	31
False Accusations-----	31
Right to Alternative Complaint Procedure-----	31
Harassment Complaint Form-----	32
Grievance Form for Informal Level-----	33
Grievance Form for Formal Levels-----	34

Introduction

Whether you recently joined Hamilton County Schools (HCS) or have been employed with us for a while, we are confident you will find our district a rewarding place in which to work. At HCS, we consider our employees to be one of our most valuable assets, and we look forward to a productive and successful relationship. This handbook has been designed to explain your benefits, privileges, duties, and responsibilities as part of the HCS team.

This handbook is not a binding employment agreement or contract, nor does it guarantee any fixed terms or conditions of employment. The policies, procedures, practices, and benefits described herein may be modified or discontinued at any time at the discretion of HCS. If the handbook conflicts with Board policy, the Board policy takes precedence. If the Board policy conflicts with federal or state law, the law takes precedence. Employees are expected to read the Board policies. Board policies are published on the HCS website which can be found at the following link: https://www.hcde.org/district/school_board/board_policy

This handbook contains general information and guidelines only. It is not intended to be comprehensive of all general policies and procedures or their exceptions. For these reasons, should you have specific questions regarding the application of a particular benefit or policy, you should address those questions to your supervisor/principal or to your Human Resources Business Partner.

This handbook and its policies, written or oral, supersede all previously published HCS handbooks. Future updates may be distributed in written format, electronically via the HCS website, employee self-service, or applicant tracking system. It is the responsibility of employees to be aware of changes and how the changes affect them.

Non-Discrimination Notice

Hamilton County Schools is an equal opportunity employer and actively seeks to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of our student population and community. HCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, national origin, genetic information and individuals with disabilities or veteran status with regard only for qualifications for the positions involved.

Title VI and Title IX prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin or sex in all programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Hamilton County Schools (HCS) values all of our employees including those who are experiencing disabilities. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), HCS does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and strives to provide reasonable accommodations and services for employees.

Should an employee need to request assistance, they should submit a help desk ticket for ADA accommodations. HCS's Compliance & Compensation Coordinator in the Human Resources Department will provide assistance and/or services for persons with disabilities.

E-Verify

Hamilton County Schools is an E-Verify employer in compliance with Federal Law which requires employers to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all persons hired in the United States. HCS is compliant with E-Verify, and we invite you to review the documentation at www.hcde.org.



WHO WE ARE

JUST CAUSE

All children thrive and experience a future without limits.

MISSION

To equip students with the knowledge, skills, and supports to thrive in life.

VISION

By 2030, Hamilton County Schools will be a leader in developing our diverse graduates to be connected, competitive, and life ready.

Board Goals

The Hamilton County Board of Education is committed to success for all students through increased student achievement, parent and community involvement, safe schools and accountability. The Board established a set of goals to guide district leadership in their oversight of school operations.

1. Ensure a safe, clean, and orderly environment that promotes learning in all schools.
2. Improve academic performance of all students through implementation of a system of high standards and accountability in all classrooms.
3. Recruit and retain effective and qualified teachers for all children.
4. Enhance and strengthen the programs that promote good citizenship, teach character education, and value diversity.
5. Develop a parent involvement program in every school.
6. Implement a comprehensive plan that provides clear and open lines of communication among central office employees, school staff, parents and community.

Employment

Classification and Qualifications

Refer to Board Policy 5.102 Personnel Classification and Qualifications

Classified employees are those employees, regardless of education, training, experience, or licensure, who hold positions for which the Tennessee Department of Education does not require certification. Classified personnel are employees at will, meaning that either they or the Director of Schools may end their employment at any time for any reason or for no reason. Should an employee's job assignment change for the following year, HCS will make every attempt to notify the employee of his/her anticipated job assignment for the following year by June 15. However, nothing within this handbook, Board policy, or any other policy will be construed to extend to these employees a contract of employment for any specific term. Each employee is designated as either non-exempt or exempt from federal and state wage and hour laws. Non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws. In addition to the above categories, each employee will belong to one other employment category as listed below:

Employee Classifications

For purposes of payroll administration, eligibility for overtime payments, and employment benefits, HCS classifies its employees as follows:

Regular full-time employees are those who are not in a provisional or introductory status or who are regularly scheduled to work HCS's full-time schedule. Generally, they are eligible for HCS's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

Part-time employees are those who are not assigned to a provisional or introductory status and who are regularly scheduled to work 29.5 hours or less per week and may not be eligible for all of HCS's benefits.

Provisional employees are those hired for a defined period of time to fill a short-term need or who agree to work on an "as needed" basis. Provisional employees are different from temporary contractors, who are not HCS employees.

Non-faculty coaches work in a paid coaching position, but they are not employed in any other position within the district.

Volunteers Non-exempt classified employees may volunteer as a coach with no promise or expectation of compensation, provided that their current job is not similar to coaching.

Employee Identification (ID) Badge

ID badges are made by the Human Resources Department when required paperwork for employment has been completed. Lost or damaged ID badges can be replaced at no cost through the Human Resources Department. Upon termination, ID badges must be turned in to the supervisor.

Employee Identification Number

The 6-digit Employee ID number will be on the check stub in Employee Self-Service and on the HCS- issued Employee ID badge.

Employee Self-Service

ESS is a web-based system designed to provide employees with access to their records. Employees are able to update addresses, change tax withholding, view check stubs, dependent information, pay information, deductions, and benefits. Employees are also able to print check stubs and W-2s. Employee Self-Service can be accessed either by using school system computers or from a home computer using the url:
<https://selfservice.hcde.org/ess>.

The login is the employee's outlook username without the @hcde.org. The password is the employee's Outlook password.

Employee Records

Refer to Board Policy 5.114, Personnel Records:

HCS maintains files of former and current employees through a centralized record keeping system. These records are public records, except for matters deemed confidential by law. Employees who wish to review their own file should contact the Human Resources Department. With a reasonable advance notice (at least two (2) work days), employees may review their own personnel files in the Human Resources Department and in the presence of a Human Resources representative.

Any request for verification of employment should be referred to the HCS website at
https://www.hcde.org/staff/human_resources/employment_salary_verification.

Human Resources will release to credit agencies only the present employment status of an employee, title, date of hire, and the length of service in HCS. Additional salary and personnel information will be released only upon written authorization of the employee.

Changes in Personal Information

Employees are responsible for maintaining current address, telephone number, and other pertinent information. Changes should be made through Employee Self Service.

Outside Employment or Non-School Employment

Refer to Board Policy 5.607, Non-School Employment

Employees may hold employment outside the school system so long as such employment does not interfere with regular and overtime duties for the school system or pose a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest. However, employees may not engage in other employment while on approved leave if the employment would occur during the hours the employee would be working for HCS.

Required Certifications to Perform Work

Employees whose positions require certification as a condition of performing the work are responsible for maintaining a current and valid certification as a condition of employment. Failure to maintain a current and valid certification may result in termination from the position. (Examples: nurses, maintenance)

Resignation

Refer to Board Policy 5.204, Resignation

While classified employees are employed at will, meaning that they may terminate their employment with HCS at any time and for any reason, the Board of Education requests classified employees to give their immediate supervisor written notice of their intent to resign their employment at least ten (10) work days in advance of the effective date of their resignation. Any employee who fails to provide the supervisor with his/her requisite notice shall not be eligible for reemployment with HCS. However, the Director of Schools may waive this notice requirement and the disqualification for good cause.

Termination

Refer to Board Policy 5.102, Classification and Qualifications

The employee or the Director of Schools may end the employee's employment at any time for any or no reason.

Compensation

Paydays at HCS normally occur bi-weekly. For payroll purposes, the standard work week begins at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday and ends at 12:00 midnight on Friday. HCS employees will be paid through direct deposit of funds to either a savings or a checking account.

Expanded Pay

School based staff is paid during the summer via expanded pay. Expanded pay is calculated based on the employee's hourly rate, hours worked per day (7.5) and number of days worked. This amount is then divided by 26 (total number of paychecks issued under expanded pay).

If an employee is hired after January 1 for the current school year, that employee will not be paid via expanded pay during the summer. The expanded pay calculation will be adjusted based on the number of remaining paychecks for the school year. If the employee is benefits eligible, the cost will be based on the twenty-two (22) paychecks schedule. If that employee is rehired for the next school year, that employee will be paid via expanded pay and will receive twenty-six (26) paychecks during the following school year.

Employee on Call

Supervisors have the authority to assign a non-exempt employee to be on call. Being on call is an inconvenience, but it is not the same as being on duty. If an employee responds to a call, he/she is entitled to be paid from the time the employee takes the call until the work is completed.

Garnishments

If HCS receives a legally-binding garnishment for collection of an employee's debt to a third party, HCS will withhold from the employee's pay check the amount prescribed by law.

Holidays—Non-school based employees

Refer to Board Policy 5.310, Vacations and Holidays

If an employee is employed as a regular full-time employee on an administrative calendar (not school-based calendar) for twelve (12) calendar months per year, he/she is eligible for the following paid holidays:

New Year's Day	1 Day
Martin Luther King Day	1 Day
Spring Holiday	1 Day

Memorial Day	1 Day
Juneteenth	1 Day
Independence Day	1 Day
Labor Day	1 Day
Thanksgiving	2 Days*
Christmas and New Years	4 Days**

*Thursday and Friday

**Definite days determined annually by the Director of Schools

An employee must be in pay status the work day before and after a holiday to receive pay for the holiday.

Holiday-School based employees

Refer to Board Policy 5.310, Vacations and Holidays

If an employee is employed as a regular full-time employee on a school-based calendar, the number of paid holidays will vary, according to the number of days worked. A calendar of paid days will be available in Employee Self Service. An employee hired before winter break (as defined by the school-based calendar) and who works the remaining scheduled school calendar shall receive pay for all winter holiday days. Employees who leave the system prior to the scheduled winter break or who are hired after the break are not eligible for any paid time off arising out of the winter break. A calendar of paid days will be available in Employee Self Service.

An employee must be in pay status the work day before and after a holiday to receive pay for the holiday.

Personal Leave Not Used

Refer to Board Policy 5.303, Personal and Professional Leave

All full-time and part-time employees who earn benefits shall earn three (3) personal leave days per school year. Any personal leave remaining unused at the end of a year shall be credited to sick leave.

Overtime

Refer to Board Policy 5.604, Overtime Pay of Non-Exempt Classified Personnel

If an employee is in an hourly, non-exempt position, the employee should not work more than his/her regularly scheduled hours in one week without his/her supervisor's prior approval. If an employee actually works more than his/her hours in a regular week, it is the responsibility of the employee to report the time worked. The employee will be paid 1.5 times the regular hourly rate of pay for all hours worked over forty (40) during the standard work week. Actual hours worked will be used to calculate overtime pay.

Timekeeping Procedures

Time cards (including time sheets or electronic timekeeping procedures) are official records. Time cards are the basis for calculating hourly, non-exempt pay. If an employee is an hourly employee, it is the employee's responsibility to accurately document his/her time worked. Also, it is the employee's responsibility to verify the accuracy of time worked by signing or electronically acknowledging the time card on a weekly basis.

Non-exempt, hourly paid employees will be paid for all time worked. However, **employees cannot clock in more than twelve (12) minutes prior to scheduled start time.** Employees should never work "off the clock." If employees are ever asked to work "off the clock," they should immediately contact their supervisor, their supervisor's supervisor, or the Human Resources Department. In addition, hourly employees should never take work home unless authorized by the supervisor as assigned work related duties for which they will be compensated.

If an employee believes his/her hours have been calculated incorrectly, he/she should inform the supervisor before signing the time card or upon receipt of the paycheck. Manipulation or falsification (including the failure to record time worked) of an employee's time card or someone else's time card may result in termination of employment. Signing in or out for another employee is falsification of records and may result in termination of employment. Failure to sign in or out will be considered grounds for disciplinary action and may result in delayed payment of wages.

Retirement

Refer to Board Policy 5.205, Retirement

Employees who retire under any State of Tennessee or Hamilton County approved retirement plans shall be paid for accrued sick leave. The sick leave payment shall be at the rate of twenty dollars (\$20) per day. If notice of retirement is given prior to February 1 of the current school year, the sick leave payment shall be at the rate of fifty dollars (\$50) per day. In the event of termination of employment as a result of death, any salary payment and accrued sick leave days shall be paid to the employee's estate.

Benefits

This section is not intended to give individualized specific information about benefits. The employee is responsible for completing and returning all benefit forms online. Some benefits require employee contributions while others are Board paid. Failure to complete enrollment forms within thirty (30) days of hire date may result in forfeiture of benefits.

Please note: Not all employees are eligible for benefits.

Benefit Eligibility

Benefit elections for benefit eligible employees become effective immediately upon the employee's hire date.

Open Enrollment

Benefit changes may be made during the open enrollment period in October. Changes made during the open enrollment period are effective January 1 of the following year.

Benefit Qualifying Life Events

Employees have thirty (30) days from the date of a qualifying life event to make changes to benefits. Qualifying life events are: marriage, divorce, legal separation, documented loss of employment by spouse, death of a covered dependent, acquisition of an eligible dependent, birth/adoption of a child, or spouse's insurance coverage change. To cover a newborn, the employee must notify the Benefits Department within thirty (30) days of the birth of the child (even if the employee already covers other children).

Contact Info

Please contact the Benefits Department if you have questions at (423) 498-7048.

Leave

Bereavement Leave

Refer to Board Policy 5.3022, Bereavement Leave

Employees who wish to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify their supervisor immediately.

Only regular full-time employees and regular part-time employees are eligible for bereavement leave. Employees may take five (5) consecutive work days of paid bereavement leave without loss of pay or benefits and not chargeable to any other type of leave on the death of parent or court appointed legal guardian, spouse, child of the employee, natural and/or adopted siblings, grandparents, and current parents-in-law, if the leave is taken within seven (7) calendar days of the funeral or cremation.

Bereavement pay is calculated using the employee's base pay rate at the time of absence and will not include any special forms of compensation such as incentives, commissions, bonuses, or shift differentials.

Paid bereavement leave will be considered valid if the employee's requested date(s) coincide with regular duty hours. (Example: If an employee was scheduled to work at the time of bereavement leave, such leave may be considered valid.)

In cases of relationships other than those already listed, the Director of Schools, or a designee, as a special circumstance may grant bereavement leave, not to exceed three (3) consecutive work days.

In the event of the death of an employee or student in HCS, and with the agreement of the Director of Schools, the immediate supervisor may grant to an appropriate number of employees sufficient time to attend the services.

Jury Duty

When an employee is summoned for jury duty, the employee must present written evidence that he/she has been summoned to serve on a jury. An employee is entitled to his/her usual compensation. Any fees or remuneration the employee receives from the summoning court during jury duty must be turned over to HCS.

Emergency Leave

Refer to Board Policy 5.301, Emergency and Legal Leave

An immediate supervisor may grant an employee emergency leave during

the workday for a maximum of three (3) hours. Such leave shall be for a sudden, unexpected occurrence demanding immediate attention. Leave beyond three (3) hours shall be taken as personal leave, sick leave, or leave without pay.

Leave of Absence

Although HCS recognizes that situations may arise that require an employee to be absent from work, HCS policy requires that an employee must request and receive approval for absences. If an employee anticipates they will be out for three (3) or more days due to a serious health condition for self or family member, birth, adoption, military caregiver, hospitalized, or having surgery during any time of the calendar year, they must request a leave of absence through the HCS helpdesk. The Leave Specialist will provide guidance and the applicable paperwork if the employee is eligible for a leave of absence. Failure to comply with procedures may result in denial of leave or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If the reason for the leave of absence is due to a medical condition (including maternity leave), the employee must submit a return to work physician's statement to the leave Leave Specialist in the Human Resources Department via fax at (423) 498-6680. The employee cannot return to work until cleared by the Human Resources Department.

Extended Leaves of Absence

Refer to Board Policy 5.304, Extended Leaves of Absence

If the employee's leave exceeds twelve (12) months, the leave must be approved by the Director of Schools. If the leave is approved, the employee is not guaranteed his/her same position upon return to work, as it is dependent upon job availability and needs. A reasonable accommodation may be explored for an employee who cannot return to work following twelve (12) months of leave due to a disability. If the reason for the leave of absence is due to a medical condition, the employee must submit a return to work physician's statement to the Leave Specialist in the Human Resources Department via fax at (423) 498-6680. The employee cannot return to work until cleared by the Human Resources Department.

Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

Refer to Board Policy 5.305, Family and Medical Leave

FMLA entitles eligible employees up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave for the birth and care of the newborn child of an employee, for placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care, to care for an immediate family member (spouse, parent or child); to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition, or because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse,

child, or parent is a covered military member on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in support of a contingency operation. In addition, “eligible employees” may take up to twenty-six (26) weeks during a “single 12-month period” of unpaid leave to care for a covered service member who is a spouse, child, parent or next of kin with a serious injury or illness.

Eligibility for FMLA

Employees eligible for FMLA leave are those who have worked for at least 1,250 hours during the previous twelve (12) months prior to the start of the leave and have worked for HCS for at least twelve (12) months. HCS uses the fixed 12-month fiscal year from July 1 through June 30 for leave calculation. Employees on a leave of absence from HCS may not work for another employer during the time of leave.

Employment and Benefit Protection

Family and Medical Leave shall run concurrently with Tennessee Maternity Leave, On-the-Job-Injury (OJI), HCS sick leave, personal leave, and/or paid vacation time. After using all accrued paid leave, then an employee’s Family and Medical Leave shall be without pay. Leave shall be taken in no less than one-half (1/2) day increments.

If the employee returns to work, the employee is entitled to seniority, sick leave, and other benefits the employee would have enjoyed before the employee left. However, if the leave was unpaid, the employee will not receive benefits that would have accrued in his or her absence. Employees are responsible for the payment of benefit premiums or COBRA during leave. Failure to continue payment may result in termination of benefits.

Military Leave

Refer to Board Policy 5.306, Military Leave

HCS supports and appreciates the contributions of its employees who choose to actively maintain membership in the uniformed services. Employees who are members of any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States shall be granted leave of absence for all periods of military service during which they are engaged in the performance of duty or training in the service of the state or the United States. Reservists who anticipate military duty during the school year must give written notice to the Director of Schools, within thirty (30) days of the beginning of the school year, of the dates of the anticipated duty. While performing such duty or training, the employee shall be paid his/her regular salary up to a maximum of twenty (20) working days in any one (1) calendar year, plus such additional days as may result from any call to active state duty. An employee called to active duty by

the Governor to enforce the laws of the state shall be paid his/her regular salary for such time as he/she is engaged in the performance of his/her duty, and any time spent in active state duty shall not count against the twenty (20)-day period of leave allowed for military service.

Request for leaves and extension of leaves shall conform to state law and Board Policy governing all leaves of absence. Failure to comply with applicable laws and policies shall constitute grounds for dismissal.

The employee shall supply a copy of the orders for duty, including the dates of departure, and return it to the Director of Schools prior to, or simultaneous with requesting leave.

Personal Leave

Refer to Board Policy 5.303, Personal and Professional Leave

Regular full-time employees are allowed three (3) personal leave days per year. For part-time classified employees earning benefits, personal leave will be prorated. If, at the termination of employment, any employee has been absent for more days than leave has been earned, an amount sufficient to cover the excess days used will be deducted from the employee's final salary payment.

Subject to the following conditions, personal leave may be taken at the discretion of the employee:

1. Except in an emergency, each employee shall give his/her immediate supervisor at least one (1) day's notice in writing of intent to take leave.
2. Leave is subject to the approval of the immediate supervisor and should not be taken without approval.
3. Immediate supervisors reserve the right to deny leave if requested during a "peak work period", or if more requests are received than an office/department/school could allow without a decrease in services.
4. Except in cases of an emergency approved by the immediate supervisor, personal leave cannot be taken on the day immediately preceding or following a holiday or vacation period.

Sick Leave

Refer to Board Policy 5.302, Sick Leave

Full-time regular employees are allowed one (1) day of sick leave for each month worked. Employees are not limited to the number of days they can accumulate. Sick leave is defined as personal illness from natural causes or accident, quarantine, or illness or death of a member of the immediate family, meaning wife or husband, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, mother-in-law, father-in-law,

daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law. The immediate supervisor may require a physician's certificate. A falsified statement is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Sick leave for maternity purposes may be taken during the period of physical disability only. Employees may use up to thirty (30) days of accumulated sick leave for the adoption of a child. If both adoptive parents work for the school district, only one parent may request leave. Written verification from the adoption agency or other entity handling the adoption shall be required before the leave is granted.

At the termination of employment, all unused sick leave accumulated will be administered as follows:

1. In recognition of faithful attendance over the course of an employee's career, the Board will pay a loyalty bonus of unused sick leave day(s) accrued by an employee at the time of his or her retirement per board policy.
2. If the employee resigns, his/her leave will be held in escrow in the event the employee is rehired at a later date.
3. For any employee absent for more days than leave has been earned at termination of employment, an amount sufficient to cover the excess days used shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Student Teaching

If student teaching is required by an employee's college/university, the employee must request a leave of absence to complete the requirement(s). The leave of absence is subject to approval in accordance with HCS Board Policy and the Director of Schools. Employees will not be approved to student teach in the school or program in which he/she is currently assigned. Due to HCS's involvement in several teacher prep initiatives as well as for other educationally sound reasons, HCS does not agree to enter into agreement with all colleges/universities making requests for student teacher placements. The employee is responsible for contacting the Human Resources Department to determine if HCS has an agreement with the college/university where the employee is enrolled. An employee who is approved for a leave of absence to student teach is not guaranteed his/her same position when the employee returns to work.

Job Postings, Vacancies, and Transfers

Job Postings

HCS has online job postings that offer employees and outside applicants the opportunity to apply for specific positions within HCS.

Open Positions

Positions are posted online as vacancies occur. Employees are responsible for checking vacancies and applying in accordance with instructions. HCS reserves the right to accept applicants from outside the system, interview applicants, and hire applicants.

How to Apply for Positions

Login to the Hamilton County Schools website at www.hcde.org and follow these instructions:

- Click the Careers tab.
- Click Current Team Member to login to the employee portal
- Click View Current Job Opportunities
- Open job opportunity and click apply

If you cannot access your account or have questions, please contact your HR Generalist in the Human Resources Department at (423) 498-7048.

School-Based Vacancies

School-based vacancies for the upcoming School Year will be posted as “regular” positions until June 1st. Vacancies posted after the cut-off date will be posted as “provisional” and filled with a qualified applicant in a “provisional” position until the end of the current School Year. Vacancies filled on or after June 1, will be filled as “provisional” positions until the end of the school year.

Eligibility to Apply for a Position

Eligibility to apply for a position depends on when the applicant applies and where the vacancy occurs. Internal Transfers will be made until the cut-off date of May 31. If the cut-off date occurs on a non-business day (i.e., holiday, Saturday, Sunday, etc.), the cut-off date will be considered the last business day prior to May 31. After the last day to transfer, school-based employees may apply and transfer to a position at a different location provided the position for which the employee is applying is a promotion. A promotion is defined as a position at a salary higher than the employee’s current position.

Principals and managers may fill a vacancy from within a school or department without interviewing other candidates. It is the principal's and manager's responsibility to ensure hiring decisions are fair and equitable.

Transfers

If it is in the best interest of HCS, the Director of Schools reserves the right to transfer employees from position to position without giving employees prior notice and opportunity to be heard, provided the transfer does not result in a reduction of hourly wages or annual salary.

HCS Guidelines, Working Conditions, and Expectations

Appropriate Use of Technology and Other Business Systems

HCS is committed to providing employees with the necessary technological resources to perform job functions. HCS is committed to the proper use of all communication systems including, but not limited to, the telephone, electronic mail (e-mail), Internet, and FAX.

Employees accessing the Internet are representing HCS and therefore have a responsibility to use the Internet, electronic mail, and other technological resources in a productive manner that meets the ethical standards of an educational institution. Use of any and all technological resources is a privilege and not a right. Any violation of the Acceptable Usage Agreement may result in corrective action including suspension of use or termination of employment.

HCS prohibits transmission of sexually explicit images, messages or cartoons, ethnic slurs, racial epithets, or anything else that may be construed as harassment, bullying, threatening, attacking or disparagement of others based on race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, and religious or political beliefs. HCS assets cannot, at any time, be used for any purpose that might be considered offensive, defamatory, intimidating, or hostile. HCS assets cannot be used for political purposes or personal profit.

Other examples of inappropriate use include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Accessing inappropriate websites (sites containing information that is violent, illegal, sexually explicit, racist, etc.).
- Sending, displaying, or downloading offensive messages or pictures.
- Using obscene, racist, profane, lewd, discriminatory, threatening, or inflammatory language.
- Posting any false, damaging, or libelous information about other people, the school system or other organizations.
- Use of any HCS technological resources for personal gain or commercial or political purposes.

Arrests and Convictions

Refer to Board Policy 5.1061, Criminal Records Check

All HCS employees, regardless of classification or designation, who are arrested and charged with and/or convicted of a felony (including felonies that have been reduced to a lesser charge), a misdemeanor, or who receive a citation in lieu of arrest, must report this information to their supervisor AND to Human Resources within forty-eight (48) hours of the arrest and/or conviction. Employees are not required to report minor traffic offenses.

Employees must also report to Human Resources immediately if the Department of Children's Services (DCS) has any pending investigations against them or the employee has been indicated to be a perpetrator of child abuse.

Failure to report may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Attendance

Punctuality is expected of every employee. Regular attendance is an essential function of each employee's job. Employees are expected to be at their duty station in accordance with the time, rules, and/or regulations set forth by their supervisor. All departments/schools shall maintain attendance records showing the hours worked by employees. Employees are to report an absence according to the instructions of the supervisor. Failure to report absences shall result in disciplinary action, which could result in termination of employment. A physician's statement verifying the reason for absence may be required at the supervisor's discretion. Excessive absences or tardies shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Performance Evaluation

Refer to Board Policy 5.109, Evaluation

Classified employees shall be evaluated at least once per year. During the course of the year, if an area of deficit has been identified, the supervisor may develop a Performance Improvement Plan to support the employee in addressing the area(s) of deficit. If the employee fails to improve his/her performance or fails to sustain satisfactory performance, the evaluator may recommend termination of employment to the Director of Schools. If the employee disagrees with a rating, the employee may respond in the response section of the electronic evaluation system within ten (10) days of the summative conference.

Communicable Diseases

No employee who has any communicable disease shall perform his/her duties in any location where such attendance might endanger the health of students or other employees. The Board shall require any employee to submit to a physical examination by a physician, at the employee's expense, whenever there is reason to believe that the employee has a communicable disease.

The Director of Schools shall reassign or suspend any employee who is suspected of having a communicable disease that might endanger the health of students or other employees, pending investigation and final disposition of the case. The employee shall provide medical certification of his/her ability to return to work to Human Resources, and be cleared by Human Resources.

Conflict of Interest

Refer to Board Policy 5.601, Conflict of Interest

Employees of the Board will not engage in, nor have financial interest in, any activity that raises a reasonable question of conflict of interest with their duties and responsibilities as members of the school staff. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. School employees may not purchase for sale to students any goods or equipment or render any service to the school system on a commission basis;
2. Employees who have patented or copyrighted any device, publication, or other item will not receive royalties for use of such item in the school system;
3. Employees will not engage in any type of work where the source of information concerning a customer, client, or employer originates from information obtained through the school system;
4. The Board shall make no purchase of supplies, materials, or equipment from a school system employee; and
5. Employees shall not solicit for the purpose of selling instructional supplies, equipment and reference books in a territory that includes the parents of the children of the school in which the employee is assigned.

Discussions with Media

Employees are not authorized to speak for the district with the news media unless specifically authorized by the Director of Schools or his/her Designee.

Dress Code

Employees are expected to follow the dress code as directed by the supervisor/principal.

Duty Free Lunch

Refer to Board Policy 5.602, Times Schedules and Extra Duty

All employees covered by the Wage and Hour Law have at least a thirty (30) minutes lunch/reset period if they work at least six (6) hours per day. Lunch times may vary by department and supervisor discretion.

During this scheduled lunch/rest period, the employee shall be relieved of all duties of any nature.

All employees are covered by the Wage and Hour Law except:

- Students who work an hour or less per day;
- Volunteer workers other than regular employees; and
- Those set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act as executives, administrative employees, and professionals.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

Refer to Board Policy 5.403, Drug and Alcohol Testing

HCS does not tolerate the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs by its employees while they are on duty. Whenever a supervisor reasonably suspects that an employee's work performance or on the job behavior is being affected by alcohol or illegal drugs, the supervisor may request the Chief Talent Officer or their designee to order the employee to submit to an alcohol and/or drug test. If the employee refuses to submit to such a test, the employee may be subjected to appropriate discipline for his or her insubordination, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees in safety sensitive positions shall be subjected to pre-employment screenings, post-accident screenings, and random screenings for drug and alcohol abuse. Safety sensitive functions shall include but are not limited to mechanics, school bus drivers, driver assistants, school safety officers, maintenance employees, and school nutrition employees who drive vehicles during the performance of their duties, and all other employees whose driver assignment requires a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and/or HCS employees who operate and drive school system-owned vehicles.

No employee in a safety sensitive position shall report for duty or remain on duty or operate an HCS vehicle while having a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.02 or greater. Employees may not use alcohol within eight (8)

hours preceding the performance of safety sensitive functions. Employees may not use or possess alcohol or drugs while on duty or operating an HCS vehicle.

Inclement Weather

School-based employees - When it is necessary to adjust the student school day due to inclement weather, the workday of all school based employees will be adjusted accordingly, unless otherwise directed by the Director of Schools or his/her designee. Employees will be paid for the day(s), unless the employee is in non-pay status.

- Part-time employees are only paid for hours worked. If school is closed, part-time employees will receive no compensation. If school is dismissed early or starts late, part-time employees are paid for the actual hours worked.

Non-school based employees (Central Office, West 40th, Dodds Avenue, and other locations) – Unless Central Office is announced as being closed, all employees who accrue vacation leave will be notified as to when they are to report. If unable to report at the instructed time, the employee must use vacation or personal leave.

Maintenance employees will receive instructions from their immediate supervisor through the Director of Maintenance or his/her designee.

School Nutrition employees will receive instructions from their immediate supervisor through the Director of School Nutrition or his/her designee.

Job Abandonment

Refer to Board Policy 5.3001, Job Abandonment

Employees shall report his/her absence to the immediate supervisor in a timely manner according to the established and published regulations of the department and/or office where the employee is assigned. Employees who fail to report their absence(s) for three (3) consecutive scheduled work days shall be reported to the Director of Schools as a voluntary resignation, due to job abandonment.

Nepotism

Refer to Board Policy 1.108, Nepotism

Employees will be placed in positions according to policies of HCS. No employee shall be permitted to work within the “chain of command” of a relative where a relative’s work responsibilities, salary, schedule, or career progress could be influenced by another relative.

Relatives are not permitted to work in a position in which HCS believes a

conflict of interest may exist or where there is an appearance of a conflict of interest. The Director of Schools has the authority to transfer or reassign one or more employees if an actual or potential conflict of interest exists involving relatives or close personal relationships.

On-the-Job-Injury

Refer to Board Policy 5.311, On-the-Job-Injury

If an injury occurs while the employee is on Board-approved duty inside the District, the employee alleging the injury must file or cause to be filed a completed copy of the specified OJI report forms with the Risk Management Office immediately, but no later than within five (5) working days of the incident. If an injury occurs while the employee is on Board-approved activity outside the District, the employee shall file or cause to be filed the OJI report forms within five (5) working days of the return date.

The Board reserves the right to require a Board-approved physician's statement to verify the employee's inability to perform normal duties. Failure to follow procedures for claims may result in the claim being denied by Risk Management.

A Return to Work form must be completed by a Board approved physician and sent to the Human Resources Department. Human Resources must clear the employee to return to work. OJI runs concurrently with all other leaves of absence. NO LATER THAN the tenth (10th) consecutive work day the employee is absent, a Leave of Absence Request form must be completed by the employee and submitted to the Human Resources Department.

Failure to file a First Report of Occupational Injury or Illness report within the five (5) working day period following the incident or diagnosis shall relieve the Board of any responsibility. Forms are available on the HCS employee hub at the following link:

<https://hamiltonschools.sharepoint.com/sites/Finance/SitePages/Risk-Management.aspx>. For specific information, please contact the Risk Management Office at 423-498-7031.

Personal Phone Calls and Cell Phones

Employees are discouraged from making or accepting personal calls during working hours. Employees are expected to minimize time spent on personal cell phones during work hours so that duties of the job are being performed consistently throughout the work day .This includes not only calls but checking personal email, text messages, social media sites, etc. Such activity on personal cell phones can be intrusive and distracting and diminish employee productivity. Employees are to follow the guidelines established by his/her supervisor. No personal long distance calls may be charged to the District.

Political Activities

Refer to Board Policy 5.606, Staff-Community Relations

Employees have a right to express their views on any issue while not on duty. In each case, they must make clear that the view expressed is not the official view of HCS. Employees may, on their own time and while not on school property, campaign for or against any candidate or referendum, but they shall not use the schools, the classroom, school technology, or system position for political forum, nor engage in any political promotion or solicitation during school hours.

Record Tampering

Refer to Board Policy 5.1062, Record Tampering

Violation of this policy is a Class E felony as well as grounds for other disciplinary action leading up to and including termination.

Relationships with Students

Employees will recognize and respect the rights of students, as established by local, state, and federal law. Employees shall, at all times, maintain a professional relationship and exhibit a professional demeanor in their interactions with students.

Safety

Employees are responsible for ensuring their work area is safe by making regular safety inspections of all work conditions and equipment used in the work area. If there are unsafe conditions in their work area, precautions should be implemented to ensure safety until the conditions are corrected. If equipment is unsafe, it is not to be used until it has been repaired. All unsafe conditions and equipment are to be reported to the immediate supervisor, who shall initiate the proper action to have them corrected.

Smoking

Refer to Board Policy 1.803, Tobacco-Free Schools

All uses of tobacco and tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes and/or associated paraphernalia are prohibited on all HCS owned property. Tobacco and tobacco products are prohibited in all publicly owned or leased vehicles or any vehicle used to transport children. Any violation of the smoking policy may result in disciplinary action leading up to and including termination.

Work Assignment

HCS reserves the right to determine the location and hours of work that will constitute the employee's assignment.

Violence in the Workplace

Refer to Board Policy 5.6001, Workplace Violence

HCS will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of (or actual) violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as is practical. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of the investigation, the Director of Schools may suspend employees pending investigation.

Anyone determined to be responsible for threats of (or actual) violence or other conduct that is in violation of the guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

HCS encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors or the Human Resources Department before the situation escalates into potential violence.

Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal

Suspension/Dismissal of Classified Employees

Refer to Board Policy 5.202, Suspension/Dismissal of Classified Employees

All classified employees are under the authority of the Director of Schools who may hire, direct and control, transfer, suspend or dismiss them at his/her sole discretion. No classified employee will be employed under a contract or have any expectation of continued employment.

Corrective Action Procedure

The disciplinary action taken in any given situation depends upon the seriousness of an infraction and the employee's disciplinary history. The HCS Corrective Action Procedure involves the following progression of corrective actions:

- Counseling
- Verbal Warning
- Written Reprimand
- Suspension
- Termination

There are circumstances where the progression may be accelerated, or immediate termination may be warranted.

Counseling Session

Supervisors are to engage in open dialogue with employees prior to implementing formal corrective action procedures. This provides an opportunity for both the employer and the employee to come to a mutual agreement on action that should be taken. The counseling session is recommended but not required.

Verbal Warning

Supervisors may take corrective action by issuing a verbal warning to an employee as needed. This action may be taken in an effort to correct a situation that, if uncorrected, may require further disciplinary action. Verbal warnings should be documented.

Written Reprimand

Supervisors may take corrective action by issuing a written reprimand to an employee as needed. A copy of any written reprimand will be placed in the employee's official personnel file. The employee shall have the right to submit a written response to the reprimand and his/her response shall be attached to all copies of the reprimand.

Employee Grievances

Open Door Policy

Any employee concerned that any law, regulation, Board policy, or provision of this handbook governing his/her employment has been misinterpreted, misapplied, or applied unfairly is encouraged to discuss the matter with his/her supervisor and/or Human Resources at all levels.

Grievance Procedure

Refer to Board Policy 5.501, Employee Grievances

Should any classified, administrative, and supervisory employee believe that a specific HCDE Board Policy has been violated, and that such violation resulted in a personal loss, he may file a grievance using the following protocols.

Informal Level - Immediately-involved supervisor

The parties hereto acknowledge that it is most desirable for an employee and the supervisor immediately-involved to resolve problems through free and informal communications. An employee must ask for an informal grievance meeting with the immediately involved supervisor within 10 days from the time the employee knew of the incident. Meetings must be scheduled within ten (10) days of the request. An employee who has a grievance shall meet with the immediate supervisor to discuss the grievance in an attempt to resolve the matter informally. When the employee requests such a meeting, the employee shall inform the immediate supervisor in writing that the meeting constitutes the informal level of the grievance procedure. At the conclusion of this meeting, the employee and the immediately involved supervisor will complete the Informal Level Grievance Form (Appendix B), with the employee receiving a copy of the completed form.

Formal Level 1-Immediately-involved supervisor's supervisor (IISS)

If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the employee at the informal level within five (5) days of the informal discussion the grievance shall be set forth in writing to the immediately-involved supervisor's supervisor on the Grievance Form (Appendix C). The IISS shall arrange to meet with the grievant to discuss the grievance within five (5) days of receipt of the grievance.

Formal Level 2-Director of Schools

The employee, no later than five (5) days after the receipt of the IISS's decision, may appeal the decision to the Director of Schools or the Director's designee. The appeal to the Director of Schools must be made in writing on the Grievance Form. The Director of Schools or his/her designee shall arrange for a meeting to take place with the grievant to discuss the grievance within ten

(10) days of the receipt of the grievance.

Formal Level 3-School Board

If the dispute is not settled at level 2, the grievance may be advanced directly to the Board of Education within ten days after the employee receives the written decision from Level 2, the employee may request a review by the Board of Education. The Board shall review the case at its next regularly scheduled monthly meeting provided; however, if the request for a review is not received earlier than ten days before the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting, the Board of Education shall review the case at its following regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The Board of Education shall issue a written decision within ten days of its review, with copies to the aggrieved and the Director of Schools.

Harassment and Discrimination Complaints

Harassment and Discrimination

Refer to Board Policy, 5.502, Harassment/Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

HCS is committed to safeguarding the rights of all employees within the school system to work in an environment that is free from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment. Refer to Harassment/Sexual Harassment and Discrimination form in Appendix A.

Harassment/Discrimination Defined

Discrimination/harassment will not be tolerated. Discrimination/harassment is defined as conduct, advances, gestures, or words either written or spoken on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or appearance, race, national origin, color, creed, religion, age, marital status, or disability which:

- Unreasonably interferes with the individual's work performance; or
- Creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or academic environment; or
- Implies that submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term of employment; or
- Implies that submission to or rejection of such conduct will be used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed individual.

Sexual Harassment Defined/Conduct Prohibited

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct, or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, for obtaining or retaining employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment; or
- That conduct or communication has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive employment environment.

Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Sexual advances
- Verbal harassment or abuse
- Subtle pressure for sexual activity

- Touching of a sexual nature including inappropriate patting or pinching
- Intentional brushing against a student's or other person's body
- Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment or educational status
- Demanding sexual favors especially when accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment
- Graffiti of sexual nature
- Displaying or distributing sexually explicit drawings, pictures, or other written materials including making and playing sexually explicit audio/video tapes
- Sexual gestures including touching oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activities in front of others
- Sexual or "dirty" jokes, or
- Spreading rumors about or rating other students and/or adults as to sexual activity or performance

Any sexual harassment as defined above when perpetrated by or toward any employee of the school district will be treated as sexual harassment under this policy.

Reporting Procedure

- Report harassment or sexual harassment to the immediate supervisor except when the immediate supervisor is the offending party. If the immediate supervisor is the offending party, the report may be made to the Director of Schools or the Human Resources Department at 3074 Hickory Valley Road, Chattanooga, TN 37421, or by calling Dr. Saunya Goss, Director, HR Business Partners at 423.498.7048.
- Employees may submit an oral complaint; however, such complaints must be transcribed in writing to ensure a more complete investigation. The complaint should include the identity of the alleged victim and the person accused, the location, date, time, and circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, a description of what happened and any other relevant information. (See Appendix A).
- Upon receipt of a report or complaint, an investigation shall be initiated. The investigation shall be conducted by school system officials.
- The investigator(s) shall provide a written report of the status of the investigation within twenty (20) days to the Director of Schools. The twenty (20) day period may be extended by the Director of Schools if the investigation warrants the extension.
- The result of the investigation for each complaint filed under these procedures shall be reported in writing to the complainant by the school system.

- The school system shall take other steps as are necessary to prevent recurrence of the harassment.

Reprisal

There shall be no retaliation against any person who reports discrimination/harassment or participates in an investigation.

False Accusations

False accusations of harassment or sexual harassment can have a serious detrimental effect on innocent parties. Any person who knowingly and intentionally makes a false accusation for any reason which would be contrary to the spirit and intent of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Right to Alternative Complaint Procedure

The described procedure does not deny the right of any individual to pursue other avenues of recourse which may include filing charges with Tennessee Human Rights Commission, initiating civil action, filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education, or, in certain instances, seeking redress under state statutes.



Harassment Complaint Form

Confidential Document

Date Complaint Filed: _____

Complainant Name: _____

Employee Student

Complainant Location: _____

Work School

Name of Alleged Harasser: _____

Position of Alleged Harasser: _____

Briefly Explain the Nature of the Complaint: _____

When did the harassment start? *(List date, if known)* _____

Was the alleged harasser told of your concern? NO YES *If yes, list date:* _____

Name(s) of Witnesses who can verify your complaint:

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

Did you report this complaint to anyone else prior to filing the written complaint?

NO YES

If yes, to whom? _____

Signature of Complainant

Date

Complaint received by:

HCS Administrator

Date

Attach additional pages if necessary



Grievance Form for Informal Level

Confidential Document

The undersigned hereby agree that on _____ a
Date

meeting was held in accordance with the Grievance Procedure, Board Policy 5.501.

Immediate Supervisor

Employee

(1 copy to the employee and 1 copy to the immediate supervisor)



Grievance Form for Formal Levels

Confidential Document

To Be Completed by Grievant:

Check one: _____ Level I - Immediately-Involved Supervisor's Supervisor

_____ Level II - Director of Schools or Designee

_____ Level III - School Board*

Grievant Name: _____

Work Location: _____

Assignment: _____

Article(s) and Section(s) alleged to have been violated (attach additional sheets as needed):

Specific statement of grievance:

Relief sought:

Grievant Signature

Date