

Jackson County Public Schools

Employee Handbook

2026-2027

Jackson County Public Schools Employee Handbook

This handbook is intended to be used as a reference manual or guide for employees regarding Jackson County Public Schools policies and procedures. It is not a contract for employment. The Jackson County Public Schools Board of Education reserves the right to unilaterally change, terminate and/or make exceptions to the extent permitted by law. Nothing in this handbook grants employment rights beyond that which is granted by law. Forms referenced in this handbook can be found in the JCPS Google Drive under JCPS Staff Information.

The Jackson County Public School system does not discriminate against any person on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age or handicap in any of its education or employment programs or activities.

Employee Handbook Prepared by the Offices of Human Resources/Finance/Payroll

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The educators of Jackson County will work with parents and community members, using all resources and techniques necessary to ensure that all students achieve the academic, reasoning, technical and life skills to be successful at the entry-level of employment and in the pursuit of further education.

Jackson County Public Schools Vision

Our students are prepared to achieve their personal best as contributing members of their communities.

We believe that:

- A nurturing learning community empowers every student to thrive.
- High Expectations for students & staff lead to continuous growth & improvement.
- Safe & secure environments foster an atmosphere for learning.
- Partnerships with families & communities are critical for student success.

Board of Education

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Central Office Contacts

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Deputy Superintendent	Jacob Buchanan
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Chief Finance Officer	Kristie Walker
Human Resources Director	Dr. Michael Vetter
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School Nutrition Director	Laura Cabe
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Chief Technology Officer	Greg Stewart
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Policy Manual

All School Board policies are listed on our Jackson County Public Schools website. Employees are expected to familiarize themselves with these policies. If you have specific questions, contact the appropriate department at the central office.

Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators

Preamble: The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to define standards of professional conduct.

The responsibility to teach and the freedom to learn, and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all are essential to the achievement of these principles. The professional educator acknowledges the worth and dignity of every person and demonstrates the pursuit of truth and devotion to excellence, acquires knowledge, and nurtures democratic citizenship. The educator exemplifies a commitment to the teaching and learning processes with accountability to the students, maintains professional growth, exercises professional judgment, and personifies integrity. The educator strives to maintain the respect and confidence of colleagues, students, parents and legal guardians, and the community, and to serve as an appropriate role model.

To uphold these commitments, the educator:

I. Commitment to the Student.

A. Protects students from conditions within the educator's control that circumvent learning or are detrimental to the health and safety of students.
B. Maintains an appropriate relationship with students in all settings; does not encourage, solicit, or engage in a sexual or romantic relationship with students, nor touch a student in an inappropriate way for personal gratification, with intent to harm, or out of anger.
C. Evaluates students and assigns grades based upon the students' demonstrated competencies and performance.
D. Disciplines students justly and fairly and does not deliberately embarrass or humiliate them.
E. Holds in confidence information learned in professional practice except for professional reasons or in compliance with pertinent regulations or statutes.
F. Refuses to accept significant gifts, favors, or additional compensation that might influence or appear to influence professional decisions or actions.

II. Commitment to the School and School System

A. Utilizes available resources to provide a classroom climate conducive to learning and to promote learning to the maximum possible extent.
B. Acknowledges the diverse views of students, parents and legal guardians, and colleagues as they work collaboratively to shape educational goals, policies, and decisions; does not proselytize for personal viewpoints that are outside the scope of professional practice.
C. Signs a contract in good faith and does not abandon contracted professional duties without a substantive reason.

D. Participates actively in professional decision-making processes and supports the expression of professional opinions and judgments by colleagues in decision-making processes or due process proceedings.
E. When acting in an administrative capacity:
    1. Acts fairly, consistently, and prudently in the exercise of authority with colleagues, subordinates, students, and parents and legal guardians.
    2. Evaluates the work of other educators using appropriate procedures and established statutes and regulations.
    3. Protects the rights of others in the educational setting, and does not retaliate, coerce, or intentionally intimidate others in the exercise of rights protected by law.
    4. Recommends persons for employment, promotion, or transfer according to their professional qualifications, the needs and policies of the LEA, and according to the law.

II. Commitment to the Profession

A. Provides accurate credentials and information regarding licensure or employment and does not knowingly assist others in providing untruthful information.
B. Takes action to remedy an observed violation of the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators and promotes understanding of the principles of professional ethics.
C. Pursues growth and development in the practice of the profession and uses that knowledge in improving the educational opportunities, experiences, and performance of students and colleagues.

Adopted by the State Board of Education June 5, 1997

Personnel Classification

Full-Time Permanent:
Employees, who work six or more hours per day, or 30 or more hours per week and whose assignment is to a position which is greater than six months in duration shall be considered full time, permanent employees. Employees in this category are eligible for membership in the State.

Employees' Retirement System and paid health insurance for self, in addition to holidays, annual leave and sick leave according to approved earning rates. Employees in this classification are earning "Aggregate State Service" toward annual leave and longevity pay.

Temporary:
Employees who work less than 20 hours per week or are employed to fill a vacancy for less than six months are considered to be temporary.

Employees in this category may be classified as full-time or part-time and are not eligible for membership in the State Employees' Retirement System coverage, paid health insurance, holidays, annual leave or sick leave. Employees in this classification are not earning "Aggregate State Service" toward annual leave and longevity pay.

Part-Time:
A. **20 to less than 30 hours per week**- Employees who work at least four hours per day or 20 hours per week, but less than six hours per day or 30 hours per week, are considered part-time permanent

employees. They are entitled to earn annual leave, sick leave and holidays on a pro rata basis. A part-time permanent employee in this category does not receive retirement. However, an employee in this category is eligible for hospitalization coverage by assuming full costs (employee and employer charges) of coverage. Persons in this category are earning a pro-rata portion of "Aggregate State Service" toward annual leave.

B. **Less than 20 hours per week**- Employees who work for less than four hours per day or 20 hours per week are also considered part-time permanent employees but do not receive sick leave, annual leave or holiday pay. These employees receive neither hospital insurance nor retirement system membership. This classification is not eligible for hospitalization coverage even if willing to assume full costs. Employees in this classification are not earning "Aggregate State Service".

C. Employees who hold a permanent part-time position (under six hours daily) and are "filling in" on a temporary basis for another employee bringing the work day to six hours or more per day, are not eligible for full time benefits.

Interim Employee:

A person employed for less than six full consecutive months to replace an employee who is on an approved leave of absence and is expected to return.

Volunteer:

A person who volunteers of his/her own free will; does not receive and does not expect to receive compensation (with no agreement or expectation of payment at a later date); and provides services which would normally be provided by an (unpaid) volunteer. An employee that chooses to volunteer outside of their current role must use appropriate leave time.

Volunteering is not employment; therefore, volunteers cannot be used to fill or hold any vacancies. Volunteering also must not affect or influence any future decisions the employer may make with regard to the volunteer's possible employment in the local education agency.

At-will or Contract?

If you are a non-licensed/classified employee, you are employed at the will and at the pleasure of the school system. This means that you may be dismissed or demoted for any nondiscriminatory reason. If you are dismissed, you are entitled to request a hearing and to find out the reason why you were dismissed.

If you are licensed, you may be employed on a contract for a fixed term as a probationary employee, or you may be employed on a continuing contract. Licensed employees may not be dismissed for any arbitrary, discriminatory, personal, or political reason.

Teacher Contracts

The board recognizes the importance of establishing a clear contractual relationship with teachers employed by the school system. All teacher employment contracts entered into by the board will meet the requirements of state law and State Board of Education policy. Nothing in this policy is intended to grant or confer any employment rights beyond those existing in law.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "teacher" is defined as a person who meets the requirements of G.S. 115C-325.1(6). An individual who is employed as a temporary or part-time (less than 100%) teacher

does not meet this definition of teacher; however, the board's performance expectations established in this policy apply to such individuals.

A new or renewed contract will be for a term of one school year for teachers who have been employed by the board as a teacher for less than three consecutive years immediately preceding a further contract offer. For teachers who have been employed by the board as a teacher for three or more consecutive years immediately preceding a further contract offer and who are in good standing, a new or renewed contract will be for a term of four school years. After a teacher has completed a four-year contract, subsequent contracts will be for a term of four school years if the teacher is in good standing at the time of the contract offer. A teacher will be considered in good standing for purposes of this policy if:

1) the teacher received a rating of at least "proficient" on all standards of the teacher evaluation instrument on the two most recent annual evaluations;
2) the teacher is not currently on a monitored or directed growth plan, mandatory improvement plan, or corrective action plan and has not been on any such plan at any time during the current or previous school year;
3) the teacher has not received any of the following during the current or previous school year: a demotion, a suspension without pay, a written reprimand or other disciplinary action, aside from a written warning, that is documented in the teacher's official personnel file; and
4) there is no other relevant performance or conduct information in the personnel file that would support a decision to disqualify the teacher from a multi-year contract. If renewed, a contract for a teacher who is not in good standing may be for a term of one year only.

Administrator Contracts

Administrator Contracts are issued to school-based administrators and other administrators as required by law. School-based administrator contracts are for terms of 2 or 4 years.

Updating Personal Information

If your name or address changes for any reason, please complete a **Change of Employee Information Form** and forward a copy to the Human Resources Coordinator and Payroll Specialist. The form is available in each school office, on the JCPS webpage (Change of Employee Information Form) and at the Central Office. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify these offices. The name on your records should agree with the name on your Social Security Card. When changing your name, a copy of your social security card and driver's license reflecting the name change will be required. Please forward a copy of your new identification to the payroll and human resources departments.

The Workday – Reporting Absences

All employees are to be present during all working hours. Absences must have prior approval from the employee's supervisor unless in case of emergency. Employees should create all absences in Absence Management before 6:30 AM of the day of the absence by entering the request online at www.jcpsnc.org (select Staff and Absence Management) or by calling 1-800-942-3767. All employees are responsible for entering appropriate leave. Employee login information is available from ESS (Rachel Nicholson, 828-586-2311 x1972). Leave must be entered for **ALL employees** who do not work when they

are scheduled to work. If you are an hourly employee, and you are expected to be at work, you must put in leave.

Exempt Employees

Generally defined as employees who are salaried executive, administrative and professional and/or who may have supervisory responsibilities (i.e. principals, teachers, central office administration, etc.). These positions require that the employee be at his/her workstation, or on official business, the entire length of the workday. The employee is also required to complete other assignments that may go beyond the normal workday as required by the nature of the position. Exempt employees are expected to clock in upon arrival at their work location each day using timekeeper.

Teachers: The length of the workday for full-time licensed staff is a minimum of 7.5 hours and will continue until professional responsibilities to the students and school are completed.

Non-Exempt (Classified) Employees

Working hours for all employees not exempted under the Fair Labor Standards Act will conform to federal and state regulations.

Teacher Assistants: The work week for assistants shall be five workdays per week, not to exceed 40 hours per week.

Other Non-Certified and Central Office Staff: The normal work week shall be no more than 40 hours.

Exceptions to these working hours are rare and must be approved by Human Resources prior to and deviation in the work week.

Compensatory Time

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, non-exempt employees will be granted compensatory time (comp time) off in lieu of compensation for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week. This comp time will be at the rate of time and one half for any hours over 40 hours in a work week under the following conditions:

- PRIOR to working over 40 hours, the employee agrees to work the extra time AND the immediate supervisor has authorized the employee to do so.
- Comp time hours should be used within one pay period when possible.
- No more than 40 hours of comp time may be carried from one fiscal year to the next.
- No employee should earn 240 hours of comp time unless approved by the immediate supervisor, HR Director and CFO due to employee shortages. In the event the employee earns 240 hours or more of comp time prior to the end of a fiscal year, the employee will be paid for the hours in excess of 40 at the time the overage occurs.
- Misuse of the comp time policy will be addressed by direct supervisors.

References: Comp Time Guidelines, JCPS Board Policy, North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual

Resignations

All employees who resign are required to complete an Employee Resignation Form. The form is available in each school office, on the JCPS Payroll & Employee Benefits page and at the Central Office. Professional employees who for any reason intend to resign are encouraged to indicate their plans as soon as possible.

The last day of employment is considered the last working day of the employee. Annual leave shall not be used for extending the term of employment individuals (GS 115C-316) and the remaining annual leave balance will be paid out up to 30 days unless the employee is transferring to another LEA or a state agency that will accept the leave balance.

When an employee transfers between LEAs or to a state agency, if the new employment is obtained within 31 calendar days from the date of separation, (as reported by the resigning employee), the leave balances will transfer rather than being paid out.
Lump sum payment: An employee must be paid in a lump sum for accumulated annual vacation leave, not to exceed a maximum of 30 days or 240 hours, upon separation from service. Separation from service includes resignation (unless the employee is transferring to another LEA or state agency), dismissal, reduction-in- force, death, service retirement, beginning long-term disability benefit or change to temporary status.

End of year resignations become effective in June of that school year. Resignations for any other time during the school year require a 30-day notice unless the Superintendent consents to a shorter time. A licensed employee who gives less than a 30-day notice, and leaves without the Superintendent's consent, may have his/her license revoked by the State Board of Education for the remainder of the school year, if that recommendation is made to them by the local Board.

Once a resignation is submitted and accepted by the Superintendent or his/her designee, it cannot be withdrawn.

Licensed Employees: If a career employee who has been recommended for dismissal under G.S. 115C-325(e)(1) resigns without the written consent of the superintendent, then:

1) the superintendent shall report the matter to the State Board of Education;
2) the employee shall be deemed to have consented to the placement of the written notice of the superintendent's intention to recommend dismissal in the employee's personnel file;
3) the employee shall be deemed to have consented to the release to prospective employers, upon request, of the fact that the superintendent has reported this employee to the State Board of Education; and
4) the employee shall be deemed to have voluntarily surrendered his/her certificate pending an investigation by the State Board of Education to determine whether to seek action against the employee's certificate. For purposes of this section, "career employee" means (1) a teacher or

administrator with career status, or (2) an administrator or probationary teacher during the term of his or her contract.

Licensure Information

It is the responsibility of each licensed employee to maintain his/her license in the area in which they are teaching to be eligible for continued employment.

Initial License
Conversion of an initial license to a continuing license requires:

- Meeting all testing requirements (see LICN-003(II)),
- Three years of teaching experience;
- Completion of any professional development by the employing school system;
- A rating of at least Proficient on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Instrument for the most recent year of employment in North Carolina; and
- The recommendation of the employing school system.

Continuing License
A certified employee holding a continuing license is expected to meet renewal requirements within their 5-year renewal cycle. The renewal process ensures that licensed school personnel continually update their professional knowledge and technical competency. All credits must be earned by the expiration date of the existing license.

Grades K- 5

- 3 Subject Area
- 3 Literacy
- 2 General

Grades 6-12

- 4 Subject Areas
- 4 General

Student Services Personnel

- 4 Professional Discipline
- 4 General

Administrators

- 4 Executive's Role
- 4 General

One continuing education unit reflects ten contact hours. One semester hour is equivalent to 1.5 continuing education units. Course work must be directly related to an individual's professional responsibilities as a public school educator or to his or her area(s) of licensure. Additional information is available at NCDPI's licensure page.

Beginning Teacher Program

All new teachers in North Carolina participate in a three-year Beginning Teacher Program (BTP) before they receive a continuing license. Each beginning teacher is assigned a mentor teacher who guides him/her into the teaching profession. In addition, beginning teachers participate in district wide Professional Learning Communities. To document their professional growth and competency with teaching standards, beginning teachers maintain an online collection of evidences which include professional development plans, quarterly evaluations, summative evaluations and professional development logs. At the end of the third year, the district makes a recommendation to the state for a continuing license based on successful completion of the initial licensure process and evaluations of the school administration.

Teachers who did not complete an educator preparation program may enter the profession by way of a residence license. These teachers must have a bachelor's degree and complete additional coursework requirements by enrolling in a University. Residency teachers participate with other beginning teachers in the regular meetings, are assigned a mentor and are expected to complete beginning teacher requirements.

National Boards Certification

Teachers with three or more years of experience can apply for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Teachers who complete the process will earn 7.5 renewal credits which can be used in their current renewal cycle or be applied toward a future renewal cycle. Teachers who successfully complete the NBPTS certification process will earn an additional pay increment determined by State Board Policy for the duration of the license. National Boards requires renewal every 5 years and will award 5 credits for the renewal. Additional information about National Board Certification can be found at http://www.nbpts.org/.

Teaching Experience

If a teacher teaches as much as six months (120 Days) during the year full-time, he/she will earn one year of experience on their license, and therefore, on the teacher salary scale. If a teacher teaches 50% for ten months, he/she can earn the equivalent of five months on their license. Two years at this level of experience will equal one year on the license.

North Carolina allows year-for-year experience for teachers coming from out of state. Sometimes work experience outside education will count toward a directly-related teaching area. If you have questions about crediting previous work experience, please contact the Human Resources Coordinator.

Aggregate or Total State Service

This is work experience within the State of North Carolina, not just in the public schools. This service record follows the employee from one state agency to another. It is the basis on which the employee earns annual leave and longevity pay. Work experience of 20 or more hours per week counts the same as full-time experience. Each month that the employee works half or more of the workdays in that month counts as a month of State Service. Even if the employee has withdrawn retirement funds, he/she can still count this work experience on a month-for-month basis.

Tenure or Career Status

The 2012-2013 school year was the last year teachers were eligible to earn tenure/career status. (Reference Sections 9.6 (f)-(I) of Senate Bill 402)

Professional Development

Frontline Professional Growth (formerly MyLearningPlan), is a web-based system used by Jackson County Public Schools for personnel requesting to attend professional development opportunities. To receive continuing education credit, participants are required to register for in-district workshops through the District Catalog. Conferences, courses, or workshops outside of the district require prior approval. Personnel are required to complete prior approval request form through My Learning Plan. You may contact the Human Resources office for additional information regarding MLP.

- College or university courses – Courses may be at graduate or undergraduate level and may be taken through any accredited college or university, including technical and community colleges. For these courses, 1.5 renewal credits will be awarded for each semester hour. Transcripts are required as documentation; grade reports are not accepted.
- Conferences, Courses or Workshops – Sponsored by Jackson County Public Schools, WRESA, or North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
- Other Activities – Renewal credit may be awarded for other activities if credit has been established and approved by the school system. Documentation of completion is required.

Certified Evaluations - North Carolina Educator Evaluation

All licensed employees will be evaluated using the state adopted NC Educator Evaluation Process. This process includes the following components:

- Training
- Orientation
- Self-Assessment
- Pre-observation Conference
- Observations
- Post-observation Conference
- Summary Evaluation Conference and Scoring the Summary Rating Form • Professional Development Plan

The **North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES)** is a web-based online evaluation system used as a tool for documenting teacher evaluations, observations and Professional Development Plans. Each certified personnel will be assigned an employee ID. Newly hired certified employees are required to complete training on the evaluation process. Returning teachers are required to complete an annual orientation training. You may contact the Human Resources office for additional information for NCEES technical support.

Non-Certified Evaluations

Annual evaluations are conducted by the immediate supervisor. A copy is maintained in the employee's personnel file at the central office.

North Carolina Health Certificate

All new employees, and any employee who is separated from employment for more than one year, must return completed Health Examination Certificate within thirty days of their employment.

Drug and Alcohol Testing for Bus Drivers

All applicants for bus driver, bus mechanic or other transportation positions which require employees to hold a valid CDL license, will submit to a drug assessment prior to final consideration for employment. Once employed, the employee will be subject to random drug and alcohol testing during employment under the guidelines set forth in Board policy. Please note that CBD may cause a positive test for marijuana. As such, an employee may be terminated from employment for any positive test, including CBD use.

Bus Driver CDL & DOT Medical Exam

Any school bus driver with a regular scheduled bus route, or has served as a substitute bus driver 10 or more times within the last 12 months, will be reimbursed for their CDL and DOT medical exam by the transportation department. The maximum reimbursement for the DOT Medical is $100.00.
The reimbursement for the CDL license will not include the cost of a regular license or any endorsements not related to driving a school bus.

Smoking and Tobacco Products

The Jackson County Board of Education promotes the health and safety of all students and staff and the cleanliness of all school facilities. The board believes that the use of tobacco products on school grounds, in school buildings and facilities, in or on any other school property owned or operated by the school board, or at school-related or school-sponsored events is detrimental to the health and safety of students, staff, and school visitors. To this end, and to comply with state and federal law, the board adopts this tobacco-free policy that prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco products as follows. For the purposes of this policy, the term "tobacco product" means any product that contains or is made or derived from tobacco and is intended for human consumption, including all lighted and smokeless tobacco products, as well as electronic cigarettes, vaporizers, and other electronic smoking devices even if they do not contain tobacco or nicotine. Policy Code: 5026/7250 Smoking and Tobacco Products

Duty to Report

Employees must notify their supervisor and the Director of Human Resources immediately if they are arrested, charged with, or convicted of a criminal offense (including entering a plea of guilty or *nolo contendere*) other than a minor traffic violation (i.e., speeding, parking, or a lesser violation). **Notice must be in writing, must include all pertinent facts, and must be delivered to the Director of Human Resources no later than the next scheduled business day following the arrest, charge, or conviction,**

unless the applicant is hospitalized or incarcerated, in which case the employee must report the alleged violation within 24 hours after his or her release. Upon judicial action in the matter, the applicant must report the disposition and pertinent facts in writing to the Human Resources Director no later than the next business day following adjudication.

Sexual Harassment

The Jackson County Board of Education intends that all students and employees should be free of unlawful sexual harassment as a part of a safe, orderly, caring and inviting working and learning environment. The board expressly prohibits sexual harassment in the educational and work environment.

Sexual harassment is one form of harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. submission to the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment, academic progress or completion of a school-related activity;
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or in the case of a student, submission to or rejection of such conduct is used in evaluating the individual's performance within a course of study or other school related activity; or
3. such conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work or performance or a student's educational performance; limiting a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or environment; or creating an abusive, intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or educational environment.

Examples of sexually harassing conduct include, but are not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching of a sexual nature or that takes on sexual connotations; suggestions or demands for sexual involvement accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats; pressure for sexual activity; continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions; continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual's body; sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual; or the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

It is possible for sexual harassment to occur at various levels: between fellow students or coworkers; between supervisors and subordinates; between employees and students; or imposed by non-employees, including visitors, on employees and/or students. In addition, sexual harassment can occur between members of the opposite sex or the same sex.

All employees are required to report any possible claim of sexual harassment or sexual assault against the employee or a coworker to their immediate supervisor.

Title IX Obligations

Any employee who witnessed or who has reliable information or reason to believe that a student may have been discriminated against, harassed, or bullied must report the offense immediately to their

immediate supervisor, and all reports must be made to the District Title IX Coordinator, HR Director Mike Vetter, 828-586-2311 x1925.

Bloodborne Pathogens

The school system has a Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan designed to minimize employee exposure to potentially infectious blood and other bodily fluids. All employees must comply with the provisions of this plan. Some employees are classified as occupationally exposed because they can reasonably anticipate coming into contact with blood or bodily fluids in the normal performance of their assigned work duties. Each employee is required to receive annual training for Bloodborne Pathogens. The training is designed to provide basic understanding of Bloodborne pathogens, common modes of transmission, methods of prevention, and meets the requirements of the Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens (OSHA's) Bloodborne Standard.

Seclusion and Restraint

N.C. General Statute, G.S. 115C-391.1, sets out the specific circumstances under which school personnel may physically or mechanically restrain, seclude, or isolate a student. Seclusion means the confinement of a student alone in an enclosed space from which the student is physically prevented from leaving or incapable of leaving due to physical or intellectual capacity. Mechanical Restraint means the use of any device or material that restricts freedom of movement that the student cannot easily remove. Physical restraint means the use of physical force to restrict the free movement of all or a portion of a student's body. Training is free to all JCPS staff in verbal intervention and physical interventions. Please refer to Rules For Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools, (Policy 4302-R).

Benefits

NC 401(k), and 457 Plans

A payroll deduction plan is available for those who wish to participate in a NC 401(k) or 457 plan. School personnel participate in NC 401(k) and 457 plans at their convenience, and payroll deductions may begin at any time with a two-week notice. When an employee wishes to start one of these plans, he/she can go online www.myncplans.com or contact the benefits specialist.

Disability Income Plan

The purpose of the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina is a benefit for those employees who become temporarily or permanently disabled from further performance of their regular job prior to retirement. Coverage under the plan is automatic for all teachers and state employees who are members of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System and have completed at least 365 days of membership service. This plan has a 60-day waiting period before any benefits are payable. During this waiting period, employees must exhaust their accumulated sick or annual leave and then they may avail themselves of Voluntary Shared Sick Leave.

Short-Term Disability Benefits: After the 60-day waiting period, the disabled employee moves into a short-term disability period, which lasts up to 365 days. The employee must have completed 365 days of membership service prior to the beginning of the short-term disability period. The monthly short-term benefit is equal to ½ of your annual base salary (including longevity and local supplement) last payable to the employee prior to the beginning of the short-term benefit period, to a maximum of $3,000 per month. Your benefit may be subject to offsets. An "offset" is a reduction in the amount of your benefit based on the amount of another benefit you are receiving or may be eligible to receive.

Long-Term Disability Benefits: At the completion of the short-term disability period, long-term disability benefits are payable for as long as the employee is permanently disabled, but not after the employee becomes eligible for an unreduced service retirement, provided the employee:

1. has five years of contributing membership service in the Retirement System earned within 96 calendar months prior to the end of the short-term disability period; (the short-term disability period does not count toward the five years)
2. makes an application for long-term benefits within 180 days after the conclusion of the short-term disability period;
3. is certified by the Medical Board to be mentally or physically disabled for the further performance of your usual occupation;
4. disability has been continuous, likely to be permanent and incurred while a State teacher or employee; and
5. is not eligible to receive an unreduced retirement benefit from the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System

During the first 36 months of the long-term disability period, the monthly long-term benefit will equal 65% of the employee's annual base salary, to a maximum of $3,900 per month, with a reduction for any monthly payments the employee receives for Workers' Compensation and by any Social Security benefits he/she may be receiving. The employee is permitted earnings during this period, but with certain conditions. Your benefit may be subject to offsets.

After the first 36 months, the benefit is calculated as above, except that it is reduced by an amount equal to a primary Social Security disability benefit to which the employee might be entitled had he/she been awarded Social Security disability benefits. Again, the employee is permitted earnings subject to certain conditions.

When a person receiving long-term disability benefits reaches the age and/or service requirements to qualify for an unreduced retirement allowance from the Retirement System, the benefits payable from the plan will cease and the person will commence retirement under the Retirement System. A person in receipt of benefits under the plan is considered to be in service and covered under the Death Benefit Plan, under the Survivor's Alternate Benefit provision, and covered under the Teachers' and State Employees' Comprehensive Major Medical Plan. If the employee has five years of contributing membership service at the time of disability, the state pays the employer's share of the premium, if less than five years, the employee may continue coverage by paying the full premium required.

Restrictions: A person in receipt of benefits from the plan is not permitted to receive a refund of accumulated contributions from the Retirement System. Further, a person is also not permitted to commence retirement benefits from the Retirement System while in receipt of benefits from the plan.

NOTE: A STATE TEACHER OR STATE EMPLOYEE IS NOT COVERED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE PLAN DURING ANY PERIOD WHILE ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY. THEREFORE, NO BENEFITS ARE PAYABLE FOR ANY PERIOD OF DISABILITY THAT BEGINS WHILE AN EMPLOYEE IS ON LEAVE WITHOUT PAY. Additional information about The Disability Income Plan of North Carolina can be provided by the payroll office.

Cafeteria Benefits

This benefit gives employees the option of participating in a custom benefits package that provides for tax savings for everyday expenses. Employees may select from a "menu" of available benefits that are deducted from the employee's monthly salary before taxes are calculated.

These options include:

1. Medical Reimbursement (flexible spending account)
2. Dependent care reimbursement (flexible spending account)
3. Cancer and Accident policies
4. Dental plan
5. Vision plan
6. Hospital Indemnity

After-tax benefits that may be selected are:

1. Permanent life insurance
2. Term life insurance
3. Disability insurance
4. Critical illness
5. Legalshield Protection

The cost savings are simple: the first six benefit premiums or expenses paid through the plan are tax exempt. The premium paid or reimbursement expense set aside is deducted from the gross pay before state and federal income taxes and social security taxes are computed. Tax savings are not reported and will not be included in the taxable salary reported on the W-2 forms in January.

Employees may sign up for the Flexible Benefits Program during the enrollment period of each school year. Open Enrollment is conducted annually. More information can be provided by the Benefit Specialist.

Group Health Insurance

JCPS employees are eligible to participate in the North Carolina State Health PPO Plan. This plan is currently administered by Aetna.

The State Health Plan offers two health plan options: the Plus PPO Plan and the Base PPO Plan.

Both plans are administered by Aetna, but benefits are paid by the State. You can seek care from providers in the Aetna network or go out-of-network. However, if you stay in-network, your deductibles, copays and coinsurance will be lower. Visit the State Health Plan website at https://www.shpnc.gov/, to learn more about copay reductions and other opportunities to reduce medical and pharmacy costs.

CVS Caremark is the State Health Plan's Pharmacy Benefit Manager. CVS is the Plan's pharmacy manager, but your pharmacy benefits are paid by the state. Members should note that this does NOT mean members will have to go to a CVS pharmacy location for their prescriptions. CVS Caremark has a broad pharmacy network, which can be found using the Pharmacy Locator Tool on the Plan's website at www.shpnc.org. Under both health plans, the formulary, or drug list, for prescription drugs is a custom, closed formulary. Under a custom, closed formulary, certain drugs are not covered. If you find that your prescription is not covered, speak to your provider about possible alternatives. There is an exception process available to providers who believe that, based on medical necessity, it is in the member's best interest to remain on a non-covered drug. CVS Caremark Customer Care can be reached by calling 888-321-3124.

Enrollment and effective dates: When enrolling in the plan, the effective date of coverage will be either the first month following employment or the first day of the second month following employment.

Additional information is available on the https://www.shpnc.gov/.

Group Life Insurance

JCPS provides each employee with a life insurance policy at no cost to the employee (subject to change at the Board's discretion). In addition, all full-time employees of JCPS are eligible to join the group life insurance program. Consult pg. 43 of your 2026-2027 Mark III Benefits Handbook for additional information.

Longevity Pay

Effective June 30, 2014, teachers and instructional support no longer earn longevity benefits. The General Assembly incorporated these funds into the salary schedules to provide higher salaries at each step.

Effective July 1, 2017, principals and assistant principals no longer earn longevity benefits. The General Assembly incorporated these funds into the salary schedules.

Other permanent full-time or part-time employees (20 hours per week or more) who are employed for at least 10 years of State Service are eligible for longevity payments. Longevity pay is automatic. Payment shall be made during the month following the monthly pay period in which the employee has satisfied all eligibility requirements.

The general rule as to whether or not part-time, interim or temporary service counts toward Aggregate State Service is whether or not the assignment was for 20 hours per week or more and for longer than a six-month period.

The amount of annual longevity pay is a percentage of the employee's annual rate of pay on the employee's anniversary date. The percentage is determined by the length of total state service as follows:

Years of NC Service Longevity Pay Rate
10 but less than 15 years 1.5%
15 but less than 20 years 2.25%
20 but less than 25 years 3.25%
25 or more years 4.5%

An employee separating from employment shall be paid the amount of longevity pay earned up to termination of employment.

Retirement

Retirement will be in accordance with the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina. No employee will be required to retire at any age.

Any employee who anticipates retirement may complete a retirement application online or with the Benefits Specialist no more than 120 days prior to his/her intended retirement date. The Benefits Specialist will notify the Superintendent's office of such requests. In order to retire, an employee must meet with the benefits specialist and complete a JCPS retirement form.

All full-time, permanent employees of JCPS must join the retirement system. Each member contributes 6% each month. Retirement is automatically deducted from the employee's paycheck. If a member leaves state employment, he/she can request a refund of his/her contributions with interest. Members are advised not to withdraw their funds from the Retirement System since it can be costly to "buy back" years of service at a later date. However, if an employee is considering withdrawal of contributions, he/she should consult with the Benefits Specialist.

Other Important Retirement Information

- Any time an employee wishes to change his/her beneficiary, he/she should log into ORBIT and make these changes.
- If an employee changes his/her name, it is important that the Retirement System be notified. Please visit the Change of Employee Information page to make updates.
- In addition to Retirement benefits, the employee and JCPS are also contributing to Social Security benefits. These benefits are in addition to retirement benefits.
- Benefits under both the Retirement System and Social Security benefits are not automatically payable – the employee or his/her beneficiary must apply for them.

Death Benefit: After one year of membership service, should the employee die in service (at any age), the beneficiary would be paid a death benefit equal to the greatest compensation on which contributions were made by a member during the 12-month period of service within the 24-month period of service ending on the month preceding the last month of service, subject to a minimum payment of $25,000 and a maximum payment of $50,000. If the employee should die within 180 days after the last day for which the employee received a salary payment, the death benefit would be payable. In case of resignation or termination, last day of actual service is the last day worked. In all other cases, it is the date on which sick and annual leave expire. This benefit is over and above any other retirement benefit to which the employee or his/her beneficiary may be entitled.

Vested Right: A member becomes vested in the Retirement System after completing a minimum of five years of membership service. This benefit is prorated based on age and service.

Early Retirement: A member may retire early with a reduced retirement benefit after:

- age 60 with at least five years of membership services, or
- age 50 with at least 20 years of creditable service.

Service Retirement: A member may retire with an unreduced retirement benefit after:

- age 65 with at least five years of membership services, or
- age 60 with 25 years of creditable service, or
- completing 30 years of creditable service, regardless of age.

Service Retirement at Age 60: At age 60, the employee is eligible for a reduced monthly benefit if he/she has a vested right or if he/she is in service regardless of the number of years of creditable service.

Service Retirement at Age 65: At age 65 or thereafter, the employee is eligible for full retirement benefits. Any employee who has made a contribution to the Retirement System may choose to withdraw their portion of the contribution when they separate from employment. After October 2006, the employee must be employed for 20 years in order to receive paid health insurance upon retirement. Employees hired on or after January 1, 2021 will not be eligible to receive retiree medical benefits.

Service credit is earned for sick leave and personal leave. Employees must be on the payroll half or more of the days in the month in order to earn any of the preceding benefits for the month.

Questions regarding retirement may be addressed to the JCPS Benefits Specialist or to:

Teachers' & State Employees' Retirement System
Department of the State Treasurer
Albemarle Building
325 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27603-1385
1-919-814-4590

Unemployment Insurance

What is the purpose of unemployment insurance? The purpose is to provide financial assistance to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. As such, it is a true insurance program in that it helps provide financial assistance over a fixed period of time for individuals who are unexpectedly unemployed and who are actively seeking work.

Who administers the program? The unemployment insurance fund is administered by the State and Federal governments and is supported by taxes on employers. The amount of tax is recomputed annually for each employer on a sliding scale that is based on the amount of unemployment insurance collected by former employees. Employees pay no part of this tax.

Who is eligible and what are the benefits? Eligibility and amount of benefits for each individual applying for unemployment insurance are determined on a case-by-case basis. Claimants and former employers are given the opportunity to indicate the reason for separation from work. Should there be a discrepancy between the claimant's and the employer's explanation, a hearing is held to determine the facts and a judgment made by the Employment Security Commission Adjudicator. Benefit amounts are based on the claimant's earnings during a given year.

Where is the local Employment Security Office? The office is located at 26 Ridgeway Street, Suite 2, in Sylva.

Worker's Compensation

What to do when an employee gets injured:

If the injury is life threatening:

1. If the injury is life threatening, please contact 911 and obtain medical attention immediately.
    a. Bookkeeper will begin completing the paperwork then contact benefits claim representative at the Central Office at 828-586-2311, x1958.

***If the injury is non-life threatening*:**

1. When injury occurs, please contact the school bookkeeper/principal immediately, who will begin completing the paperwork needed. Bookkeeper will then contact the worker's compensation administrator at the Central Office at 828-586-2311, extension 1958.
2. If medical attention is needed, the employee must visit either the Harris Urgent Care, Smoky Mountain Urgent Care or Jackson Medical Urgent Care in Sylva, or the Smoky Mountain Urgent Care in Bryson City in order to be covered under JCPS Worker's Compensation.
3. The employee must complete Form 19 and an "Employee Incident/Report of Injury" form with the bookkeeper/principal. Bookkeeper should report the injury online to the appropriate worker's compensation carrier within 24 hours.
4. All Urgent Care note(s)/physician's note(s) and any follow-up paperwork must be returned to the school bookkeeper. Bookkeeper will scan the complete file to the workers compensation administrator.
5. ***If medical attention is not needed,*** the "Employee Incident/Report of Injury" and the "Self Direct" forms must be completed, and returned to the bookkeeper. It will be considered a "report only".
6. Form 18 must be offered to the employee, and the employee can file on their own with the Industrial Commission if they feel it necessary.

Employee Leave

Please refer to all School Board policies regarding leave on the Jackson County Public Schools' website at www.jcpsnc.org.

All employees must take leave when they are absent and leave requests are entered in the Frontline Absence Management system. To enter a leave request, access Frontline Absence Management through Classlink or the Staff tab on www.jcpsnc.org**,** and selecting Absence Management.

All absences must be entered by 6:30am, if you miss the cutoff time please call 1-800-942-3767. **Absences must be entered into Frontline regardless if you need a substitute teacher.**

Sick Leave Policy Reminder

The Superintendent or designee may require a statement from a medical doctor or other acceptable proof that the employee was unable to work due to illness. If an employee is absent three consecutive days for illness, the Benefits Specialist should be notified by the supervisor or bookkeeper, and a supervisor may request a doctor's note. If an employee is absent **10 or more days**, a doctor's note **must** be presented to the supervisor and a leave request form must be turned into the payroll specialist. Employees who anticipate using sick leave for more than a single day must inform the principal or immediate supervisor in advance, so that arrangements may be made to reassign the employee's duties leave during the period of absence.

When an employee is absent 10 or more days, an appointment with Payroll and the Benefit Specialist is required. This requirement is to protect the employee and to make sure the employee is knowledgeable of all leave options.

Extended Sick Leave Policy Reminders

A classroom teacher who uses extended sick leave, for their own personal use, is required to present a statement from their medical doctor indicating their inability to work due to illness. There is a $50 charge for each day that extended sick leave is used. Please refer to the North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual for more information.

Compensatory Time (Non-exempt Positions Only)

Employees are required to use comp time before they request to use another type of leave, time such as annual leave and sick leave. Additionally, Non-exempt employees will use available leave to make a full 40-hour work week (e.g. 33 hours worked, 7 hours of leave will be used to make 40 hours). Non-exempt employees should not work in excess of assigned hours without permission or knowledge of the supervisor. In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, non-exempt employees will be granted compensatory time off in lieu of compensation for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week. This compensatory time will be at the rate of time and one half for any hours over 40 hours in a work week. An employee may not accumulate over 240 hours of compensatory time. Supervisors are encouraged to honor the 40-hour work week unless absolutely necessary. ***Prior approval from HR is required for compensatory time or overtime***. No employee shall work overtime without the approval of the supervisor. Employees must be allowed to use compensatory time within a reasonable period after requesting such use.

A maximum of 40 hours of compensatory time will be carried over from one fiscal year to the next. Any compensatory time in excess of 40 hours must be used by the end of the year. We no longer pay out compensatory time each year to meet the 40 hour threshold. Employees are required to use any excess compensatory time prior to July 1st.

Paid Parental Leave

A permanent, probationary, or time-limited full-time Public School Unit employee who becomes a parent to a child under the age of 18 years by birth, adoption or placement in foster care may take the following paid parental leave:

1. Up to eight weeks of paid leave after giving birth to a child; or
2. Up to four weeks of paid leave after any other qualifying event.

A permanent, probationary, or time-limited part-time employee may take a prorated amount of paid leave after giving birth. Part-time employees receive the same amount of leave as full-time employees. Employees who work less than full-time hours will receive compensation for paid parental leave based on the percentage of the total wages for that job that reflects the actual time worked. For the immediate twelve months preceding months, the employee must have been employed by a North Carolina public school in a permanent, probationary, or time-limited appointment without a break in service. *The employee must have been in pay status for at least 1,040 hours in the previous 12-month period to qualify for paid parental leave.* (North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual 8.1.3)

Leave Without Pay

Leave without pay cannot be taken if the employee has other leave balances available, unless extenuating circumstances exist and the leave is approved by the Superintendent/ Designee.

Additional information can also be found in the North Carolina State Benefits Manual located at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/work4ncschools/.

Leave of Absence

An employee, who wishes to take leave that is not eligible for any other specific type of leave, may be granted a leave of absence with OR without pay for a period of up to one calendar year at the discretion of the superintendent with approval from the board.

The employee is expected first to consult with his or her immediate supervisor and then to provide advance written notice (60 days if possible) stating the beginning and ending dates of the desired leave of absence. The Office of Human Resources has a form for the employee to complete to make the request. The superintendent may request documentation from the employee in support of his or her request. In determining the length of the leave of absence without pay that will be approved, due and proper consideration must be given to the welfare of the students as well as the employee. The superintendent may require the employee to give notice of his or her intent to return to work at reasonable time intervals during the leave.

Once a leave of absence without pay has been requested by an employee and approved by the board, the dates are binding unless both parties agree to a change. Full-time employees on an approved Leave of Absence may apply for a part-time position without benefits. Additional leave information can be accessed here: www.dol.gov/whd/fmla.

Teacher Assistant Internships

Teacher Assistants enrolled in an educator preparation program will have the opportunity to complete an internship with Jackson County Public Schools. Teacher assistants may be assigned to a different classroom during their internship than the classroom they are assigned as a teacher assistant, when feasible. Jackson County Public Schools will continue to pay the salary and benefits that the individual earned as a teacher assistant. G.S. 115C-269.30

Parent Volunteer

Leave must be taken when any employee participates in a classroom field trip as the parent. The type of leave will be governed by state policy and the employee's available leave balances. All leave requests must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor.

Salary and Pay Day

The NC General Assembly establishes the salary schedule for state government employees each year.

All employees are paid on the last business day of the month. When the end of the month occurs on a weekend or holiday that employees do not work, pay day is the last day before the weekend or holiday.

Direct Deposit

All employees are required to have his/her pay deposited automatically into a personal checking or savings account.

How it Works:

- Direct Deposit is the most convenient means of depositing pay. Rather than printing a paycheck, an electronic message will be sent to the bank to increase either the employee's checking or savings account.
- On payday, the employee may access through TimeKeeper a "pay stub" that details gross pay, deductions, net pay and any other information.
- The employee's pay will be available for withdrawal on payday through an automated teller machine, personal check or trip to the bank.
- The employee's regular bank statements will indicate the date and amount of the automated deposits made to the account.
- Those 10-month employees who have mortgage deductions or similar payments to SECU will have to make those payments directly to SECU over the summer months.

Guidelines: The authorization form for direct deposit must be received by the payroll office no later than the payroll due date for direct deposit to occur the following month. Forms are available in the payroll office.

Direct deposit applies to the employee's regular salary and any other checks that are issued on regular payroll cycles. This also includes supplemental, longevity, reimbursements or any other miscellaneous payments. A $5 fee will be charged for paper checks for employees who do not choose to set up direct deposit.

Extended Employment

Employees with a 10-month contract may have their contract extended and/or be employed in another capacity time added at the recommendation of the direct supervisor, the discretion of the superintendent, and availability of funds. Requests for extended employment must be submitted to Human Resources using the Personnel Recommendation Add Tran-Ext. form.

Patient Protection under Affordable Care Act

An employer must provide “a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one year after the child’s birth each time such employee has need to express the milk.” Also, the employer must provide an employee “a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public, which may be used by the employee to express breast milk.” Jackson County Public Schools follow this procedure.

North Carolina School Employee Key Information Website

http://www.ncpublicschools.org/work4ncschools/

https://www.dpi.nc.gov/about-dpi/human-resources-division

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Other Social Networking Sites

The ever-increasing popularity of social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, and TikTok, etc. has created risks for employees. Incidents of cyber-bullying, threats of violence, and Internet sexual predators have become all too common in recent years. As a result, schools nationwide have witnessed a sharp increase in disciplinary actions based on information posted by students on websites or transmitted through other electronic media.

Less obvious, perhaps, is the public nature of postings and comments by *school employees* on social networking websites, and the likelihood that students, parents, and other members of the community will be aware of these Internet activities. Information posted on the Internet is neither “personal” nor “private.” To the contrary, unless the user takes active steps to keep such postings private, they are broadcast worldwide to over one billion Internet users. Moreover, even information posted “privately” on password-protected websites can be hacked or voluntarily disseminated by those with access, and thus may indirectly come to the attention of students, parents, and other school employees.

Below is a set of guidelines for acceptable use of social networking websites:

- Do not access social networking sites from school computers, on school networks, or during work hours. Reference Board policies 3225 and 7335 for more details about the appropriate use of school system technologies.
- Do not “friend” students or their parents. Unlike traditional forms of communication, postings on social networking sites are transmitted simultaneously to large numbers of people. When you “friend” a student, that student will have automatic access to many postings by you and others, some of which may not be appropriate for children. In addition, all employees are expected to maintain a high degree of professionalism in their interactions with students and their parents. Treating children as “friends” rather than as students is unprofessional and may interfere with our educational mission.
- Think before you post. Remember that anything you post on the Internet can be shared with others and may be seen by students, parents, and other members of the community. Remember also that posts or comments may be archived instantly or disseminated by others before you have the chance to “take it back.”

• Do not post any material that would be inappropriate for school-aged children and do not allow any such material to be posted by others who have access to your site. Remember also that you are ultimately responsible for anything that appears on websites you control or maintain.
• Refrain from using school system-owned technologies to bully, harass, or sexually harass coworkers or students. These duties apply no less in cyberspace than in the classroom or work environment. Reference Board policies 3225 and 7335 for details.
• Take steps to ensure that your social networking site is as private as possible, including the use of secure passwords, and do not allow students or their parents to gain access to your site. Do not assume, however, that anything you post on the Internet will always remain "private."
• Do not post comments of any kind on the websites of students or any minor children, either within or outside of the school system.
• Do not post confidential information about yourself, your coworkers, or students on any Internet site. The disclosure of information about students, in particular, may violate state and federal confidentiality laws, even if the intent is to praise or encourage the students.
• Do not post anything that could lead others to believe that your website, or anything on it, is sponsored or endorsed by the school system.
• Do not make any comments to others in cyberspace that you would not make face-to-face. In particular, do not demean, harass, insult, or intimidate others.

Remember that under Board policies 7300 and 7310, you are expected to serve as an example and role model to students, and conduct yourself accordingly at all times.

Electronic Communication with Students

Employees are prohibited from engaging in other forms of one-to-one electronic communications (e.g., voice, voicemail, email, texting, direct messaging via social media, and photo or video transmission) with students without written prior approval of the employee's supervisor and the student's parent. It is the duty of every employee to notify his or her supervisor of any unsolicited one-to-one communication, in any form, electronic or otherwise, received from a student when the communication lacks a clear educational purpose.

Employee/Student Relationships

The interactions and relationships between staff and students must be based upon cooperation, mutual respect, and an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between adults and students inside and outside of the educational setting. Employees are expected to demonstrate good judgment and to avoid the appearance of impropriety in their interactions with students. Employees must consult their supervisor any time they suspect or are unsure whether conduct is inappropriate or otherwise constitutes a violation of board policy.

All employees are prohibited from dating, courting, or entering into a romantic relationship or having sexual contact with any student enrolled in the school system regardless of the student's age. Employees engaging in such inappropriate conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and may be subject to criminal action as provided in G.S. 14-202.4 and 14- 27.32.

Helpful Websites

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children provides parents with valuable information regarding online safety.

Professional Appearance and Dress

Employees are expected to maintain a professional appearance that reflects positively on Jackson County Public Schools and supports a productive learning environment.

Appropriate attire should be clean, neat, and suitable for the employee's assignment and responsibilities. Clothing that is excessively revealing, contains inappropriate language or images, or could reasonably be considered disruptive to the educational environment is not permitted.

School principals and supervisors may establish additional expectations based on job responsibilities, school activities, safety requirements, or special events.