



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

MISSION

Inspiring learning and empowering ALL learners to be productive citizens.

VISION

Preparing ALL students for bright and prosperous futures.

MOTTO

One Chatham for ALL students.

version update March 7, 2025

Notice of Nondiscrimination

In compliance with federal laws, Chatham County Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background or disability, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law. Furthermore, the Board has established policy [1710/4021/7230](#) formalizing prohibition of discrimination. Inquiries or complaints should be directed to the Chatham County Schools Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources – 369 West Street, Pittsboro, NC 27312. Nondiscrimination statements for Chatham County Schools may be viewed online under the [About Us](#) tab of the district website.

List of Handbook Revisions

DATE	REVISION
01/01/2023	Employee Handbook published in digital access format
08/01/2023	Reissued for 2023-2024 school year with new state approved Paid Parental Leave benefit information added to “Leave Benefits”
01/23/2024	Annual recertification for employees to receive the handbook.
03/07/2025	Annual recertification for employees to receive the handbook. Note: Chatham County Schools provides \$25,000 term life insurance coverage to all full-time employees at no cost to the employee. See “Benefits” section.
05/12/2025	Clarification added in “Leave” section regarding instances an employee has a negative leave balance. Reminder added in the “Compensation” section that an employee’s final check before separating from service will be a paper check.

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook contains employment information for Chatham County Schools (CCS) personnel. **Although there are references to Chatham County Schools Board of Education policies and procedures, the handbook does not contain all Board of Education policies and procedures. Each employee should review policies through the school system's [web page for Board policies](#).** It is the responsibility of all employees of the Chatham County Schools Board of Education to understand and comply with applicable laws, policies, and procedures. The handbook is accessible to all employees on the district's website.

Please note that each school may have established guidelines or other documents which are not contained in this handbook to assist employees. In addition, other district-wide divisions and departments may have procedures that affect employees.

The Chatham County Schools Board of Education policies and procedures contained in this handbook are neither an employment contract nor terms of an employment contract. The school district's employees (other than employees in positions that fall under the NC General Statute 115C-325 or employees who have specific employment contracts) are "employees at will" – this means that the employee or the school district has the right to terminate the relationship at any time, with or without reason.

Each employee is required to sign the ***Chatham County Schools Confirmation of Receipt of the Employee Handbook Notification*** acknowledging access to the handbook on the Chatham County Schools website, and the associated duty to familiarize himself/herself with the district's policies and procedures. Revisions to the handbook will be made as necessary; however, employees should be alert to changes in policies and/or procedures that are implemented during the year. Proposed policies are available for public comment before adoption and changed policies and/or procedures are placed on the website when approved by the Chatham County Board of Education.

As we continually seek to improve our resources and services to our employees, all employees are encouraged to send written suggestions or ideas regarding the contents of the handbook to the Human Resources Division. Please accept our best wishes for continued success, and we appreciate your dedication to the students and families of Chatham County Schools.

Dr. Anthony Jackson
Superintendent

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Jessica Pasion, Public Information Officer

CORE BELIEFS

- Inclusive, respectful, safe, and nurturing school environments are essential for ALL students and staff.
- ALL students can achieve given the appropriate access to resources and opportunities.
- Education is a shared responsibility among educators, parents, students, and the community.
- Our community depends on a strong public education system led by innovative and caring professionals who are supported by stakeholders who are invested in a sound, vibrant, and inclusive public school system.
- Rigorous, innovative, and culturally respectful teaching and learning empowers schools and ALL students.

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VISION STATEMENT

Preparing ALL students for bright and prosperous futures.

MOTTO

One Chatham for ALL students

For information about our “One Chatham” 2022-2027 strategic plan, please visit our website (www.chatham.k12.nc.us) and navigate to the “One Chatham” link on the main page.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

It is the policy of the board to provide all applicants for employment with equal employment opportunities and to provide current employees with training, compensation, promotion and other benefits of employment without regard to race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, age or disability, except where sex, age or physical requirements are essential occupational qualifications. All candidates will be evaluated on their merits and qualifications for the positions.

The board also is committed to diversity throughout the programs and practices of the school system. To further this goal, the recruitment and employment program will be designed to encourage a diverse pool of qualified applicants.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In compliance with federal laws, Chatham County Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background or disability, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law. A listing of applicable nondiscrimination statements from Chatham County Schools may be found under the “About Us” tab from the district website.

Furthermore, the Board has established policy [1710/4021/7230](#) formalizing prohibition of discrimination. Inquiries or complaints should be directed to the Chatham County Schools Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources – 468 Renaissance Drive, Pittsboro, NC 27312.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Chatham County Schools maintains a program for all its employees that provides confidential, short-term referral and counseling services designed to assist in finding resources and solutions to personal problems that adversely affect employees’ job performance.

McLaughlin Young Group (MYgroup) provides these free services for employees. Information on how to access these services is available at each school/job site or on the [district website](#) – select the Services tab, then select Human Resources followed by Staff Resources.

Some examples of concerns that the EAP addresses include:

Family conflict	Depression and anxiety
Relationship issues	Communication breakdowns
Grief and loss	Alcohol or drug use
Stress	Work-related issues

For direct assistance through the Employee Assistance Program, simply call 800.633.3353 or visit [mygroup.com](#) -> click on **My Portal Login** -> select **Work-Life** -> **Username: chatham Password: guest**

Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year at 800.633.3353 or via mygroup.com at no additional cost to you or your household family members. Consultations are confidential.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

BENEFIT ENROLLMENT

All employees are required to complete appropriate documentation for employment and benefits. Failure to complete required forms may cancel or delay an employee's eligibility status for benefits and result in a delay in receiving the first or subsequent paychecks. Benefits packages will be given to new employees or to employees who transfer to a position that changes their benefits eligibility. Further information can be found on the school system's webpage.

CHANGES IN EMPLOYEE STATUS

When "Qualifying Life Events" occur that will result in changes to employee benefits (Health and Supplemental), employees should contact the Benefits Specialist in the Human Resources Division at 919.542.3626. Other changes such as name, address, telephone, etc., emergency contacts, etc. can be addressed through [Frontline](#) HRMS. A name change will not be made without a social security card reflecting the employee's new name and signature.

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Username: chatham Password: guest

INCOME TAX WITHHOLDING FORMS

Federal and state exemption and deduction withholding status can be changed at any time by contacting the district's Finance Division at 919-542-3626.

INSURANCE

State Health Plan and Supplemental Benefits

All permanent full-time Chatham County Schools employees are eligible for health insurance, as noted in the [North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual](#). Supplemental benefits, including dental and other types of insurance, are available at the employee's cost. The State Health Plan is administered by the [North Carolina State Health Plan Office](#) and provides coverage for hospital, medical expenses, and prescription drugs. For information on supplemental benefit options, please visit the school system's [Benefits](#) page.

If you have questions regarding health insurance, please contact the Benefits Specialist in the Human Resources Division at 919-542-3626.

Life Insurance

Chatham County Schools provides \$25,000 term life insurance coverage to all full-time employees at no cost to the employee. This policy is carried by Hartford Life and employees may purchase supplemental coverage for an additional cost per month for themselves and/or their dependents.

Disability Income

The Disability Income Plan of North Carolina provides both short-term and long-term disability benefits at no cost to permanent employees who are members of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System and who meet certain state service requirements.

Unemployment Insurance

Public school employees are eligible for unemployment insurance in accordance with applicable NC General Statutes. Benefit amounts are based on a percentage of a person's earnings, up to the allowable maximum.

Workers' Compensation

All public school employees are entitled to receive Workers' Compensation under the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act. Employees must have suffered an accidental injury or contracted an occupational disease in the course of employment to be considered for medical payments, compensation for lost salary, or death benefits under this program. Any such injuries or occupational disease must be immediately reported via the Employee Health and Safety page on the [district website](#). Enter all the information requested and follow the steps to submit your report. For assistance, contact your immediate supervisor or the school Workers' Compensation contact or call the Workers' Compensation Specialist at 919.542.3626 ext. 23246. The Employee Accident/Exposure Incident Report should be completed by the injured/affected employee, however, if necessary, another employee can complete the report with the assistance of the affected employee.

Death Benefits

The beneficiary of an Employee who dies while still in active service and has a minimum of one year as a contributing member of the Teachers and State Employees Retirement System will receive a single lump-sum payment. The payment equals the highest 12 months of salary in a row during the 24 months before you die, but no less than \$25,000 and no more than \$50,000. This benefit is also paid if you die within 180 days of the last day for which you were paid salary. It is in addition to any other benefits to which you may be entitled. For this death benefit, you may name the same or different beneficiary(ies) than the one(s) you named to receive the refund of contributions during the 24 months preceding death subject to a minimum of \$25,000 and a maximum of \$50,000. For more information, you may visit the [state retirement system webpage](#).

Supplemental Retirement Plans

[State-sponsored supplemental retirement plans](#) are available to school employees. The Deferred Compensation Plan and State 401(K) and 457 Plans allow school employees to save for retirement through tax-sheltered programs. Contact the district's Finance Division at 919-542-3626 for additional information as needed.

Social Security

School employees are members of the federal Social Security System and both employees and employers make contributions. Benefits include retirement income, disability payments, and survivor's insurance. Social Security contributions have two parts, Social Security and Medicare.

RETIREMENT

Permanent full-time employees are covered by the North Carolina Teachers and State Employees Retirement System. Employees who are involuntarily terminated or who resign after ten(10) or more years of Retirement System membership, may withdraw their retirement contributions, plus any statutory interest earned. Persons who voluntarily resign with less than ten (10) years of membership in the Retirement System may withdraw only the funds contributed by the individual. Persons leaving public school employment may elect to leave their contributions in the Retirement System.

Information regarding retirement eligibility and options can be found in the [Teachers and State Employees Retirement System Handbook](#).

Employment of Retirees

Employees who retire through the Teachers and State Employees can be reemployed under the following circumstances

- 6-month break required (only bonafide volunteering allowed during six (6) month break)
- must not exceed earnings CAP. (If exceeded, retirement pension will be suspended also causing your health insurance benefits to be suspended.)
- employer is not responsible for tracking retiree's CAP
- must be part-time (less than 30 hours per week) if status is permanent.
- may be interim, substitute or temporary status [full-time (limited to 6 months) or part-time, no benefits for either. (See the [North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual](#) Section 1.1.2)]
- must **NOT** be in permanent full-time status

LEAVE BENEFITS

All Leave Benefits are determined based on the [North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual](#).

Sick Leave

Permanent full-time and employees who are working, or are on paid leave for one-half or more of the workdays in a monthly pay period, earn sick leave at the rate of one (1) day per month. Eligible permanent part-time employees earn sick leave equal to their percentage of full-time employment. Sick leave may be granted for the following:

- a) personal illness, injury, or other temporary disability (i.e. Pregnancy, childbirth, postnatal recovery), or
- b) care for a child placed with an employee for adoption (up to 30 days of earned sick leave), or
- c) illness in the employee's immediate family, or
- d) death in the immediate family, or
- e) medical appointments, or
- f) to care for a military covered service member.

The superintendent or designee (employee's immediate supervisor) may require a statement from a medical doctor or other acceptable proof that the employee was unable to work due to illness. Employees who anticipate using sick leave for a period of time must inform the principal or immediate supervisor in advance, so that continuity of duties may be maintained.

Any employee eligible to earn sick leave may have advanced at the supervisor's discretion up to one (1) day of sick leave to which he or she is otherwise entitled for that upcoming pay month. In the event an employee separates from service before earning sick leave, which has been advanced, a deduction will be made from the final salary check for the total unearned sick leave used. Pay for unused leave is not permitted, except when an employee has been approved for long-term disability.

Sick leave may be transferred to and from a state agency, institution, community college or technical institute, or position covered by the State Personnel Act in county agencies if the receiving agency is willing to accept the leave.

Upon retirement, accrued sick leave may be applied toward creditable state service. One (1) month of creditable service is allowed for each 20 days of unused sick leave and one (1) more month for any additional portion (greater than one (1) hour) when an employee retires. If an employee separates from service prior to retirement, sick leave will be held for 60 months, five (5) years. After that time period, the benefits will no longer be available.

Extended Sick Leave

Extended sick leave is available for up to 20 days each year to permanent full or part-time classroom teachers and media coordinators who require substitutes if they are absent due to their own personal illness or injury after all available sick leave and vacation leave have been exhausted. Employees on extended sick leave receive full salary less the required substitute deduction of \$50 per day. Unused extended sick leave does not carry forward to subsequent school years. Requests for extended sick leave must be made and approved through the Human Resources Division.

Annual/Vacation Leave

All permanent full-time and part-time employees who work or are on paid leave for one-half or more of the workdays in a monthly pay period earn annual vacation leave. Eligible part-time permanent employees earn leave equal to their percentage of part-time employment. State regulations and policies established by Chatham County Schools govern when vacation leave may be taken. Unused vacation leave can be accumulated and a maximum of 30 days carried forward to the next fiscal year which begins on July 1st. June 30th of each year, any accumulated days of annual/vacation leave in excess of 30 days are converted to sick leave days. When employees transfer between local educational agencies, vacation leave will also be transferred. Vacation leave may be transferred to a state agency if that agency is willing to accept it.

Employees leaving the public schools will be paid for up to 30 days of accumulated annual/vacation leave. If an employee separating from service is overdrawn with respect to annual vacation leave (i.e. - **leave deficit** or **overdrawn vacation leave**), a deduction in the appropriate amount must be made from the employee's final paycheck.

Upon separation in order to retire, annual/vacation leave over 30 days may be converted to sick leave for creditable service toward retirement. In case of death, the employee's estate will receive payment for any accumulated annual/vacation leave up to 30 days.

Instructional personnel who require substitutes (e.g., classroom teachers, media personnel, teacher assistants) and bus drivers are prohibited from using annual/vacation leave on student attendance days, except when the employee has a catastrophic illness or is caring for a newborn, adopted or foster child. Certain restrictions do apply to the above exceptions.

The superintendent or designee (employee's immediate supervisor) will have the authority to approve the vacation schedules of all personnel. To promote the efficient operation of schools, the superintendent may designate certain periods during the non-academic year as preferred vacation periods for 12-month employees.

Vacation Leave Earning Rate

<i>Years of State Service</i>	<i>Days Earned Per Month</i>
<i>Less than 2 years</i>	1.166
<i>2 but less than 5 years</i>	1.166
<i>5 but less than 10 years</i>	1.417
<i>10 but less than 15 years</i>	1.667
<i>15 but less than 20 years</i>	1.917
<i>20 years or more</i>	2.166

Bonus Annual Leave

Occasionally bonus annual leave is awarded to eligible employees by the state or by local boards of education. When this occurs, bonus annual leave can be used under the same circumstances and provisions as annual leave. Bonus annual leave, with the exception of special bonus leave" is tracked separately and carried forward each year until used or paid out at separation of employment.

Continuous Leave of More Than Ten Days

All eligible employees will be provided with leave as required by the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) and applicable State laws and State Board of Education policies. Teachers who request leave, with or without pay, will be required to write and leave lesson plans for the first 10 days of their leave period.

Professional Leave

Employees are encouraged to attend and participate in relevant professional educational meetings and commendable programs. Approval for professional leave is required in advance from the immediate supervisor and in accordance with procedures adopted by the superintendent.

Educational Leave

The school district encourages licensed employees to pursue additional coursework and advanced degrees. To this end, educational leave may be granted in semester increments not to exceed one (1) year per degree for licensed employees who have worked in the county for five (5) years or who are enrolled as full-time students at a college or university. Leave cannot be granted in consecutive years unless enrolled in a state fellows program.

To receive educational leave, the following requirements must be met:

- the request must be made at least 60 days in advance of the opening of a new school year and must include a course of study that the employee plans to pursue.
- the employee must provide verification or acceptance into a graduate program.
- the employee is responsible for providing a transcript, copy of grades or official verification from college attended to be sent to the Licensure Specialist in Human Resources upon completion of each semester's course work.
- the employee is expected to notify the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources of any variance in the approved plan.

Failure to meet the agreement for an educational leave of absence will be noted in the employee's personnel file and could subsequently lead to further action, including dismissal. Exceptions will be considered on an individual basis by the school system.

Personal Leave

Permanent full-time classroom teachers and media specialists who require substitutes earn two (2) days of personal leave per year, cumulative to a maximum of five (5) days and are transferable between school systems. Part-time personnel earn a pro-rata share of the rate for full-time teachers. Unused personal leave may be carried forward from one year to another and may be accumulated without limitation until June 30th. On June 30, personal leave in excess of five (5) days is converted to sick leave so that a maximum of five (5) days of personal leave are carried forward to July 1st. Upon retirement, any personal leave may also be converted to sick leave.

Personal leave may be used with the guidelines listed below.

- Personal leave may be used only upon the authorization of the immediate supervisor.
- Eligible staff shall not take personal leave on the first day the eligible staff is required to report for the school year, on a required eligible staff workday, on days scheduled for State testing, or on the day before or the day after a holiday or scheduled vacation day, unless the request is approved by the principal.
- **Eligible staff who request personal leave at least five days in advance shall be automatically granted the request subject to the availability of a substitute.**
- **Eligible staff making the request cannot be required to provide a reason for the request if the request is made at least five (5) days in advance.**
- **Personal leave may be used on any instructional day or workday except as noted above.**
- **Eligible staff using personal leave on qualifying student instructional days shall receive full salary if a reason for the request is provided. If a reason for the request is not provided, eligible staff will receive full salary less the required substitute deduction. If, however, no substitute is hired for a teacher, the substitute reduction shall be refunded to the eligible staff.**
- Eligible staff using personal leave on non-protected workdays shall receive full salary. Eligible staff may use up to their accrued amount of personal leave on non-protected workdays in accordance with paragraphs a, b, c, and d above.

Holiday Leave

Twelve-month employees normally observe 11 holidays per year. Ten-month employees normally observe 10 holidays per year. When Christmas falls on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday an additional day of holiday leave is provided. With the exception of Veteran's Day, the Chatham County Board of Education determines when holidays are scheduled.

Observance of Bona Fide Religious Holidays

Absence from school for bona fide religious holidays may be allowed for a maximum of two days within any one school year with prior approval from the superintendent. Days designated may not be already scheduled as vacation or other holidays in the school calendar. Absence for these religious holidays will be with full pay. The employee must agree to make up the amount of time for which his or her absence has been excused. The time must be made up at a time mutually agreeable with the employee and his or her supervisor.

Voluntary Shared Leave

Voluntary shared leave is intended to provide economic relief for employees who face financial hardship due to a prolonged absence or frequent short-term absences caused by a serious medical condition. Voluntary shared leave may also be used during the required 60-day waiting period for short-term disability. An employee who is receiving benefits or is eligible to receive benefits from the Disability Income Plan and elects to use paid leave is not eligible to receive donated leave.

Permanent full-time and part-time employees are eligible to receive donated leave. Eligible employees must exhaust available sick leave and vacation leave before using donated leave. Employees who are approved by the superintendent or designee to receive donated leave may receive annual vacation leave and sick leave from any employee including family members in the school system. Family members may donate annual vacation leave and sick leave to an immediate family member (see Section 1.1.12) in another LEA, community college or state agency. A public school employee shall not donate more than five (5) days of sick leave per year to any one non-family member. The combined total of sick leave donated to a recipient from non-family members shall not exceed 20 days per year. A donor may not reduce his/her sick leave or annual vacation leave balance below one-half of what he/ she can earn in a year.

Compensatory Leave

Only employees classified as "non-exempt" under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) who work more than 40 hours in a work week are eligible for overtime pay. Compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay may be given if agreed to by the employee and employer prior to the performance of the work. Compensatory time off is calculated at the rate of one and one-half hours for each hour of overtime worked. Compensatory leave may be accumulated to a maximum of 240 hours. When the maximum is reached, additional overtime hours worked must be paid at the overtime rate. If a non-exempt employee terminates employment, he/she must be paid for any unused compensatory time earned at a rate not less than

- (a) the average regular rate received by such employee during the last three years of the employee's employment, or
- (b) the final regular rate received by the employee, whichever is higher.

SPECIAL LEAVE

Jury Duty

When permanent school employees are absent from work to serve on a jury, no deduction is made from their regular salaries. Employees are entitled to their regular compensation plus any fees received for jury duty.

Court Attendance

When employees are absent from work to attend court in connection with their official duty or because they were subpoenaed as a witness to a crime, no salary deduction is made. Except for travel reimbursement, any fees received in an official capacity must be returned to the Chatham County Schools. If, however, an employee must be absent from work as a defendant, plaintiff, or witness in a case for personal matters, no salary is received unless the employee uses appropriate vacation leave or personal leave. Full-time or part-time public school employees who are absent for appearance in court as plaintiffs, defendants, or witnesses for personal matters, even if subpoenaed, shall not be entitled to receive any salary payment for those days, unless they are using appropriate, approved earned leave. (NOTE: School personnel who are responding to subpoenas for civic responsibilities, such as a witness to a crime, are eligible for paid court attendance leave.)

Unpaid Parental Leave

Permanent full-time and part-time school employees may request a leave of absence using appropriate paid leave and/or leave without pay for up to one (1) calendar year immediately following the birth or adoption for the care of a child. The unpaid leave of absence may be extended for the remainder of the school year when this leave would otherwise end in the latter half of the school year.

Career Status employees approved for a leave of absence retain career status upon return from the authorized leave. Probationary teachers must begin a new probationary period if a leave of absence, paid or unpaid, prevents the probationary teacher from completing four (4) consecutive years of 120 workdays in each year in the same school system. Unless, the probationary teacher in a full-time, permanent position did not work for at least 120 workdays in a 215 day school year because the teacher was on sick leave, disability leave, or both, that school year shall not be deemed to constitute:

- (a) a consecutive year of service for the teacher, or
- (b) a break in the continuity in consecutive years of service for the teacher.

Paid Parental Leave (*state approved benefit enacted July 1, 2023*)

A permanent, probationary, or time-limited full-time 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. Temporary employees, and independent contractors are not eligible for paid parental leave.

Family Medical Leave Act

The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) as amended allows eligible employees who have been employed for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12 month period to take 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for their own serious medical condition or that of an immediate family member (parent, spouse, or child). The 12-month period in which the 12 weeks of leave entitlement occurs will be from July 1 to June 30. Additionally, leave may be taken without pay for up to 12 weeks for the birth or adoption of a child. During the 12 weeks, the employer-paid portion of health benefits will be maintained for the employee only. Dependent coverage can be maintained if the employee continues to pay monthly premium costs.

Accrued leave will be substituted for any FMLA-eligible leave upon the request of the employee or the decision of the school district. Employees of the school district also may substitute extended sick leave for instructional personnel, or disability leave for FMLA-eligible leave. If paid leave is substituted under circumstances which qualify as FMLA leave, the leave can be counted towards the 12-week entitlement of FMLA leave if designated as FMLA-eligible at the time leave is taken. If paid leave is substituted for unpaid FMLA leave for continuous leave of more than 10 days, all employees may be asked to provide notice for foreseeable and unforeseeable leave, medical certification, fitness for duty certification, and notice of intent to return to work at reasonable time intervals during the leave.

Military Leave

Leave with pay is granted to members of reserve components of the U.S. Armed Forces for certain periods of active duty training and for state military duty. Leave with pay is extended to full-time or part-time permanent school employees, normally not to exceed 15 working days during the federal fiscal year (October 1st – September 30th), for training and military maneuvers. Military leave without pay can be granted for one enlistment period of active service, not to exceed five years plus 90 days. Paid military leave is treated like any other paid leave. The employee shall continue to accumulate leave and receive health insurance for self. Employees on leaves of absences for state or federal military duty under honorable services status, for required training, or for special emergency management service shall be paid the difference in military base pay and state salary, including non-performance based bonuses, when the military pay is less than the state salary. Differential pay shall be paid from the same source of funds as the employees' public school salary.

Under certain circumstances, an employee may receive teaching experience credit and retirement credit for service in the military, in accordance with State Board regulations.

Leave of Absence Without Pay

An employee may be granted leaves of absence without pay for the following reasons and for a period of time up to one (1) calendar year, renewable at the discretion of the superintendent with approval by the Board.

- Military leave
- Personal Illness
- Family leave
- Professional leave
- Other reasons at the discretion of the superintendent; this leave should be requested in advance and must comply with regulations adopted by the board.

Employees may secure a leave of absence form from the Human Resources Division web page.

Return from Long-Term Leave of Absence

When an employee returns to work from an approved leave of absence without pay, the school district will attempt to place that employee in his/her original position if possible. However, when this is not possible, the employee will be placed in an equivalent position within the school system.

Unauthorized Absences

To the extent permitted by law and policy, absence(s) without prior approval, failure to follow established leave procedures, habitual tardiness, or abuses of designated working hours are categorized as neglect of duty and shall result in disciplinary action by the employee's supervisor up to, and including, dismissal.

MISCELLANEOUS BENEFITS

ANNUITIES

All employees are eligible to participate in a 403(b) Tax-Deferred Annuity Program and 457 Deferred Compensation Plan through a pre-taxed monthly payroll deduction. A list of approved companies can be obtained from the Human Resources Division Benefits Office.

All qualifying employees are eligible to participate in the state's 401(k) program and 457 Plan. This program is administered directly by Prudential, and more information can be found on the [related retirement system webpage](#).

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE and TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Chatham County Schools offers reimbursement of tuition expenses for lateral entry teachers and teachers/instructional assistants employed with the district for two (2) years or more. In addition, educational leave, with supervisory approval and available funds, may be granted if the education is deemed to be of sufficient benefit to the department and the employee has attained permanent status. For additional information about the tuition reimbursement program, refer to the documents provided in the [shared folder linked here](#).

FLEXIBLE BENEFITS PLAN

All full-time permanent employees are eligible to participate in the flexible benefits program administered by Pierce Group Benefits. More information can be found on their [webpage](#).

STATE EMPLOYEES' CREDIT UNION (SECU)

School system employees are eligible to join the North Carolina State Employees' Credit Union. Information may be obtained from the local credit union in Pittsboro or Siler City. Chatham County employees are eligible to set up a payment option plan to receive checks over the summer months.

EMPLOYMENT TERMS

All employment terms are determined by the [*North Carolina Public Schools Benefits and Employment Policy Manual*](#)

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Permanent Employee

An employee who is either:

1. Employed to fill a position that is to be permanent if needs and funds continue. A permanent employee is eligible to receive full or pro-rata benefits, OR
2. Employed for at least six full consecutive months to either replace one or more employees who are on an approved leave of absence without pay, or to fill a vacancy until a qualified replacement is employed. Eligibility for benefits must be determined at the time of initial employment or upon change of employment status.

A permanent employee may be employed full-time (at least 30 hours per week) or part-time (at least 20 hours per week, but less than the number of hours set as full-time for that class of work). Any permanent employee who works at least 30 hours per week is enrolled in the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System is eligible to receive employer-paid medical insurance for self.

Part-Time Employee

An employee who regularly works at least 20 hours per week, but less than the hours set as full-time for that class of work. A part-time employee earns annual leave, sick leave, and holidays on a pro-rata basis. A part-time employee does not receive retirement benefits and hospitalization, but is eligible for longevity pay, if it is available for that class of work.

Full-Time Employee

An employee whose regular workweek is the number of hours established as full-time for the class of work assigned, but not less than 30 hours per week.

Two or more part-time positions may be combined to produce full-time employment. An employee working in two or more positions may not earn more benefits than those allowed for a single, full-time position.

Temporary Employee

"Temporary employee" means a person who is either (a) employed to fill a position whose work week is less than 20 hours per week, or (b) employed for less than six (6) full consecutive months. Such an individual may be classified as full-time or part-time. A temporary employee is not eligible to earn leave, participate in the retirement system, or receive or purchase health benefits. Temporary employees may not use leave earned during any previous employment while working as a temporary employee.

Interim Employee

"Interim employee" means a person employed to fill a position for less than six full consecutive months that is temporarily vacant or is being held for an incumbent employee who is on leave without pay and expected to return.

Instructional Personnel

"Instructional personnel" means classroom teachers and teacher assistants. Instructional personnel who require substitutes are prohibited from using annual vacation leave on student attendance days except for catastrophic illness.

Substitute Teacher

"Substitute Teacher" means a person employed to fill in for a permanent employee who is using paid leave.

Chatham County Schools partners with ESS to recruit, hire, train and place substitute teachers for the school district. Visit [ESS online](#) to apply or contact our ESS Account Manager, Sandy Collins, at 336-406-9754 (scollins@ess.com) for more information. As an ESS employee, substitutes are not eligible for benefits or bonus payments from Chatham County Schools.

Volunteer

A "bona fide volunteer" means an individual 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.
- 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.

*Information on the approval process for volunteers can be found on the school system's [web page](#).

Immediate Family

Refers to the employee's:

- Spouse
- Children
- Parents
- Brothers
- Sisters
- Grandparents
- Grandchildren, and
- Dependents living in the employee's household.

Also included are the step, half, and in-law relationships.

*Under Federal guidelines for the Family Medical Leave Act, "immediate family" refers to a parent, spouse, or child.

PERSONNEL FILES

Personnel files will be maintained in the personnel office for all employees as provided by law. The superintendent and all supervisors are directed to ensure that all appropriate employment-related information is submitted to the file. Every employee will have the right during regular working hours to inspect his or her personnel file, provided three days notice is given to the Human Resources Division. An employee may petition the board to remove any information from his or her personnel file that the employee deems invalid, irrelevant, or outdated. For more detailed information see [policy 7820](#).

PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTS

All licensed employees are eligible for either a renewable, interim or administrative contract. Career contracts were issued to teachers who met appropriate criteria prior to July 1, 2013. These are continuing contracts and do not have to be renewed each year. However, due to changes in state law, no new career contracts are issued by the school system.

- For renewable contracts, 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. For teachers who have been employed by the board as a teacher for three consecutive years or more, a new or renewed contract will be for a term of four school years, unless the superintendent or board determines that a shorter contract is justified on the basis of one or more of the following criteria:
 1. The teacher has not received a rating of at least "proficient" on all standards on the two most recent annual evaluations preceding the contract offer;
 2. The teacher is currently on a monitored or directed growth plan, mandatory improvement plan, or corrective action plan and/or has been on any such plan at any time during the current or previous school year;
 3. The teacher has received any of the following during the current or previous school year: a demotion, a suspension without pay, or a written reprimand, warning, or other disciplinary action that is documented in the teacher's official personnel file;
 4. There is other relevant performance or conduct information in the personnel file that would support a decision to disqualify the teacher from a multi-year contract; and/or
 5. Based on the teacher's overall performance, the principal does not recommend the teacher for a four-year contract.

In no case, however, may a teacher be recommended for a contract with a term longer than one school year unless the teacher has received a rating of at least “proficient” on all standards on the two most recent annual evaluations preceding the contract offer.

- Interim contracts are issued to licensed personnel who fill positions that are temporarily vacant or short-term for a specific period of time, not to exceed one school year.
- Administrative contracts are issued to superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and certain directors and supervisors who are not eligible for career status under the provisions of GS115c-325. These contracts range in length from two to four years according to the provisions of GS115c-287.1.

For more information on teacher contracts, see [policy 7410](#). For administrator contracts, see [policy 7425](#).

ASSIGNMENTS AND TRANSFERS

All assignments and transfers to schools are the responsibility of the superintendent. In-school assignments are the responsibility of the principal. The board must be promptly notified of all transfers authorized by the superintendent.

Voluntary and involuntary transfers will be made in accordance with course requirements, fluctuating enrollments, allotment, efforts to improve student performance, and the general welfare of the school district. The interests and aspirations of employees will be considered in making assignment and transfer decisions; however, such interests must be weighed against what is in the best interest of the school or school district.

An employee may request a transfer by submitting a transfer request form to the Human Resources Division during the announced transfer period. An interview may be scheduled with the appropriate administrator when such a vacancy occurs. Due to classroom/program disruptions, transfer requests will not be considered after the first 10 days of the school year unless approved by the superintendent; however, position upgrades are permitted.

An employee may appeal a transfer decision to the board. The board generally will uphold transfer decisions that are not arbitrary, capricious, political, or discriminatory.

RESIGNATIONS

Employees who intend to resign are encouraged to indicate their plans in writing at as early a date in the school year as possible. For licensed employees, resignations become effective at the end of the school year in which they are submitted or as otherwise indicated in an employment contract. **Resignations for any other time require a 30-day notice unless the superintendent consents to a shorter notice period.** If the notice requirements are not met by a teacher and the superintendent does not consent to a waiver of notice, the superintendent will make a request to the State Board of Education to revoke the teacher’s license for the remainder of the school year. Administrators are required to give a 60-day notice. The Human Resources Division counts the 30 or 60 days from the date of receipt of the resignation. The superintendent or his/her designee will accept resignations on behalf of the school board. Classified personnel are required to submit at least a 14-day notice. For additional information, see [policy 7900](#).

SUSPENSION AND DISMISSAL

The Superintendent is authorized by the Board of Education to place any classified employee on suspension with or without pay as a disciplinary action and/or to assure the safe and orderly operation of the school system. The same is true for certified employees, but only for suspension with pay.

All actions for dismissal shall be conducted in accordance with state law. Classified employees are considered employees at will. The Superintendent or designee is authorized by the Board to dismiss classified employees. For information on classified employee suspension and dismissal, see [policy 7940](#).

DEMOTION AND DISMISSAL

The Board of Education recognizes that an effective staff is critical to the smooth operation of the school district and to creating a learning environment where students can succeed. When an employee is unable or unwilling to meet performance expectations, the supervisor and superintendent should consider whether dismissal or demotion is appropriate.

Dismissal of professional employees will be in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 115C-325. Evaluators of career or probationary employees should provide the superintendent with documented evidence concerning a person's inadequacies and lack of competencies when such inadequacies or lack of competencies has led to the recommendation and contemplation of dismissal or demotion. In the interest of students and the welfare of the school district, dismissal or demotion may be pursued regardless of whether the evaluator has met expectations previously described, so long as the legal grounds for seeking dismissal or demotion can be sufficiently demonstrated.

Classified positions are critical to the effective operation of the school district. The Board of Education encourages open communication between classified employees and their supervisors. When performance problems arise, supervisors are encouraged to clearly communicate in oral or written form the nature of the deficiencies and to provide a reasonable opportunity to improve. Any written notice or reprimands will be included in the employee's central office personnel file. All employees are expected to meet job requirements and to seek clarification and guidance when needed to fulfill these requirements.

Classified employees are at-will employees. All actions to dismiss a classified employee shall be conducted in accordance with the law. The superintendent is authorized to dismiss classified employees and will notify the Board of Education promptly of any decision to dismiss a classified employee. A classified employee who is dismissed shall receive a written statement of the reason for the dismissal. A classified employee who is demoted or dismissed by the superintendent may appeal the superintendent's decision to the Board within 30 calendar days after receiving notice from the superintendent. For additional information, see [policy 7930](#) and [policy 7940](#).

EXIT INTERVIEWS

When an employee leaves the system, an official resignation form should be submitted to the Human Resources Division after being signed by the immediate supervisor and the employee. Following submission of the official resignation form an optional exit interview survey will be shared electronically. To the extent possible, statements made by employees will be confidential.

REDUCTION IN FORCE

In the unfortunate event that economic trends force the school system to reduce its number of employees, policies are in place that provide an orderly procedure for reduction in employment of licensed, professional employees and non-certified employees in permanent positions. For additional information see [policy 7920](#) (certified) and [policy 7921](#) (classified)

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 will submit retirement paperwork to the Benefits Specialist in Human Resources no less than 90 days prior to his/her intended retirement date, except in cases where health or other extenuating circumstances makes shorter notices necessary. Employees who have questions regarding retirement should contact the Benefits Specialist. For additional information, see [policy 7910](#).

LICENSED PERSONNEL

Renewal Credits

Licensed personnel must periodically update their North Carolina Professional Educator's License as mandated by the State Board of Education Policy. Renewal credit earned through professional activities is required to assure that professional personnel updates their professional knowledge and technical skills.

[Continuing licenses must be renewed every five \(5\) years. Specific renewal requirements to maintain the Professional Educator's License in North Carolina may be accessed from the NC Department of Public Instruction website.](#)

Renewal credits must be directly related to the licensure area(s) and/or professional responsibilities and align with state, district, and school priorities. They may be earned through the following:

1. **Workshops, conferences, and activities that are not sponsored by the district:** The Piedmont Triad Consortium and other outside agencies and organizations offer many opportunities for renewal credit.
2. **College or University Courses:** Courses directly related to the licensure area can be taken at any accredited college or university, including technical or community colleges. One semester hour of credit is the equivalent of 1.5 renewal credits. An official transcript is required.
3. **Local Staff Development:** Workshops and in-service activities are offered regularly by the school district. These activities generally offer approved renewal credit.

For more information about the current district professional development offerings and other resources, please visit the Academic Services & Instructional Support "Teacher Portal" [professional development webpage](#). Additional information on renewal requirements may be reviewed through the Chatham County Schools [CEU Help Guide](#).

Each licensed employee must track his/her own renewal credits and submit all renewal credits to the Academic Services & Instructional Support office for processing. The Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services & Instructional Support approves staff development courses, workshops, college courses, etc. for CEU credit. Each employee should also keep a personal file of all earned credits.

To review CEU credits electronically, log into [Frontline](#), and choose "Professional Growth". For additional resources regarding renewal credits, reference the Chatham County Schools [CEU Help Guide](#).

Beginning Teacher Program

The Beginning Teacher Program is a three (3) year program designed to enhance and support the professional growth of teachers during their initial years of teaching. Student services personnel (media specialists, counselors, speech pathologists, administrators, and curriculum instructional specialists) are issued continuing licenses and do not participate in the Beginning Teacher Program.

This program provides support through:

- a mentor
- a site-based coordinator
- beginning teacher coaching program
- periodic assessment of skills
- a yearly evaluation of performance
- an annual Professional Development Plan (PDP)

After three (3) years of successful teaching on a clear license, initially licensed teachers are eligible for a continuing license. These three (3) years must be served within a five (5) year period from the date of enrollment in the program, and all three (3) years must be in the same licensure area. Part-time teachers who are employed less than 50% of the time are not eligible to participate in the program.

After completing the Initial Licensure Program, beginning teachers must be rated “Proficient” on all five (5) North Carolina professional teaching standards on the most recent Teacher Summary Rating Form in order to be eligible for the Standard Professional 2 License.

See COMPENSATION section for information about mentor teacher pay.

Nonrenewal of Teacher Contracts

The Board may refuse to renew the contract of any non-career status teacher for any cause it deems sufficient, so long as the cause is not arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, prohibited by state or federal law, or for personal or political reasons.

If the superintendent decides to recommend nonrenewal of a non-career status teacher, the superintendent shall provide written notice of the recommendation no later than June 1. The teacher may, within 10 days of receipt of the superintendent's recommendation, request written notice of the reasons for the superintendent's recommendation for nonrenewal and the information that the superintendent may share with the board to support the recommendation for nonrenewal. If a teacher files a timely request, the superintendent shall provide the requested information, and the teacher will be permitted to submit supplemental information to the superintendent and board prior to the board's decision.

A non-career status teacher has the right to petition the board for a hearing no later than 10 days after receiving notice of the superintendent's recommendation for nonrenewal. If the teacher requests a hearing, the board chair and vice-chair will confer and determine whether such a hearing will be granted. If the chair and vice-chair cannot agree, a hearing will be granted. The board will notify the teacher of its decision whether to grant a hearing.

In considering a recommendation of the superintendent to offer a teacher a new, renewed, or extended contract, the board may review any information that was in the teacher's personnel file at the time of the superintendent's recommendation. If the board determines that it needs additional information to reach a decision, it will notify the teacher of the board's concerns and of the additional information that it is considering and provide an opportunity for the teacher to respond to the additional information.

The board will notify the non-career status teacher whose contract will not be renewed for the next school year of its decision by June 15. If, however, a teacher is granted a hearing, the board will provide the nonrenewal notification within 10 days of the hearing or such later date upon the written consent of the superintendent and teacher. Reference [Policy 7950](#)

Extracurricular Activities

Beginning teachers (1-3 years) and teachers with 27 or more years of experience are not to be assigned extracurricular activities unless they request the assignments in writing.

CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL

All employees in classified positions are considered "at-will" employees and serve at the pleasure of the Board of Education. At-will employees are not required to be employed under contracts or offered contracts by the board. They are not entitled to due process if they are dismissed or otherwise adversely affected in their employment. However, at-will employees are entitled to pursue due process provided under [Policy 1750/7220](#)--Grievance Procedure for Employees. Classified employees must meet the employment criteria that are specific to their positions.

Dual Job Roles

Any person hired after May 3, 1999 in the position of teacher assistant, custodian, or school nutrition assistant may be required to drive a school bus. These employees will be required to secure a commercial driver's license (CDL) and be prepared to drive a school bus when needed. Principals who elect to assign bus duties to exceptional children assistants and Pre-K assistants must ensure that the required student-to-instructional staff ratios are maintained and that all other special education and/or Pre-K programmatic requirements are met. Staff members who are age 65 or over may opt out of driving a school bus at their discretion, upon thirty (30) days written notice to their principal or immediate supervisor. Reference [Policy 7460](#)

Instructional Assistants

As stated above, all Instructional Assistants may also be required to drive a bus. **For the position of Instructional Assistant, the "Highly Qualified" standard must be met to be considered for a position as an Instructional Assistant in all schools that are designated as Title I. For schools that are not Title I, the "highly qualified" standard is not required at the time of initial employment but must be met within two years. For Licensed PreK classes IAs must be highly qualified with a minimum of an Associate Degree in early childhood or child development or hold a CDA (Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential™).**

"Highly Qualified" candidates meet at least one of the requirements below:

- two-year or four-year degree from an accredited college/university (provide copy of official transcripts confirming degree, or an international education evaluation if the four-year degree is from another country) **OR**
- 48 semester credits from an accredited college/university: If earning quarter credits, determine the semester value by multiplying the number of credits by .67 (provide copy of official transcripts confirming credits) **OR**
- passing WorkKeys assessment scores AND 2 college courses or 96 documented continuing education hours. The WorkKeys scores should include Workplace Documents (Reading), Business Writing and Applied Mathematics. Passing scores are 4 in Reading and Math, and 3 in Business Writing. All this

information must be confirmed by official documentation from the agency from which the hours were earned and administered the assessments, such as a local community college, **OR**

- If highly qualified standards were met in another state, an official letter from the public school Human Resources office is needed stating the candidate met the “highly qualified standards”. Candidates must submit this information to the Chatham County Schools Licensure staff to review if North Carolina Highly Qualified standards are met.

RESTART SCHOOLS: *Schools designated as “Restart” (Siler City, Virginia Cross, and Chatham Middle) have staffing flexibility to hire IAs who do not meet the “highly qualified” standard at the time of initial employment if the IA position is not Title I funded. These IAs must meet the “highly qualified” standard within two years.*

COMPENSATION

SALARY

Teachers and other licensed staff (e.g. media coordinators, psychologists, audiologists, speech-language pathologists, counselors and social workers), Assistant Principals, and Principals are paid on state-adopted salary schedules.

Salaries for all other public school employees are determined by the position held. Contact the Finance Division to obtain salary information. Further information on salary can be found on the [DPI Salary Guides web page](#).

In addition to the state salary schedules, Chatham County Schools provides a local supplement. Information on local supplements can be found on the school system's online [Employment Page](#).

PAYROLL

Chatham County Schools requires direct deposit for all employees. A direct deposit form is completed during the onboarding process and should be updated when an employee changes financial institutions or wishes to change the bank account to which the direct deposit is made. All direct deposit documentation can be accessed through an electronic pay stub. This information can be accessed through the school system's LINQ Timekeeper [web page](#).

Note that involuntary deductions are taken from an employee's compensation whenever there are overpayments of wages or state/federal mandated garnishments for reasons required by law. At time of separation from service an employee's final compensation will be issued as a paper check.

A calendar showing payroll deadlines, etc is available [online](#).

NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

Teachers are encouraged to become certified by the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS). Certification by the NBPTS results in a 12% salary increase. The state supports state-funded teachers who have completed three full years of teaching in North Carolina public schools by loaning the assessment fee and providing three days of paid leave to prepare for certification. Additional information about National Board Certification in North Carolina can be found on the DPI [National Board Certification page](#). You can also find additional information on the [NBPTS web page](#). To retain NBPTS compensation, a teacher must spend 70% of his or her work time in classroom instruction and within the employee's area of certification or licensure. Please contact the CCS Human Resources Division for additional information.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE and TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Chatham County Schools offers reimbursement of tuition expenses for lateral entry teachers and teachers/instructional assistants employed with the district for two (2) years or more. In addition, educational leave, with supervisory approval and available funds, may be granted if the education is deemed to be of sufficient benefit to the department and the employee has attained permanent status. For additional information about the tuition reimbursement program, refer to the documents provided in the [shared folder linked here](#).

MENTOR TEACHER PAY

Mentor teachers are assigned to provide support and assistance to initially licensed teachers. Those mentors serving first and second year teachers receive a stipend.

SITE-BASED COORDINATORS

A school site-based coordinator will be appointed from each school. The coordinator will meet with the mentees assigned to their school each month. The focus of their meetings will be The North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and any other needs that they deem relevant to their school and their mentees. They will also collect documentation throughout the school year to be submitted to the Executive Director for Teacher Induction and Title II for Chatham County Schools. Coordinators are eligible for a stipend for their efforts

LONGEVITY PAY

Some permanent full-time or part-time employees receive annual longevity payments after completing 10 years of qualifying state service. In 2014, the General Assembly combined longevity pay with the salary schedules for teachers, assistant principals, and principals. Therefore, these individuals do not receive a separate payment for longevity.

For other employees, longevity payments are made not later than the end of the month following the person's anniversary date. The table below reflects the longevity rates.

Years of State Service Longevity Pay Rates:

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%

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

All employees should receive a performance evaluation at least once per year. Employees should consult with their supervisor for details that are specific to their assigned roles.

Employee Plans for Growth and Improvement

All certified employees are expected to develop a growth plan annually. Such plans should be written in cooperation with the employee's direct supervisor. If an employee is placed on an improvement plan, such as a monitored growth plan, directed growth plan, or mandatory improvement plan, due to concerns, the employee should understand that being placed on such a plan is an indication that improvement is necessary to maintain their position. For more information on improvement plans, see [Policy 7811](#).

Classified employees may be placed on an improvement plan by their supervisor.

Induction and Success Program for Beginning Teachers: *New Directions*

New Directions, our state exemplar induction and support program for beginning teachers, focuses on building the capacity of new classroom educators to promote high achievement among students. It provides a comprehensive program of support for all beginning teachers on the idea that learning to teach is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, and reflecting. Each school maintains a schedule of activities and support programming for new teachers with an additional layer of district support activities provided each year. The Beginning Teacher Program is a three (3) year program designed to enhance and support the professional growth of teachers during their initial years of teaching. Student services personnel (media specialists, counselors, speech pathologists, administrators, and curriculum instructional specialists) are issued continuing licenses and do not participate in the Beginning Teacher Program.

This program provides support through:

- a mentor
- a site-based coordinator
- beginning teacher coaching program
- periodic assessment of skills
- a yearly evaluation of performance
- an annual Professional Development Plan (PDP)

After three (3) years of successful teaching on a clear license, initially licensed teachers are eligible for a continuing license. These three (3) years must be served within a five (5) year period from the date of enrollment in the program, and all three (3) years must be in the same licensure area. Part-time teachers who are employed less than 50% of the time are not eligible to participate in the program.

After completing the Initial Licensure Program, beginning teachers must be rated "Proficient" on all five (5) North Carolina professional teaching standards on the most recent Teacher Summary Rating Form in order to be eligible for the Standard Professional 2 License. See the COMPENSATION section for information about mentor teacher pay.

GENERAL INFORMATION/POLICIES

ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

All employees are expected to be present during working hours. Employees wishing to use accrued leave should obtain approval from their immediate supervisor prior to the use of leave, except in situations where the absence is a medical necessity or otherwise meets the criteria for use of sick leave. In the case of unplanned or emergency absences, employees should contact their supervisor as soon as possible or by the start of the next day. Absence without prior approval, absences in violation of Board policy, habitual tardiness, or abuses of designated working hours are all considered neglect of duty and can result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. For information on this topic, see [Policy 7567](#) and [Policy 7505](#). *Information regarding employee absence reporting and make-up time during inclement weather and/or designated remote learning days is provided at the end of this section of the handbook.*

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

In compliance with federal and state regulations, Chatham County Schools attempts to limit/prevent occupational exposure of employees to blood or other potentially infectious bodily fluids and materials that may transmit bloodborne pathogens and lead to disease or death. The Bloodborne Pathogen Policy and Exposure Control Plan are accessible at each work site.

Employees who could be "reasonably anticipated," as a result of performing required job duties, to face contact with blood, bodily fluids or other potentially infectious materials are covered by the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard, the NC Administrative Code, and Policy 7260. "Good Samaritan" acts, such as assisting a co-worker or student with a nosebleed, would not be considered "reasonably anticipated occupational exposure."

Universal precautions will be in force at all times. All blood, bodily fluids, and other potentially infectious material will be handled as if infected. The program standards for the control of potential exposure to HIV and HBV as outlined in the OSHA Rule "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" Standard 1910.1030, the NC Administrative Codes, or the most current standards available will be followed. For additional information, see [Policy 7260](#).

CALENDARS

Calendar information, including student calendars, report card dates, make-up dates, etc. can be found on the school system [calendar web page](#).

CODE OF ETHICS

Each employee shall exhibit the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and fairness, and be responsible for his or her own actions in compliance with the [North Carolina Code of Ethics for Educators](#). An employee's conduct should be such that it protects his/her integrity and/or reputation and that of the school system. All employees while respecting and protecting the civil and human rights of everyone shall uphold the principles of due process and individual dignity. Employees shall perform their jobs in a competent and ethical manner without violating the public trust or applicable laws, policies, and regulations.

All school system employees who participate in the state testing program should review and follow the state's [Testing Code of Ethics](#).

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND CONDUCT FOR NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATORS

The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) has adopted rules to establish uniform standards of professional conduct for licensed professional educators throughout the state. These rules have been incorporated into Title 16 of the North Carolina Administrative Code and have the effect of law. These rules shall be the basis for SBE review of the performance of professional educators and are binding on every person licensed by the SBE. Violation of these standards shall subject an educator to investigation and possible disciplinary action by the SBE or local school district.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

It is the policy of the board to attempt to provide a safe and secure environment for all students and employees. In an effort to maintain a balance between the need to protect the rights of students and employees and to control the spread of serious communicable diseases and conditions, the superintendent will make decisions regarding the employment status of employees with communicable diseases or conditions on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with this policy. An employee suffering from a communicable disease or condition is encouraged to inform his or her supervisor so that appropriate accommodations may be made and appropriate precautions may be taken. This policy applies to all legally reportable communicable diseases. For additional information, see [Policy 7262](#).

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY

Each employee is responsible for familiarizing himself/herself with the policies of the Board of Education. Employees will be held accountable for compliance with these policies. Board policies are available online on the district's website.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees are expected to avoid engaging in any conduct that creates or gives the appearance to a reasonable and informed public of creating a conflict of interest with job responsibilities with the school district. While there may be other conflicts of interest, employees must follow board directives in the areas of financial interests and receipt of gifts. An employee or member of the board will not engage in selling goods or services to the board and will not engage in or have a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any activity that conflicts with duties and responsibilities in the school district.

Any teacher may enter into an agreement for tutoring students for a fee, but this practice must be limited to students other than those for whom the teacher is currently exercising teaching, administrative or supervisory responsibility. Tutoring for a fee may not take place during regular school hours or on school grounds. School supplies may not be expended in tutoring for a fee.

Further, no gifts from any person or group desiring or doing business with the school district will be accepted by a school employee except for nominally valued instructional products or advertising items which are widely distributed. For additional information, see [Policy 7730](#).

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

The school system recognizes that some employees may pursue additional compensation on their own time. Any such employee shall not engage in the following:

- non-school employment that adversely affects the employee's availability or effectiveness in fulfilling job responsibilities;
- work of any type in which the sources of information concerning customer, client, or employer originate from any information obtained through the school system;
- work of any type that materially and negatively affects the educational program of the school system;
- any type of private business using system facilities, equipment, or materials, unless prior approval is provided by the superintendent; or
- any type of private business during school time or on school property.

For additional information, see [policy 7730](#).

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, SECLUSION, AND RESTRAINT

No principal, teacher, substitute teacher, voluntary teacher, teacher assistant, student-teacher, or staff member may use corporal punishment to discipline a student. Corporal punishment is any kind of punishment inflicted on the body, including, but not limited to, spanking, paddling, or slapping. Notwithstanding the policy prohibiting the use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline, school personnel may use reasonable force to control behavior or to remove a person from the scene in these situations when necessary: a. To quell a disturbance threatening injury to others; b. To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on the person or within the control of a student; c. For self defense; d. For the protection of persons or property; or e. To restrain or correct students or otherwise maintain order. See [Policy 4355](#).

North Carolina General Statute 115C-391.1 prohibits inappropriate use of seclusion and restraint. Aversive techniques which intentionally cause physical or psychological damage, and seclusion of students as defined in the statute are strictly prohibited. For specific definitions and expectations, the statute is available [online](#).

CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

The Board of Education believes that a safe and secure learning and working environment should be provided for all students and employees. The board further believes that employees should be role models for students and should positively represent the schools in this district. These beliefs reflect the fundamental principle that any employee who has significant contact with children is in a unique position of trust in our society and must demonstrate that he/she has the integrity and honesty to fulfill the duties of his/her position.

A criminal history check will be conducted on all final candidates who will be recommended to the BOE for employment, including substitutes, and independent contractors who are being considered for performing duties in a school personnel position.

Employees who have separated from our employment for more than one (1) year and come back will require a background check.

False information on an employment application or contract which is intended to defraud, falsify, materially misrepresent or conceal the truth regarding criminal history will be a basis for denying employment or immediate dismissal.

The superintendent will forward to the State Board, in accordance with State Board rules, the criminal history of any applicant who is licensed, certificated or certified by the State Board.

Once employed, an automated system notifies the school system of criminal charges against employees. However, any employee charged by a law enforcement agency with a crime, other than a minor traffic offense, has a duty to immediately report that fact in writing to the Associate Superintendent for Human Resources. See [Policy 7300](#) and [Policy 7140](#).

DRESS AND PERSONAL APPEARANCE

The appearance and conduct of staff are of supreme importance in establishing a positive image for education in the community and for presenting a good example for students. Therefore, all personnel are expected to dress professionally, neatly and appropriately for the work to be done. An employee's dress must not disrupt or distract from the educational process and must be in accordance with health and safety standards. The superintendent may authorize the principal or department supervisors to develop specific dress or appearance requirements for each school or department. An employee's supervisor will make an initial determination of whether an employee's dress or appearance is inappropriate. In making this determination, the supervisor will consider the following factors: the nature of the work; whether the dress is consistent with a professional environment; health and safety factors; the nature of the employee's public contact and the normal expectations of outside parties with whom the employee will work; the employee's interaction with students; the prevailing practices of other workers in similar jobs; and any properly established guidelines for dress or appearance. Supervisors and principals have the authority to and are responsible for notifying those individuals who are in violation of this policy. For more information, see [Policy 7340](#).

DRUG-FREE AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE

It is the policy of the Board of Education that a drug-free and alcohol-free workplace will be maintained. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, anabolic steroids, alcohol, counterfeit substances or any other controlled substance as defined in schedules I through V of section 202 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C.812) and further defined by regulation at 21.F.R. 1300.11 through 1300.15 is prohibited. No employee will be impaired by the use of prescription or nonprescription drugs while at work or in a capacity representing the school system. This policy is not violated by an individual's proper use of a drug lawfully prescribed for that individual by a licensed healthcare provider.

Employees are prohibited from using or being under the influence of alcohol while acting in the course and scope of the employees' duties. Policy 7240 does not apply to an employee's consumption of alcoholic beverages that are served at a reception or other similar function that occurs outside the regular workday and that the employee is authorized or required to attend as a part of his/her employment duties.

This policy will govern each employee before, during or after school hours while on any property owned or leased by the Board; at anytime during which the individual employee is acting in the course and scope of his or her employment with the school system; and at any time that the employee's violation of this policy has a direct and adverse effect upon his/her job performance. An employee must notify the Chief Personnel Officer of the school system in writing of any conviction under any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring within the scope of this CCBE Policy- Code 7240.

Violation of this policy will subject an individual to personnel action by the Board of Education which could result in non-renewal or termination of employment with the school district or the requirement that the employee participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved by the Board of

Education. Information concerning available counseling, rehabilitation and reentry programs will be provided to employees. For more information, see [Policy 7240](#).

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

In order to ensure the safe operation of school vehicles and comply with federal law and regulations, Chatham County Schools has established a comprehensive program of drug and alcohol testing for school bus drivers and all other commercial motor vehicle operators employed by the Board of Education.

Commercial motor vehicle operators employed by the BOE will not consume alcohol or have alcohol in the person's body or be impaired by a prescription or nonprescription drug while on duty or while operating any motor vehicle. It is a criminal offense under NC state law G.S. 20-138.2B to drive a school bus, school activity bus or child care vehicle upon any highway, any street or any public vehicular area within the state while consuming alcohol or while alcohol remains in the person's body and the BOE prohibits drivers from engaging in such actions. Any employee who commits a prohibited act, refused any test required by policy 7241 or otherwise violated this policy: G.S. 20-138.2B or Part 382, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. For more information, see [Policy 7241](#).

EMPLOYEE HEALTH CERTIFICATE

All new employees, as well as employees who have been separated from public school employment for more than a year or who have been absent for more than 40 consecutive school days because of a communicable disease, must provide a fully completed health certificate on the form provided by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. For more information, see [Policy 7120](#).

EMPLOYEES INJURED DURING AN EPISODE OF VIOLENCE

Any employee who has suffered a medical injury while acting within the course and scope of employment must report the episode in writing as soon as possible to his/her immediate supervisor. The employee will also make such supplemental written reports as needed.

Whenever an employee is temporarily absent from school and temporarily unable to perform his/her duties as a result of medical injury received during an episode of violence and while acting in the scope and course of employment, the employee will be paid full salary less the amount of any workers' compensation payments or award made for temporary disability. This payment will be made for the period that the employee is not able to perform his/her duties as a result of the injury, but no longer than 12 months following the date the injury was incurred.

An episode of violence includes an act of violence directed at any school building or facility or to any employee or student. An act of violence is defined as the exertion of physical force with the intent to injure, damage or abuse. It does not include accidental or unintentional conduct.

To determine the length of time during which an employee is temporarily unable to perform duties and in determining that a disability is attributable to the specific injury involved, the board will have the right to have an employee examined by a physician of its own designation. In the event that there is an adjudication of the period of temporary disability in the appropriate workers' compensation proceeding, the board may adopt such adjudication. For more information, see [Policy 7640](#).

GUIDELINES FOR AFTER-SCHOOL CARE FOR CHILDREN OF TEACHERS AND STAFF

The Chatham County Board of Education recognizes that planning and other duties often require teachers to be at school well after the regular school day ends. These work hours often conflict with teachers' child care needs. The following guidelines apply when teachers must have their own children at school after regular school hours.

1. Teachers are encouraged to consider using formal after-school programs where available.
2. If a teacher elects to have their own children at school after the regular school day, the teacher is solely responsible for supervision of the children.
3. Teachers may not bring their children to school on teacher workdays or early release days.
4. Teachers are discouraged from having their children at school on days when they are responsible for attending faculty meetings, parent conferences, professional learning community meetings, staff development, or other after-school meeting or activity. In any event, teachers must arrange for appropriate supervision of their children to permit attendance at such activities.

Principals may limit or prohibit teachers from having their children at school if the presence of the children at school results in disruption, interference with the work of the school, or safety concerns. An employee or student may not bring a child into the workplace or classroom on a regular basis in lieu of childcare.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEES

It is the policy of the Board of Education, in keeping with the ultimate goal of serving the educational welfare of children, to develop and practice reasonable and effective methods of resolving difficulties that may arise among employees. The intent is to reduce potential areas of grievances and to establish and maintain recognized channels of communication between staff and administration. The purpose of this procedure is to secure, at the lowest possible level, equitable solutions to the problems that arise from time to time and affect employees.

It is desirable for an employee and his/her immediate supervisor to resolve problems through free and informal communication. In those circumstances where informal procedures fail or are inappropriate or where the employee requests formal procedures, a grievance will be processed pursuant to the steps set forth in [Policy 7220](#).

IDENTIFICATION BADGES

Upon employment, all employees of Chatham County Schools will be issued an identification (ID) badge with their picture displayed on the badge. This ID badge is to be worn at all times while the employee is on the grounds of or in buildings or vehicles owned, or leased by Chatham County Schools. Upon separation from service with Chatham County Schools, the employee must return the ID badge to his/her immediate supervisor. For assistance with appropriate door/facility badge access contact Technology Services and submit a request via [Incident IQ](#). Interns, student teachers, some contracted personnel, and other temporary roles may be issued a generic "Staff" identification badge specific to the school location or district department providing the supervised clinical experience. These badges should be returned to the issuing school or department at the conclusion of the supervised clinical experience or the end date of the temporary contracted service.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Employees' rights of citizenship, involving registering, discussing political issues, voting, campaigning for candidates or issues, running for or serving in public office, and participating on a committee or board that seeks to serve the welfare of the community, will not be infringed upon due to employment by the school system.

However, school system employees should not engage in partisan political activity during the employee's working hours or at any time the employee is performing his or her job duties for the school system. No employee may use school equipment at any time for a partisan political activity; no school supplies shall be used for political activities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ASSISTANCE

The board believes a strong relationship exists between the quality of education afforded to students and the competency of professional personnel employed by the school district. The board attaches a high priority to securing the most competent personnel available and, once they are employed, in assisting them in their professional growth and development throughout their careers. The primary purpose of staff development, both for individuals and groups of employees, is to improve the instructional program for all students by assisting teachers and other licensed personnel in improving and gaining even greater competence in their profession.

The district may pay reasonable costs, within budget limits, as mutually agreed upon in advance, for any courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, in-service training sessions or other sessions which an employee is required to attend by the local administration. The employee must seek prior approval for payments.

The district will not bear the responsibility of cost of training taken solely for the purposes of licensure renewal. For additional information, see [Policy 7800](#).

PROHIBITION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND BULLYING

In [Policy 1710](#), the Board of Education acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The board prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. The board will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying in any of its educational or employment activities or programs.

Students are expected to comply with the behavior standards established by board policy and the Code of Civility. Employees are expected to comply with board policy and school system regulations. Volunteers and visitors on school property also are expected to comply with board policy and established school rules and procedures. Any violation of this policy is serious and school officials shall promptly take appropriate action. Students will be disciplined in accordance with the school's student behavior management plan (see policy 4302, School Plan for Management of Student Behavior). Based on the nature and severity of the offense and the circumstances surrounding the incident, the student will be subject to appropriate consequences and remedial actions ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to, and including, expulsion. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, dismissal. Volunteers and visitors who violate this policy will be directed to leave school property and/or reported to law enforcement, as appropriate.

Discrimination is defined as any act or failure to act that unreasonably and unfavorably differentiates treatment of others based solely on their membership in a socially distinct group or category, such as race, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, or disability. Discrimination may be intentional or unintentional.

Harassment or bullying behavior is any pattern of gestures or written, electronic, or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication that:

- 1) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or

2) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits or by adversely altering the conditions of an employee's employment.

"Hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as harassment or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is harassment or bullying. A hostile environment may be created through pervasive or persistent misbehavior or a single incident, if sufficiently severe.

Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, behavior described above that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic or motivated by an individual's association with a person who has or is perceived to have a differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability. Examples of behavior that may constitute bullying or harassment include, but are not limited to, verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, lewd propositions, exclusion from peer groups, extortion of money or possessions, implied or stated threats, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching, or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Legitimate age-appropriate pedagogical techniques are not considered harassment or bullying.

Harassment, including sexual or gender-based harassment, is not limited to specific situations or relationships. It may occur between fellow students or co-workers, between supervisors and subordinates, between employees and students, or between non-employees, including visitors, and employees or students. Harassment may occur between members of the opposite sex or the same sex.

Sexual harassment is one type 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 the individual, or in the case of a student, submission to or rejection of such conduct is used in evaluating the student'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.

Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, deliberate, unwelcome touching that has sexual connotations or is of a sexual nature, 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, sexual assault, sexual violence, or the display of sexually suggestive drawings, objects, pictures or written materials. Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex, but not involving sexual activity or language, may be combined with incidents of sexually harassing conduct to determine if the incidents of sexually harassing conduct are sufficiently serious to create a sexually hostile environment.

Gender-based harassment is also a type of harassment. Gender-based harassment may include acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on sex or sex-stereotyping but not involving conduct of a sexual nature

Employees are required to report any actual or suspected acts of discrimination, harassment or bullying. Such reports will be investigated under [Policy 1720](#).

REPORTING ACTS OF VIOLENCE

Teachers, student teachers, substitute teachers, volunteer teachers, and/or teacher assistants must report to the principal all acts of violence in school. Principals must IMMEDIATELY report to the appropriate law enforcement agency when they have “personal knowledge or actual notice from school personnel” when an act has occurred on school grounds involving any of the following; assault resulting in serious personal injury, sexual assault, sexual offense, rape, kidnapping, indecent liberties with a minor, assault involving the use of a weapon, possession of a firearm in violation of the law, possession of a weapon in violation of the law, or possession of a controlled substance in violation of the law. Failure of a principal to report to law enforcement is a Class 3 criminal misdemeanor. Principals are required to notify the superintendent in writing or by email of any report made to law enforcement and requires the superintendent to notify the board (GS. 115C-307(a)).

SMOKING AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS

All persons, including school district personnel, volunteers, contractors, other persons performing services or activities on behalf of the school district, students, and visitors, are prohibited from using tobacco products at any time (1) in any school building, in any school facility, in any school vehicle, on school grounds or on any property owned, leased, borrowed or otherwise used by the district (2) at any school-sponsored or school-related activity, including athletic events, on or off school grounds, except for the use of tobacco products for instructional or research purposes. In addition, school district employees, school volunteers, contractors or other persons performing services on behalf of the school district are also prohibited from using tobacco products at any other time while on duty and in the presence of students, either on or off school grounds.

Employees found to be smoking, or using other tobacco products or exposing students to such products are subject to sanctions including a verbal warning, written reprimand, suspension or dismissal. Supervisors and principals are encouraged to also refer the employee to an appropriate smoking cessation program.

Non-employees found using tobacco products on school property will be asked to stop such activity. If the use of tobacco products continues, the person will be asked to leave school property. As a last resort, law enforcement officials will be called.

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. For additional information, see [Policy 7250](#).

STAFF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For students to succeed, all staff members must approach their responsibilities conscientiously, always remembering that the ultimate responsibility of the school district is to create the opportunity and environment where students can learn. Also essential to the success of ongoing school operations and the instructional program are the following specific responsibilities that will be required of all personnel:

- be familiar with, abide by, support, and, where appropriate, enforce board policies, administrative procedures, school rules, and applicable laws;
- attend to the safety and welfare of students, including the need to ensure that students are supervised at all times;
- provide an example for students by demonstrating integrity, respect and commitment to the truth through attitudes, behavior and dress;
- attend work faithfully and promptly;
- be diligent in submitting required reports at the times specified;
- take care of and protect school property;
- address or appropriately direct any complaints concerning the schools, the school program or school operation; and
- support and encourage good school-community relations in all interactions with students, parents and members of the community. For additional information, see [Policy 7300](#).

DUTY-FREE LUNCH

School improvement plans shall include a plan to provide all full-time assigned classroom teachers a duty-free lunch period on a daily basis or as otherwise approved by the school improvement team. This period will not necessarily correspond to the length of an instructional or lunch period for students, but shall be of reasonable length. During this period, the teacher shall not be assigned duties on an ongoing, regular basis without his/her consent, except that the principal may assign such duties as from time to time the safety and proper supervision of students shall require. As required by [GS 115C-105.27](#)

STAFF/STUDENT RELATIONS

The relationship between staff and students should be one of cooperation, understanding, and mutual respect. The staff has the responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning and to motivate each student to perform to his or her capacity. The staff is expected to model the behavior expected of students in staff-student relationships.

All employees, except student employees, are prohibited from dating, courting or entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with any student enrolled in the school district 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 [GS 14-202.4](#) and [14-27.31](#).

Any employee who has reason to believe that another employee is inappropriately involved with a student, as described above, is required to report this information to the superintendent. An employee who fails to inform the superintendent of a suspected inappropriate relationship between an employee and a student may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. For more information, see [Policy 7310](#).

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Any school employee who knows or has cause to suspect child abuse or neglect is legally required to report the case of the child to the director of social services. The employee also will report the case immediately to the principal. For additional information, see [policy 4240](#).

TECHNOLOGY USE

The school system provides its students and staff access to a variety of technological resources. These resources provide opportunities to enhance learning and improve communication within the school community and with the larger global community. Through the school system's technological resources, users can observe events as

they occur around the world, interact with others on a variety of subjects, and acquire access to current and in-depth information.

The school system intends that students and employees benefit from these resources while remaining within the bounds of safe, legal, and responsible use. Accordingly, the Board has established a policy to govern student and employee use of school system technological resources. This policy applies regardless of whether such use occurs on or off school system property, and it applies to all school system technological resources, including but not limited to computer networks and connections, resources, tools, and learning environments made available by or on the networks, and all devices that connect to those networks. While it is not practical to list all expectations for use of school system technological resources, the following are key guidelines:

- Resources may not be used for personal profit, amusement, or entertainment purposes
- School system software or other resources may not be copied for personal use
- Users must comply with all applicable laws, including those relating to copyrights and trademarks, confidential information, and public records. Any use that violates state or federal law is strictly prohibited.
- No user should engage with material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, pornographic, harassing, abusive, or considered to be harmful to minors.
- School employees must not disclose on school system websites or web pages or elsewhere on the Internet any personally identifiable, private, or confidential information concerning students (including names, addresses, or pictures) without the written permission of a parent or guardian or an eligible student
- Users may not intentionally or negligently damage technological resources
- Users are prohibited from engaging in unauthorized or unlawful activities, such as "hacking" or using the computer network to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized or unlawful access to other computers, computer systems, or accounts.
- Users are prohibited from using another individual's ID or password for any technological resource without permission from the individual.
- Employees shall not use passwords or user IDs for any data system (e.g., the state student information and instructional improvement system applications, time-keeping software, etc.) for an unauthorized or improper purpose.
- If a user identifies a security problem on a technological resource, he or she must immediately notify a system administrator. Users must not demonstrate the problem to other users.
- Teachers shall make reasonable efforts to supervise students' use of the Internet during instructional time
- Views may be expressed on the Internet or other technological resources as representing the view of the school system or part of the school system only with prior approval by the superintendent or designee
- Users must have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, delete, receive, or display when using the school system's network, devices, Internet access, email system, or other technological resources owned or issued by the school system, whether the resources are used at school or elsewhere, and even if the use is for personal purposes. With limited exceptions, emails, blog posts, or other online activities associated with the school system are considered public information, and may be disclosed by the school system.

For additional information, see [policy 3225](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA

The school system acknowledges that school employees may engage in the use of social media during their personal time. School employees who use social media for personal purposes must be mindful that they are responsible for their public conduct even when not acting in their capacities as school system employees. All school employees, including student teachers and independent contractors, shall comply with the requirements of

this policy when using electronic social media for personal purposes. In addition, all school employees must comply with [policy 4040](#), Staff-Student Relations, when communicating with individual students through other electronic means, such as through voice, email, or text messaging.

While it is not practical to list all expectations regarding employee use of social media, the following are some key points:

- Employees shall not post confidential information about students, employees, or school system business.
- Employees shall not accept current students as "friends" or "followers" or otherwise connect with students on personal social media sites without parental permission, unless the employee and student have a family relationship or other type of appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting.
- Employees shall not knowingly allow students access to their personal social media sites that discuss or portray sex, nudity, alcohol, or drug use or other behaviors associated with the employees' private lives that would be inappropriate to discuss with a student at school.
- Employees may not knowingly grant students access to any portion of their personal social media sites that are not accessible to the general public without parental permission, unless the employee and student have a family relationship or other type of appropriate relationship which originated outside of the school setting.
- Employees shall be professional in all Internet postings related to or referencing the school system, students or their parents, and other employees.
- Employees shall not use profane, pornographic, obscene, indecent, lewd, vulgar, or sexually offensive language, pictures, or graphics, or other communication that could reasonably be anticipated to cause a substantial disruption to the school environment.
- Employees shall not use the school system's logo or other copyrighted material of the system on a personal social media site without express, written consent from the board.
- Employees shall not post identifiable images of a student or student's family on a personal social media site without permission from the student and the student's parent or legal guardian. Employees may post such images on a school-controlled social media site only with prior permission of the employee's supervisor and in accordance with the requirements of federal and state privacy laws and [policy 4700](#), Student Records.
- Employees shall not use Internet postings to libel or defame the board, individual board members, students, or other school employees.
- Employees shall not use Internet postings to harass, bully, or intimidate students or other employees in violation of policy [1710](#), Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying, or state and federal laws.
- Employees shall not post content that negatively impacts their ability to perform their jobs.
- Employees shall not use Internet postings to engage in any other conduct that violates board policy or administrative procedures or state and federal laws.

For additional information, see [policy 7335](#).

GIFTS TO THE SCHOOL

As stated in the [Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators](#) and in [Board policy](#), school system employees may not accept gifts associated with their employment (beyond small incidental tokens). Any substantial offered gift/donation should be evaluated by the Superintendent or designee to determine the donation's suitability for the school or school system. Unless otherwise specified in a written agreement approved by the board, any accepted donation becomes the permanent property of the school system. Anything purchased with donated funds, including funds raised through a crowdfunding campaign, project, or platform, become the property of the school system. A donor may request that a donation be designated for a particular purpose. However, the board

reserves the right to utilize the donation as it deems appropriate. Any donation constituting revenues will be deposited in the proper account. The specific manner in which donated funds are expended for a designated purpose will be determined under the direction of the superintendent.

OPERATION OF SCHOOL SYSTEM VEHICLES

All employees authorized to drive Chatham County Schools' owned or leased vehicles or personal vehicles in conducting Chatham County Schools business must possess a current, valid North Carolina driver's license or a Commercial Driver's License if the position requires it. Any change in license status or driving record must be reported to the principal/supervisor immediately.

A valid driver's license must be in the employee's possession while operating a vehicle off or on Chatham County Schools' property. It is the responsibility of every employee to drive safely and obey all traffic, vehicle safety, and parking laws or regulations. Drivers must demonstrate and model safe driving habits at all times.

Chatham County Schools-owned or leased vehicles may be used only as authorized by supervisory staff.

Safety must come before all other concerns. All employees, including bus drivers, must refrain from using phones while driving during working hours. Regardless of the circumstances, including slow or stopped traffic, employees should proceed to a safe location off the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting a call. If acceptance of a call is absolutely necessary while the employee is driving, the employee should advise the called that he/she is unable to speak at that time and will return the call shortly. Under no circumstances should employees feel that they need to place themselves at risk to fulfill business needs.

WEAPONS

Except as otherwise specified below, employees, visitors, and other persons are prohibited from possessing, carrying, using, or threatening to use weapons, or encouraging another person to do so on school property or while attending activities sponsored by the school system. This policy applies to weapons or explosives carried openly or concealed.

A weapon includes, but is not limited to, any gun, rifle, pistol, or other firearm of any kind; any BB gun, stun gun, air rifle, air pistol, bowie knife, dirk, dagger, slingshot, leaded cane, switchblade knife, blackjack, metallic knuckles, razors, and razor blades (except solely for personal shaving), or fireworks; any sharp-pointed or -edged instrument, except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files, and clips and tools used solely for the preparation of food, instruction, and/or maintenance on educational property; and mace, pepper spray, and other personal defense sprays. For purposes of this policy, an explosive includes, but is not limited to, any dynamite cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine, or powerful explosive as defined in [G.S. 14-284.1](#).

This policy does not apply to:

- a weapon or explosive used solely for educational or school-sanctioned ceremonial purposes, or used in a school-approved program conducted under the supervision of an adult whose supervision has been approved

- a person who has a concealed handgun permit that is valid under state law or who is exempted by state law from needing a permit to carry a concealed handgun, if any of the following conditions are met:
 1. the person has a handgun in a closed compartment or container within the person's locked vehicle or in a locked container securely affixed to the person's vehicle;
 2. the person has a handgun concealed on the person and the person remains in a locked vehicle; or
 3. the person is within a locked vehicle and removes the handgun from concealment only for the amount of time reasonably necessary to move it to a closed compartment or container within the vehicle or to move it from the closed compartment or container to concealment on the person.
- Firefighters, emergency service personnel, North Carolina Forest Service personnel, and any private police employed by the Board of Education, when acting in the discharge of their official duties
- law enforcement officers or other persons as provided in [G.S. 14-269.2\(g\)\(1a\)](#); or
- a volunteer school safety resource officer providing security at a school pursuant to an agreement as provided in [G.S. 115C-47\(61\)](#), provided that the volunteer school safety resource officer is acting in the discharge of his or her official duties and is on the educational property of the school that the officer was assigned to by the head of the local law enforcement agency.

Any employee who violates this policy is subject to immediate dismissal.

For additional information, see [policy 5027](#).

WORKDAY

The length of the school day for licensed and professional staff will be a minimum of seven hours and thirty minutes and will continue until professional responsibilities to the student and school are completed. Administrative meetings, curriculum development, pupil supervision, assigned duties, parent conferences, group or individual planning and extra-curricular activities may require hours beyond the stated minimum. Work schedules for other employees are defined by the superintendent or his/her designee, consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the provisions of [policy 7500](#). Hourly employees must receive approval from their principal/supervisor prior to accruing overtime.

Inclement Weather / Remote Day Employee Absence Reporting & Make-Up Time

[Policy 7550 \(Absences Due to Inclement Weather\)](#) and [7550-R \(Absences Due to Inclement Weather\)](#) allows certain options on days that are designated as optional workdays or closed due to inclement weather. When recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Board of Education, teleworking is available for an instructional day designated as a remote learning day. **Supervisors should follow the protocols provided in the [document linked here](#) when working with staff to implement the options.**

INFORMATION DIRECTORY

Answers to most questions can be found through calling the main number for the school system's central services at 919-542-3626 and asking the receptionist to direct you to the appropriate extension.

Board of Education

- Board Policy
- Public Information Officer

Operations Division

- Student Transfers/Assignments/Tuition

Operations Division

- Athletics
- Construction/Facilities
- Safety Issues
- School Facility Rental

Finance Division

- Accounts Payable
- Payroll
- Purchasing/Fixed Assets
- Tax Withholdings

Human Resources

- Certified/Classified Personnel
- Hospital/Dental/Life Insurance
- Licensed Personnel
- Licensure
- National Board Certification
- New Directions support program for Beginning Teachers
- Recruitment
- Resignations
- Retirement/Disability
- Substitute Teachers
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Unemployment
- Workers' Compensation

Academic Services and Instructional Support Division

- Alcohol & Other Drugs
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Career & Technical Education
- Cultural Arts
- Elementary Programs (K-5)
- ML/ELL
- Field Trips
- Middle Grades Programs (6-8)
- Migrant Education Program
- Preschool Program
- Renewal Credits

Secondary Programs (9-12)
Staff Development
Student Transcripts
Technology/Media Education
Testing/Infinite Campus
Title I Programs
Volunteer Program

The following services are in a different location, and have their own phone numbers, as follows:

Exceptional Children's Program	919-542-6400
Homebound Instruction	919-542-6400
Maintenance	919-542-6700
School Nutrition	919-542-6600
Student Services	919-542-6400
Transportation and Bus Drivers	919-542-2715

Confirmation of Receipt*

This handbook contains employment information for Chatham County Schools employees. Although there are references to Chatham County Board of Education policies and procedures, the handbook does not contain all Board of Education policies and procedures. To review Board policies in detail, please access the district's website, navigate to the "Board" tab, then select "Policies" for a complete listing.

It is the responsibility of all employees of the Chatham County Board of Education to understand and comply with applicable laws, policies and procedures. Copies of the handbook or the district's operating policies and procedures are available at each work site and on the district's website.

By my signature below, I hereby certify that I have received notification of how to access a copy of the Chatham County Schools Employee Handbook.

Employee Signature: collected digitally via Frontline

Date: collected digitally via Frontline

Department/Division/School: collected digitally via Frontline

****Confirmation of Receipt for the Employee Handbook administered annually via Frontline***