

**EUSTACE  
ECC**

***EUSTACE ISD***

***Employee  
Handbook***



***2016-2017***

# **EUSTACE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **VIVID DESCRIPTIONS**

*EISD will provide a learning and working environment that will have people knocking at our doors in order to be a part of. When parents learn that their children will have the opportunity to attend school in Eustace and when people learn that they will have the privilege of being employed by EISD, it will be like Charlie finding the Golden Ticket to tour Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. Parents will know that their children will truly receive a world-class education that is second to none. They will know that their children will be treated with respect and dignity by all employees of EISD. Parents will know that their children will be attending a bully free environment where students not only receive expert instruction in the core subjects, but are taught daily the importance of responsible behavior. Students at EISD will be as excited about coming to school every day as they are about seeing the latest blockbuster movie. Parents, staff and students will all understand that they will be expected to build relationships with one another. Students will know that when they leave EISD, they will have unlimited possibilities. Colleges, universities, and employers will actively seek out Eustace ISD graduates.*

*Employees know that they will be treated as professionals and*

*valued as individuals. They will enjoy mutual respect and support from their fellow teachers and administrators. They will constantly seek buy in from all stakeholders at every opportunity. Employees understand that our students are worth fighting for. There is also no doubt among any employee that we will win the fight. Employees readily accept the role of molding our students through their actions and words. Employees of EISD will receive all the support and training necessary to make the maximum impact on each and every student. We will never accept defeat at any level for any student.*

## **CORE BELIEFS**

*Decisions are student focused  
and in their best interest.*

*Passion and compassion for the  
whole child.*

*Dedicated to success in ALL we  
do.*

*Be BULLDOG PROUD!*

*Loyal, Tenacious, Intelligent,  
Courageous*

## **PURPOSE**

*Increase the opportunities  
available for our children.*

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# Introduction

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

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of noncontract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate district office. Policy manuals are located at each campus, central office and are available for employee review during normal working hours. District policies can be accessed on line at [www.eustaceisd.net](http://www.eustaceisd.net).

# District Information

## Description of the District

The Eustace Independent School District encompasses 82 square miles in Western Henderson County and southern Van Zandt County. Approximately 1500 students attend the four campuses of Eustace ISD.

## Mission Statement

*Policy AE*

Eustace Independent School District exists to provide a challenging and comprehensive educational program in a way that:

- Unites family, community and school as stakeholders
- Ensures and emotionally and physically safe environment
- Fosters maximum individual academic achievements
- Offers a variety of opportunities for development

So that students are productive lifelong learners equipped to succeed in a competitive society.

## District Goals and Objectives

### *PUBLIC EDUCATION MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES*

The mission of the Texas public education system is to ensure that all Texas children have access to a quality education that enables them to achieve their full potential and fully participate now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities in our state and nation. That mission is grounded on the conviction that a general diffusion of knowledge is essential for the welfare of Texas and for the preservation of the liberties and rights of Texas citizens. It is further grounded on the conviction that a successful public education system is directly related to a strong, dedicated, and supportive family and that parental involvement in the school is essential for the maximum educational achievement of a child. The objectives of public education are:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| OBJECTIVE 1: | Parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.                             |
| OBJECTIVE 2: | Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.                         |
| OBJECTIVE 3: | Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a diploma. |
| OBJECTIVE 4: | A well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.                                 |

- OBJECTIVE 5: Qualified and highly effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.
- OBJECTIVE 6: Texas students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.
- OBJECTIVE 7: School campuses will maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.
- OBJECTIVE 8: Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning.
- OBJECTIVE 9: Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration.

The academic goals of public education are to serve as a foundation for a well-balanced and appropriate education. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in:

- GOAL 1: The reading and writing of the English language.
- GOAL 2: The understanding of mathematics.
- GOAL 3: The understanding of science.
- GOAL 4: The understanding of social studies.

Education Code 4.001, 4.002

## **Board of Trustees**

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

Texas law grants the board of trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the district's schools. The board is the policy-making body within the district and has overall responsibility for the curriculum, school taxes, annual budget, employment of the superintendent and other professional staff, facilities. The board has complete and final control over school matters within limits established by state and federal law and regulations.

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Board members are elected at large and serve 4-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

Board members:	President	Gary Walsh
	Vice President	Ashley McKee
	Secretary	Bobby Karl Ashton
	Members	Sonny Hodge
		James Kirkhart, Jr.
		Steven Bell
		Billy (Cotton) Walker

The board usually meets the third Monday of each month in the High School Library at 7:00 p.m. In the event that large attendance is anticipated, the board may meet at the High School Auditorium. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district's website, [www.eustaceisd.net](http://www.eustaceisd.net), and the Central Office front door at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

## **Administration**

Coy Holcombe, Superintendent	425-5299
Karen Thompson, Superintendent Secretary	425-5299
Janice Beasley, Assistant Superintendent	425-5128
Stan Sowers, Assistant Superintendent	425-5128
Teri Clark, Assistant Superintendent Secretary	425-5128

## Helpful Contacts

From time to time, employees have questions or concerns. If those questions or concerns cannot be answered by supervisors or at the campus or department level, the employee is encouraged to contact the appropriate department as listed below.

Business Manager	Carol Warren	425-5126
Account Payable/Purchase Orders	Kara Weaver	425-5127
Payroll/Insurance	Debra Meyners	425-5125
Attendance/Safety/Security	Richard Gaddis	425-5130
Director of Special Programs	Kathryn Hendrickson	425-5390
Food Service Director	Rosemary Abbott	425-5119
Maintenance Director	James Beverly	425-5131
PEIMS Coordinator	Karen Thompson	425-5299
Special Service Office Secretary	Teri Clark	425-5128
Technology Director	Coy Holcombe	
Transportation Director	Henry Carter	425-5122
Tax Assessor Collector	Henderson County	675-6134

## School Directory

Primary School	Dianne Shaffer, Principal	425-5191
Intermediate School	Robert Reeve, Principal	425-5181
Middle School	Truman Oakley, Principal	425-5171
High School	Chris Whorton, Principal	425-5161

## Employment

### Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policies DAA, DIA*

The Eustace ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), genetic information, age, national origin, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Additionally, the district does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment should contact the District Title IX coordinator, Dr. Coy Holcombe, Superintendent. Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should contact Dr. Mack Saxon, district ADA/Section 504 coordinator. Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent.



## **Job Vacancy Announcements**

### *Policy DC*

To the extent possible, announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on the district's website, [www.eustaceisd.net](http://www.eustaceisd.net).

## **Employment after Retirement**

### *Policy DC*

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed under certain circumstances on a full- or part-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and state law. Detailed information about employment after retirement is available in the TRS publication Employment after Retirement. Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling (800) 223-8778 or (512) 542-6400. Information is also available on the TRS Web Site ( [www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

## **Contract and Noncontract Employment**

### *Policy DC*

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term or continuing contracts. Employees in all other positions are employed at-will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewal or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide a general description of the employment arrangements used by the district.

**Probationary Contracts.** Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the district and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive probationary contracts during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after at least a two-year lapse in district employment or employees who move to a position requiring a new class of certification also may be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district may not exceed one school year.

For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three school years (i.e., three one-year contracts) with an optional fourth school year if the board determines it is doubtful whether a term or continuing contract should be given.

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

**Noncertified professional and administrative employees:** Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are employed by a

one-year contract that is not subject to the provisions for nonrenewal or termination under the Texas Education Code.

**Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees** All paraprofessional and auxiliary employees, regardless of certification, are employed at will and not by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

## **Certification and Licenses**

Policies DBA, DF

Professional employees whose positions require SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to Central Office in a timely manner.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact Janice Beasley if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

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

*Policy DHE*

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

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

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty

and follow-up testing will be conducted if an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs is allowed to return to duty.

All employees required to have a CDL that are subject to alcohol and drug testing will receive a copy of the district's policy, the testing requirements, and detailed information on alcohol and drug abuse and the availability of assistance programs.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact Henry Carter, Director of Transportation.

## **Health Safety Training**

*Policies DB, DMA*

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, The American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to the superintendent's office by 8-15-2015.

## **Reassignments and Transfers**

*Policy DK*

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

An employee with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. A teacher requesting a transfer to another campus before the school year begins must submit his or her request by March 1st. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students and after a replacement has been found. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Superintendent's office and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

## **Workload and Work Schedules**

*Policies DEA, DL*

**Professional Employees** Professional employees and academic administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the district. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including start and end dates and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year. Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation including conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level but must provide at least 450 minutes within each two-week period in blocks not less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. Teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The district may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one day a week when no other personnel are available.

**Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees** Support employees are employed at will and receive notification of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not exempt from overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor. See *Overtime Compensation* on page 13 for additional information.

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

*Policies DEA, DEAB, DG*

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

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

## **Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications**

*Policies DK, DBA*

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

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

made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Janice Beasley, the Assistant Superintendent.

## **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

*Policy DBD*

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

## **Performance Evaluation**

*Policies DN series*

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

## **Employee Involvement**

*Policies BQA, BQB*

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

## **Staff Development**

*Policy DMA*

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the district. Staff development for instructional personnel is predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, addressed in the campus improvement plan, and approved by a campus-level advisory committee. Staff development for non-instructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers) and continued employee skill development.

Individuals holding renewable SBEC certificates are responsible for obtaining the required training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation.

# Compensation and Benefits

## Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

*Policy DEA, DEAA*

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation*, page 13.)

All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before the start of each school year. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule.

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

## Paychecks

All employees are paid monthly. During the school year, paychecks are delivered to each campus. Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization. During summer breaks, paychecks will be mailed or may be picked up at the campus office.

An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated.

Employees receive their pay on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a holiday or weekend, the employee will receive their pay on the nearest preceding workday.

## Automatic Payroll Deposit

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification of 30 days is necessary to activate this service. Contact Debra Meyners at ext. 125 for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

## **Payroll Deductions**

### *Policy CFEA*

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

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax required for all full-time employees
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986)
- Temporary and part-time employees who are not eligible for TRS membership must pay into LSW in lieu of Social Security.

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; higher education savings plans; and savings deposits and loan payments through Texas Trust Credit Union. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations and other voluntary deductions in accordance with administrative procedures. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

## **Overtime Compensation**

### *Policy DEA*

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

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours weekly and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. Sunday and ends at midnight Saturday.

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

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

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

*Policy DEE*

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor and the Superintendent must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the board of trustees. Employees must submit *itemized* receipts, to be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage.

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

*Policy CRD*

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-ActiveCare, the statewide public school employee health insurance program. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the board of trustees. Employees eligible for health insurance coverage include the following:

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS members
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members and who are regularly scheduled to work at least 10 hours per week

TRS retirees who are enrolled in TRS-Care (retiree health insurance program) and employees who are not contributing TRS members who are regularly scheduled to work less than 10 hours per week, are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. New employees must complete enrollment forms within the first 30 days of employment. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage at the beginning of each school year. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the Business Office for more information.

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

*Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for dental, disability, catastrophic illness, cancer, additional life, etc. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. The insurance plan year for supplemental insurance benefits is Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. Employees should contact the Business Office for more information.

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

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.



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

## **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

*Policy CRE*

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

Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to your immediate supervisor. Employees who are unable to work due to a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See Workers' Compensation Benefits, Page 15 for information on use of paid leave for such absences.

## **Unemployment Compensation Insurance**

*Policy CRF*

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

## **Teacher Retirement**

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least four and one-half months are members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). For new employees, there is a 91-day waiting period before TRS membership begins. Substitute's not receiving TRS service retirement benefits who work at least 90 days a year are also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Business Office as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)). See page 7 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

## Other Benefit Programs

Children of non-resident district employees may attend district schools tuition-free. District employees shall be admitted free to all schools sponsored events.

## Leaves and Absences

*Policy DEC, DECA, DECB*

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

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

- Local leave
- State Sick Leave
- Extended Leave

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate form or certification.

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

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

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

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

## Personal Leave

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of personal leave is equivalent to the number of hours per day in an employee's usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers. Personal leave may be used for two general purposes: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

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

**Discretionary.** Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a notice of the request 5 days in advance of the anticipated absence to his or her principal or supervisor. Discretionary personal leave will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

- A maximum 10% of campus employees in each job category will be permitted to take discretionary personal leave at the same time.
- Discretionary leave may not last more than 3 consecutive workdays, except with special approval for extenuating circumstances.
- Discretionary leave may not be taken on the following key days: the day before or the day after a school holiday; days scheduled for end of semester or end of year exams; days scheduled for STAAR tests or professional or staff development days.

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

## State Sick Leave

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. Sick leave can be used only in ½ day increments except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-schedule basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

If an employee uses more sick leave than he or she has earned, the cost of unearned sick leave will be deducted from the employee's next paycheck.

Sick leave may be used for the following reasons only:

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

## **Local Leave**

### ***Policy DEC (Local)***

Professional employees shall earn an additional two (equivalent) workdays of local sick leave each school year. Local sick leave shall be non-cumulative and shall be taken with no loss of pay.

A professional employee who has exhausted all earned sick leave benefits shall be permitted up to 15 days of extended sick leave to be used in cases involving a single prolonged illness or disability, including pregnancy-related disability for the employee or the immediate family. Extended sick leave shall be granted only upon the written recommendation of the employee's physician and subject to the approval of the Superintendent. The cost of a substitute shall be deducted from the daily pay of the employee whether or not a substitute is employed during the extended leave period.

For more detailed information concerning local leave policy, refer to local policy DEC.

## **Sick Leave Pool**

An employee who has exhausted all paid leave and who suffers from a catastrophic illness or injury or is absent due to the catastrophic illness or injury of a family member of the employee's immediate family may request the establishment of a sick leave pool, to which District employees may donate only state personal leave for use by the eligible employee. If the employee is unable to submit the request, a member of the employee's family or the employee's supervisor may submit the request to establish a sick leave pool.

The pool shall cease to exist when the employee no longer needs the leave for the purpose requested, uses the maximum number of days allowed under a pool, or exhausts all leave days donated to the sick leave pool.

1. In order for a sick leave pool to be implemented, the employee must submit a written request to the superintendent along with a medical certification.
2. The maximum number of days that may be donated by an employee is three.
3. The maximum number of days an eligible employee may receive through a sick leave pool is 120.
4. Days donated to the pool will be drawn at random. Any unused days will be returned to the person that donated the days.

All decisions regarding the establishment or implementation of the District's sick leave pool may be appealed in accordance with the DGBA (LOCAL), beginning with the Superintendent or designee.

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

**Basic Leave Entitlement.** The FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

**Military Family Leave Entitlements.** An eligible employee whose spouse, son, daughter or parent is on covered active duty or called to covered active duty status may use his or her 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered servicemember is (1) a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness\*; or (2) a veteran who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran, and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness.\*

**\*The FMLA definitions of “serious injury or illness” for current servicemembers and veterans are distinct from the FMLA definition of “serious health condition”.**

**Benefits and Protections.** During FML, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any “group health plan” on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FML, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FML leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

**Eligibility Requirements.** Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

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

**Definition of Serious Health Condition.** A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

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

**Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave.** Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FML. In order to use paid leave for FML, employees must comply with the district's normal paid leave policies.

**Employee Responsibilities.** Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FML-when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

**Employer Responsibilities.** Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under the FMLA. If they are eligible, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FML and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FML, the employer must notify the employee.

**Unlawful Acts by Employers.** The FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to: interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right protected under the FMLA; discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to the FMLA.

**Enforcement.** An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. The FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

*FMLA section 109 (29 U.S.C. § 2619) requires FMLA covered employers to post the text of this notice. Regulations 29 C.F.R. § 825.300 (a) may require additional disclosures.*

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

[www.wagehour.dol.gov](http://www.wagehour.dol.gov)

## **Local Family and Medical Leave FMLA Provisions**

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period beginning on the first duty day of the school year

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

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

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

**District Contact.** Employees that require FML or have questions should contact Debra Meyners for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Temporary Disability Leave**

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

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

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

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

## **Workers' Compensation Benefits**

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly income benefits *if the absence exceeds seven calendar days*.

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

## **Assault Leave**

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

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At the request of an employee, the district will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation benefits. Upon investigation the district may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

## **Bereavement Leave**

Use of state and/or local leave for death in immediate family shall not exceed three work days per occurrence, subject to the approval of the district.



## **Jury Duty**

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service and may keep any compensation they receive.

## **Other Court Appearances**

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

## **Military Leave**

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

**Reemployment after Military Leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active military duty as the member of the military force of any state (e.g., National Guard or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment within the time specified by law to the superintendent's office. In most cases, the length of military service cannot exceed five years.

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

## **Employee Relations and Communications**

### **Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include an employee appreciation banquet each year and service pins for extended years of service to EISD.

## **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, the central office and campus offices publish newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

EISD UPDATE is published monthly September through May and distributed via email and posted to website at [www.eustaceisd.net](http://www.eustaceisd.net).

## **Complaints and Grievances**

### *Policy DGBA*

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

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

### **PERSONNEL-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS: EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES**

This policy provides employees an orderly process for the prompt and equitable resolution of grievances when a concern has not been resolved. The Board intends that, whenever feasible, grievances be resolved at the lowest possible administrative level. This policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by Board policy or law.

### ***DEFINITIONS***

For purposes of this policy, "days" shall mean calendar days.

The terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning. A grievance under this policy may include, but shall not be limited to, any of the following:

1. Grievances concerning an employee's wages, hours, or conditions of work.
2. Specific allegations of unlawful discrimination in employment on the basis of sex (including allegations of sexual harassment), race, religion, national origin, age, or disability.
3. Specific allegations of unlawful discrimination or retaliation on the basis of the employee's exercise of constitutional rights.

4. "Whistleblower" complaints.

### ***OTHER REVIEW PROCESSES***

Procedures and information regarding sexual harassment by other employees are found at DHC (LOCAL) and information regarding federal nondiscrimination is found at DAA (LOCAL).

An employee's dismissal or nonrenewal may be the subject of a grievance under this policy only if the District does not otherwise provide for a review of the matter.

The following are governed by other review processes and are not subject to this policy:

1. Grievances regarding suspension of a contractual employee without pay: DF series.
2. Grievances regarding termination of an employment contract governed by Chapter 21 of the Education Code: DF series
3. Grievances against a peace officer: CKE
4. Grievances regarding instructional materials: EFA

### ***NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES***

The principal of each campus and other supervisory personnel shall ensure that employees under their supervision are informed of this policy.

### ***FREEDOM FROM RETALIATION***

Neither the Board nor the administration shall unlawfully retaliate against any employee for bringing a grievance under this policy. [See DG (LEGAL)]

### ***'WHISTLEBLOWER' COMPLAINTS***

Employees who allege adverse employment action in retaliation for reporting a violation of law to an appropriate authority shall initiate a grievance under this policy within 15 days after the date the alleged violation occurred or the employee first knew of the alleged violation.

The complaint shall first be filed in accordance with LEVEL TWO, below. Time lines for the employee and the District set out in this policy may be shortened to allow the Board to make a final decision within 60 days of the initiation of the complaint.

### ***GENERAL PROVISIONS***

A grievance must specify the individual harm alleged. An employee is prohibited from bringing separate or serial grievances regarding the same event or action. All time limits shall be strictly complied with unless modified by mutual consent. The party incurring them shall pay costs of any grievance.

### ***CONSOLIDATION***

When the Superintendent determines that two or more individual grievances are sufficiently similar in nature and remedy to permit their resolution through one proceeding, he or she may consolidate the grievances.

### ***DECISIONS***

Announcing a decision in the employee's presence constitutes communication of the decision.

### ***INITIATING GRIEVANCE***

Unless otherwise specified in policy, an employee shall initiate a grievance as provided at LEVEL ONE, below.

#### ***LEVEL ONE***

An employee who has a grievance shall request a conference with the principal or immediate supervisor by submitting the grievance in writing on a form provided by the District. The form must be filed within 15 days of the time the employee first knew or should have known of the event or series of events about which the employee is complaining.

The principal or supervisor shall hold the conference within seven days after receipt of the written request. The principal or supervisor shall have seven days following the conference within which to respond.

#### ***LEVEL TWO***

If the outcome of the conference at Level One is not to the employee's satisfaction or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may request a conference with the Superintendent or designee to discuss the grievance. The request shall be in writing on a form provided by the District and must be filed within seven days following receipt of a written response or, if no written response is received, within seven days of the response deadline.

The Superintendent or designee shall hold the conference within seven days after receipt of the written request. The Superintendent or designee shall have seven days following the conference within which to respond.

#### ***LEVEL THREE***

If the outcome of the conference at Level Two is not to the employee's satisfaction or if the time for a response has expired, the employee may submit to the Superintendent or designee a request to place the matter on the agenda of a future Board meeting. [See BE (LOCAL)] The request shall be in writing on a form provided by the District and must be filed within seven days following receipt of a written response or, if no written response is received, within seven days of the response deadline.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform the employee of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board with copies of the employee's original grievance, all responses, and any written documentation previously submitted by the employee and the administration. The Board is not required to consider documentation not previously submitted or issues not previously presented.

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits. The Board shall hear the grievance and may request a response from the administration. The District shall make an audiotape record of the Level Three proceeding before the Board.

The Board shall then make and communicate its decision orally or in writing at any time up to and including the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

***CLOSED MEETING***

If the grievance involves the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of the employee bringing the grievance, it may be heard by the Board in closed meeting unless the employee bringing the grievance requests that it be heard in public.

***EXCEPTION***

However, if the grievance involves a complaint or charge against another District employee or Board member, it shall be heard in closed meeting unless an open meeting is requested in writing by the employee or Board member against whom the complaint or charge is brought.

**EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT FORM: LEVEL ONE**

Any employee filing a complaint must fill out this form completely and submit it to his or her principal or immediate supervisor. All complaints will be processed in accordance with DGBA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) or any exceptions outlined therein.

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Position/campus \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Please state the date of the event or series of events causing the complaint.  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please state your complaint, including the individual harm alleged.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Please state specific facts of which you are aware to support your complaint (list in detail).  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Please state the remedy you seek for this complaint.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date submitted

# Employee Conduct and Welfare

## Standards of Conduct

### *Policy DH*

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

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

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent first learns of the incident. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency*, page 44 for additional information.

The *Educators' Code of Ethics*, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all district employees must adhere to, is reprinted below:

### **Texas Educators' Code of Ethics**

#### **Statement of Purpose**

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

## Professional Standards

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Standard 1.13** The educator shall not consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

### 2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

### **3. Ethical Conduct toward Students**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Standard 3.9** The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication.

Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- (i) the nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- (ii) the subject matter of the communication;
- (iii) whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
- (iv) whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship;
- (v) whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- (vi) whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

## ***EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT***

All District employees shall perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District policy, and ethical standard for professional educators. [See DH (EXHIBIT)]

All District personnel shall recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community and shall work cooperatively with others to serve the best interests of the District.

Employees wishing to express concern, complaints, or criticism shall do so through appropriate channels. [See DGBA (LOCAL)]

### ***EXCEPTION***

An employee who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician through a prescription specifically for that employee's use shall not be considered to have violated this policy.

### ***MORAL TURPITUDE***

Moral turpitude includes but is not limited to:

1. Dishonesty; fraud; deceit; theft; misrepresentation;
2. Deliberate violence;
3. Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor;
4. Felony possession, transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to possess, transfer, sell or distribute any controlled substance defined in Chapter 481 of the Health and Safety Code; acts constituting public intoxication, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, or disorderly conduct if two or more acts are committed within any 12-month period; or
5. Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code.

### ***DRESS AND GROOMING***

The dress and grooming of District employees shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by their supervisors and approved by the Superintendent. While performing the functions of their position, any personal body tattoos should be covered and not visible. No body piercing studs or rings are permitted (except earrings on women.)

### ***VIOLATIONS***

Employees shall comply with the standards of conduct set out in this policy and with any other policies, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards attendant to their status as District employees. Violations of any policies, regulations, and guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. [See DCD and DF series]

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

*Policies DH, DIA*

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

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor or appropriate district official. If the campus principal, supervisor, or district official is the subject of a complaint, the employee shall report the complaint directly to the superintendent. A complaint against the superintendent may be made directly to the board.

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

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/627?filename=DIA\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/627?filename=DIA(LOCAL).pdf)

## **Harassment of Students**

*Policies DH, DHB, FFG, FFH*

Sexual and other harassment of student by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See *Reporting suspected child abuse*, page 33 and *Bullying*, page 48 for additional information.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting an investigating harassment of students can be found in the following link: <http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/107905/>

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

*Policy DG, DH, DHB, FFG, GRA*

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying or registering facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Abuse is defined by SBEC and includes the following acts or omissions:

- Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;

- Causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or
- Sexual conduct harmful to a student's or minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.

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

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

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

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

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies.

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

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

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, which may be accessed at *Policy FFG* at [http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/107905/pol.cfm?DisplayPage=FFG\(LEGAL\).pdf](http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/107905/pol.cfm?DisplayPage=FFG(LEGAL).pdf). As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Employees are required to follow the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

## **Reporting Crime**

### *Policy DG*

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

## **Technology Resources**

### *Policy CQ*

The district's technology resources, including its networks, e-mail accounts, devices connected to its networks, and all district-owned devices used on or off school property, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district.
- Does not unduly burden the district's computer or network resources
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the technology resources are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

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

## **Personal Use of Electronic Media**

### *Policy DH*

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the

employee's page, and for web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

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

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:
  - Confidentiality of student records. [See Policy FL]
  - Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]
  - Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses. [See Policy GBA]
  - Copyright law [See Policy CY]
  - Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]

This does not preclude employees from setting up and/or using an account to share information among other professionals, parents, or community members. The district encourages, rather than discourages, the sharing of professional dialogue that enhances one's learning and that furthers communication with parents and community members. Employees are subject to the confidentiality criteria stated above.

See *Use of Electronic Media with Students*, below, for regulations on employee communication with students through electronic media.

## **Use of Electronic Media with Students**

### *Policy DH*

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the district. The employee must comply with the provisions outlined below. All other employees are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the district through electronic media.

An employee is not subject to these provisions to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student. For example, an employee may have a relationship with a niece or nephew, a student who is the child of an adult friend, a student who is a friend of the employee's child, or a member or participant in the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization.

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

- *Electronic media* includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing websites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn). *Electronic media* also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and web-based applications.
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee’s personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*: however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

An employee who uses electronic media to communicate with students shall observe the following:

- The employee may use any form of electronic media **except** text messaging. Only a teacher, trainer, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility.
- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including:
  - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
  - Copyright law [See Policy CY]
- Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DHB]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

An employee may request an exception from one or more of the limitations above by submitting a written request to his or her immediate supervisor.

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

Policy DBAA

Employees may be subject to a review of their criminal history record information at any time during employment. National criminal history checks based on an individual's fingerprints, photo, and other identification will be conducted on certain employees and entered into the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Clearinghouse. This database provides the district and SBEC with access to an employee's current national criminal history and updates to the employee's subsequent criminal history.

## **Employee Arrests and Convictions**

*Policy DH*

An employee must notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any felony, and any of the other offenses listed below:

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

Moral turpitude includes the following:

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

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

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

*Policies DH, DI*

Eustace ISD is committed to maintaining an alcohol- and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas



Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The district's policy regarding employee drug use follows:

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/627?filename=DH\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/627?filename=DH(LOCAL).pdf)

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/627?filename=DI\(XHIBIT\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/627?filename=DI(XHIBIT).pdf)

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

*Policy DH, GKA, FNCD*

State law prohibits smoking, using tobacco products, or e-cigarettes on district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off school property. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking while inside the vehicle. Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in all school buildings.

## **Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

*Policy CAA*

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets, including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

## **Conflict of Interest**

*Policy DBD*

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

- A personal financial interest
- A business interest

- Any other obligation or relationship
- Non-school employment

Employees should contact their supervisor for additional information.

## **Gifts and Favors**

*Policy DBD*

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

## **Copyrighted Materials**

*Policy EFE*

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

## **Associations and Political Activities**

*Policy DGA*

The district will not directly or indirectly discourage employees from participating in political affairs or require any employee to join any group, club, committee, organization, or association. Employees may join or refuse to join any professional association or organization.

An individual's employment will not be affected by membership or a decision not to be a member of any employee organization that exists for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

Use of district resources including work time for political activities is prohibited.

## **Charitable Contributions**

### *Policy DG*

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

## **Safety**

### *Policy CK series*

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the district's safety officer at 903-425-5130.

## **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

### *Policies FNCG, GKA*

Employees, other than peace officers, including those with a license to carry a concealed handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises, which includes buildings or portions of buildings.

## **Visitors In the Workplace**

### *Policy GKC*

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

Each campus will issue a Raptor ID badge to any authorized visitor. This badge is to be prominently displayed at all times while the visitor is on campus.

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

*Policy CKA*

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

## **Pest Control Treatment**

*Policies CLB, DI*

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

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

## **Other Topics**

### **PHONE USE**

Each employee has a code for long distance calling. Limit your phone calls whenever possible. Do not give your code to students or other employees.

## **General Procedures**

### **Bad Weather Closing**

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

- KCKL (95.9 fm) or visit [www.kcklklvq.com](http://www.kcklklvq.com)
- WBAP (820 am) or visit [www.wbap.com](http://www.wbap.com)
- NBC, Channel 5 or visit [www.nbc5i.com](http://www.nbc5i.com)

## **Emergencies**

*Policies CKC, CKD*

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

## **Purchasing Procedures**

*Policy CH*

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the business department on an official district purchase order (PO) form with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a PO number. The district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact the Business Manager for additional information on purchasing procedures.

## **Name and Address Changes**

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

## **Personnel Records**

*Policy DBA, GBA*

Most district records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. Employees may choose to have the following information withheld:

- Address
- Phone number, including personal cell phone number
- Information that reveals whether they have family members
- Personal e-mail address

The choice to not allow public access to this information may be made at any time by submitting a written request to the business office. New or terminating employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public.

## **Building Use**

*Policies DGA, GKD*

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

## **Termination of Employment**

### **Resignations**

*Policy DFE*

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

The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in *Reports Texas Education Agency on page 45*

**Noncontract employees.** Noncontract employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to immediate supervisor at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

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

*Policies DFAA, DFAB, DFBA, DFBB, DFD, DFF, DFFA, DFFB, DFFC*

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year or according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be non-renewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The time lines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the time lines and procedures can be found in the DF series policies that are provided to employees or available online.

## **Dismissal of Noncontract Employees**

*Policy DCD*

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See *Complaints and grievances*, page 24.)

## **Exit Interviews and Procedures**

*Policies DC and CY*

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the district. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on his or her employment experience. All district keys, books, property, including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

## **Reports to Texas Education Agency**

*Policy DF, DHB*

The dismissal of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA whenever the termination is based on a determination that the employee was involved in any the following:

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

The superintendent is also required to notify TEA when a certified employee resigns and there is evidence the educator engaged in the conduct listed above.

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

## Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance to the court and the individual receiving the support ( Texas Family Code §§8.210, 158.211). Notice of the following must be sent to the court and support recipient:

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

## Vehicles Owned By the District

In order to have access to a district vehicle, an employee must complete and sign an annual disclosure about any restrictions on license and any citations received. If there is not a form on file, an employee cannot operate a school vehicle.

## Student Issues

### Equal Educational Opportunities

*Policies FB, FFH*

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on sex, including sexual harassment should be directed to the district Title IX coordinator, Dr. Coy Holcombe, Superintendent. Questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should be directed to the district ADA/Section 504 coordinator, Janice Beasley, Assistant Superintendent. All other concerns relating to discrimination based on any other reasons should be directed to the Superintendent.

### Student Records

*Policy FL*

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

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights



- The student: The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student’s records before this time.
- School officials with legitimate education interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should contact:

Primary School	Dianne Shaffer, Principal	425-5191
Intermediate School	Robert Reeve, Principal	425-5181
Middle School	Truman Oakley, Principal	425-5171
High School	Chris Whorton, Principal	425-5161

## **Parent and Student Complaints**

### *Policy FNG*

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

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

## **Administering Medication to Students**

### *Policy FFAC*

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

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

### *Policy FFAC*

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

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

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

## **Dietary supplements**

*Policies DH, FFAC*

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

## **Student Conduct and Discipline**

*Policies in the FN series and FO series*

Students are expected to follow the campus rules, classroom rules, and rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by the district. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal.

## **Student Attendance**

*Policies in the FEB*

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

## **Bullying**

*Policy FFI*

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to the campus principal. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is reprinted below:

<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/107905/>

## **Hazing**

### *Policy in the FNCC*

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

\*\*\*\*\*END OF DOCUMENT\*\*\*\*\*