

# **Randolph County Schools**

## ***Employee Handbook***

***2020-2021 School Year***



***Dr. Tangela Madge, Superintendent***

***Randolph County Schools***

***98 School Dr.***

***Cuthbert, GA 39840***



## WELCOME!!

## SECTION

# 1

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! Thank you in advance for your service and dedication to Randolph County's children and Randolph County School District. We consider ourselves a district whereby all students can become lifelong learners equipped with the appropriate skills and competencies to be contributing members of society.

Whether the contribution is in the classroom, in transporting or feeding students so they are ready to learn, in ensuring clean and safe learning environments, or in managing District resources, *those* efforts are critical to achieving our shared goal. So, while our job descriptions may vary, our focus is the same: **student success!!**

With the continued dedication and support of all our employees, we will move closer to the goal of excellence in all that we do for students every day in every classroom throughout the district.



## UPDATES FOR 2020-2021

### Required Ethics Training for All Employees

**All** employees will be required to complete the annual training on ethics and professional standards at Randolph County Schools. Completion of the annual training is mandatory for all employees.



## Table of Contents

Welcome	1
<b>UPDATES FOR 2020-2021</b>	1
Required Ethics Training for All Employees	1
<b>Introduction</b>	5
About This Handbook	5
About Randolph County Schools	5
Administration – Mission, Vision & Beliefs	6
Randolph County Board of Education	6
Strategic Plan 2017-2022	7
Equal Employment Opportunity	7
<b>Our Shared Values</b>	8
Ethics	8
Corporal Punishment	8
Drug-free Workplace	9
Smoking	9
Falsification of Records	10
Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation	10
Sexual Misconduct & Harassment	10
Sexual Misconduct	10
Sexual Harassment	10
Child Abuse and Neglect	11
Supervision of Students	11
Employee Organizations	11
<b>Complaints &amp; Due Process</b>	12
Complaint Policy Purpose	12
What is a Complaint/Grievance?	12
Before Filing a Formal Complaint/Grievance	12
<b>Beginning Employment at Randolph County Schools</b>	13
Required Documents	13
Certification Information	13

# Randolph County Schools Employee Handbook



<b>Working in Randolph County Schools</b>	14
Work Year	14
Workday Schedules & Punctuality	14
Emergency Closings	14
Dress Code	15
Records Management/Retention	15
Subpoenas	15
Electronic Media Usage	15
Social Media Usage	16
Unauthorized Tape Recordings	16
Infectious Diseases	16
Weapons	17
Care of the Randolph County School Work Environment	17
Arrests and Convictions	17
<b>Pay &amp; Benefits</b>	18
Pay Dates	18
Paid Holidays	18
Direct Deposit	18
Payroll Deductions	18
Salary Level	18
Summer Salary	18
Annual Open Enrollment	19
Flex Plan	19
Insurance Choices	19
Workers' Compensation	19
Retirement	20
<b>Leaves of Absence</b>	21
Sick Leave/ Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	21
Maternity, Paternity & Child Adoption Leave	22
Personal Leave	22
Annual Leave/Vacation	22
Bereavement Leave	23

# Randolph County Schools Employee Handbook



Educational Leave	23
Military, Government Service & Political Campaign Leave	23
Jury Duty	24
Leave for Employee Representatives	24
Disputes Regarding Leave Balances	24
<b>Your Personnel Records</b>	25
Annual Evaluation	25
Change in Job Status	25
Change in Personal Status	25
Reduction in Force	26
Records to Retain after Separation	26
Confidentiality and Access to Personnel Records	26
Employment Verification	26
<b>Ending Employment with Randolph County Schools</b>	28
Retirement	28
Resignation	28
Separation Process	29
Employment Acknowledgement	29



## SECTION 2

### INTRODUCTION

#### About This Handbook

The *Randolph County Schools Employee Handbook* is designed to communicate the Randolph County Schools' (RCS) major policies and procedures. The most current version of the *Randolph County Schools Employee Handbook* can be found in PDF format on the District website. This document is current as of the date noted in the lower left-hand corner of each page.

RCS used several resources to develop this handbook. Resources include federal and state laws, Georgia Board of Education rules, and Randolph County Board of Education policies. Throughout this document, there will be provided for reference blue, underlined hyperlinks to the [online policy manual](#) and other useful information sources. Follow the links to learn more.

If there are questions:

- Employees should ask the immediate supervisor.
- Follow the hyperlinks to the online policy manual throughout this handbook.

The contents of this handbook are intended to provide a brief overview of the most referenced policies. RCS reserves the right to revise, expand, or discontinue this information at any time. Only the Superintendent and the RCBOE may approve changes to Randolph County Schools' policies.

If there is a conflict between the information in this handbook and any law, rule, policy, or regulation of the United States, State of Georgia, Georgia Department of Education, Randolph County Board of Education, the law, rule, policy, or regulation is the controlling authority.

#### About Randolph County Schools

The Randolph County School District is located in a rural southwest Georgia community in Randolph County. The estimated population of Randolph County is approximately 7,719. The county consists of Cuthbert (county seat), Shellman, Benevolence, and Coleman. The school district also serves high school students from neighboring Clay County. The Randolph County School District is a Charter System, and all three schools are governed by local governance teams.

The Randolph County School District operates three school-wide Title I schools and a Pre-K Head Start Program. The school district has approximately 839 students in grades K-12. The district consists of one elementary school (grades K-5), one middle school (grades 6-8), and one high school (grades 9-12).



## **Mission, Vision and Beliefs**

The Randolph County School System will provide a high-quality education in a safe environment for all students. All stakeholders will work together to ensure that students develop the necessary skills to graduate, pursue higher education and become productive citizens in an ever-changing workforce. The Randolph County School System will become an empowering learning environment that provides every student with a 21st century education that ensures accountability, global workforce readiness and academic success.

## **We Believe:**

- All schools should be accountable for improving student achievement.
- All students must be prepared for a knowledge-based, technologically rich and culturally diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- All students can learn; but they learn in different ways and at different rates.
- A safe and secure environment is essential for teaching and learning.
- Learning is a shared responsibility and should take place in the home, at school and in the community.

## **District Goals**

- Strategic Goal I: Ensure student mastery of rigorous Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Strategic Goal II: Promote and encourage positive student behavior.
- Strategic Goal III: Provide targeted professional learning to all staff.
- Strategic Goal IV: Increase opportunities for stakeholder involvement.
- Strategic Goal V: Centralize the district's financial procedures and processes.

## **Randolph County Board of Education**

The Randolph County Board of Education is an elected, five-member body, charged with overseeing the management of the Randolph County Schools. The Board has many responsibilities; however, its main functions are to approve the budget, to adopt policy, and to hire and evaluate the performance of the superintendent.

Five members are elected to represent the five educational districts of Randolph County. Board members are:

**District 1**  
**Henry Cook**

**District 2**  
**Dymple McDonald**

**District 3**  
**Jack Fowler**

**District 4**  
**Ramel Thomas**

**District 5**  
**Rodney Burks**

The Board meets on a regular basis throughout the year. Board meetings are held on every fourth Thursday of the month. Meetings are held at the Randolph County Board office in the J.B. Smith Cafeteria.



## **Strategic Plan 2017-2022**

In December 2016, the Randolph County Board of Education approved [a five-year strategic plan for RCS](#). The plan spans from 2017-2022 and the five focus areas are:

1. Academic Instruction
2. Professional Growth and Development
3. Safe and Orderly Schools
4. Stakeholder Involvement
5. Operations and Fiscal Management

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

RCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, or any legally protected status in any of its employment practices, educational programs, services, or activities. For details, please refer to [policy GAAA Equal Employment Opportunity](#).





## SECTION 3

### OUR SHARED VALUES

#### Ethics

An effective school system requires employees of integrity, high ideals and expectations, and sensitivity to others in the school environment. Employees are responsible for understanding Randolph County Schools' ethical standards and applying those standards in daily activities. All employees are expected to:

- Make decisions based on what is best for students in all cases.
- Maintain honest, equitable, professional relationships with students, parents, and other staff members.
- Observe local, state, and federal laws, policies, rules, and regulations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of research and competence in state-of-the-art practices in your field of expertise.
- Maintain confidentiality of privileged information.
- Support cooperation between the school and the community. Avoid conflicts of interest and avoid giving and receiving improper gifts.
- Refrain from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views, or propaganda of any kind.
- Safeguard school property, equipment, and materials.
- Implement board policies in a spirit of good faith.
- Comply with appropriate professional ethical standards.

Educators and other certificated employees should also refer to the Code of Ethics for Georgia Educators from the [Professional Standards Commission](#) for additional ethical expectations.

#### Corporal Punishment

In RCS, corporal punishment refers to disciplinary action that is physical in nature and delivered by school administrators as punishment for some type of student misbehavior. The only form of corporal punishment used is: Paddling (performed with a paddle only).

Corporal punishment is only delivered in the principal's office and must have an accompanying discipline referral. The referral contains information verifying the type of punishment allowed (e.g., paddling), the number of strokes that can be given, who among the school staff is authorized to deliver the punishment

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and whether parents must first give their permission before punishment can be delivered to their child. These guidelines help school personnel to keep their punishment consistent and in line with school policy and also informs parents of what their child might incur if their actions merit discipline.

RCS also offers parents the option to 'opt-out' of the corporal system. At RCHS, students are offered a choice of whether to submit to corporal punishment or receive an alternate form of discipline, such as suspension or detention.

In accordance with policy [JDA: Corporal Punishment](#), reasonable discipline may include the administration of corporal punishment to a student, subject to the following requirements:

1. Corporal punishment shall not be excessive or unduly severe.
2. Corporal punishment shall never be used as a first line of punishment for misbehavior unless the pupil was informed beforehand that specific misbehavior could occasion its use; provided however, that corporal punishment may be employed as a first line of punishment for those acts of misconduct which are so antisocial or disruptive in nature as to shock the conscience.
3. Corporal punishment must be administered by certificated personnel in the presence of a principal or designee, who must be informed beforehand and in the presence of the pupil, the reason for the punishment. The certificated personnel and the principal or designee must be employees of the Randolph County Board of Education.
4. The principal or teacher who administered corporal punishment must provide the child's parent, upon request, a written explanation of the reasons for the punishment and the name of the principal or designee who was present; provided however, that such an explanation shall not be used as evidence in any subsequent civil action brought as a result of the corporal punishment.
5. Corporal punishment shall not be administered to a child whose parents or legal guardian has filed, with the principal of the school a statement objecting to its use or a statement from a medical doctor licensed in Georgia, stating that it is detrimental to the child's mental or emotional stability.

## **Drug-Free Workplace**

RCS is a drug-free environment. Drugs, other than prescription medications in their original containers, are prohibited on district property.

In accordance with the federal Drug-Free School and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 and Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, it is unlawful for any RCS employee to manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use alcohol or a controlled substance, marijuana, or dangerous drug in the workplace at any time. Additionally, employees who seek treatment for a work-related injury through the district's workers' compensation insurance will be subject to a drug and alcohol test.

You have a duty to report to your immediate supervisor anyone who possesses or uses a controlled substance. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

For details, please refer to policy [GAMA Safe and Drug-free Workplace](#).



## Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on any Randolph County Schools property as well as in any vehicle owned or insured by RCS. All employees, students, and visitors are prohibited from smoking on District property and in District vehicles. RCS discourages using tobacco or nicotine in any form.

For details, please refer to policy [GAMA Safe and Drug-Free Workplace](#).

## Falsification of Records

As with the job application, if an employee willfully submits false information on any records including, but not limited to, attendance records for an employee or student, records related to leave or workers' compensation, and registration/enrollment records for a child or another student, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Randolph County Schools prohibits discrimination, including harassment, based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, or any legally protected status. Acts of discrimination or harassment committed by any RCS employee are violations of this policy and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Randolph County Schools prohibits retaliation against any person who has reported in good faith and/or cooperated with an investigation of discrimination or harassment. Acts of retaliation in violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action being taken against an offending employee up to and including termination. For details, please refer to policy [GAEB Harassment](#).

## Sexual Misconduct & Harassment

**Sexual Misconduct** is any unlawful sexual act; any solicitation of any unlawful sexual act, whether written, verbal, or physical; any act of child abuse, as defined by law; any solicitation, encouragement, or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student; or any sexual contact with a student. "Romantic relationship" includes dating a student or otherwise being involved in an inappropriate social relationship or any act of unlawful sexual harassment as the law defines.

**Sexual Harassment** is a specific form of sexual misconduct. While its definition depends upon the situation, it may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal harassment or abuse
- Subtle pressure for sexual activity
- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexually motivated touching
- Offensive or unwelcome sexual advances or propositions
- Unwelcome, intentional touching of intimate body parts
- Graphic or degrading verbal comments about you or your physical attributes
- Display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cards, or letters
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures



- Off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature
- Demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or obvious threats concerning your employment or educational status.

Such conduct is unacceptable in RCS, violating Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Any employee, contractor, or consultant who believes that he or she has been exposed to unwelcomed sexual or sex-based misconduct, should report the alleged act immediately to a principal, assistant principal, director, executive director, and/or another senior-level administrator. Any employee receiving a report of possible sexual misconduct or harassment must *immediately* report the offenses to his or her immediate supervisor. Concerns will be reviewed appropriately and recommendations for the appropriate disciplinary or corrective action related to sexual harassment incidences. Retaliation against a complainant for reporting a sexual harassment incident is prohibited.

For details, please refer to policy [GAEB Harassment](#).

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

To protect the welfare for all Randolph County Schools students, all employees and other persons working with students on behalf of the Randolph County Schools, including contractors, consultants and volunteers must report all cases of suspected child abuse and neglect on behalf of children under age 18. Employees are immune from any civil or criminal liability that might result when reporting these cases. The assigned school counselor or school principal can assist in filing a report.

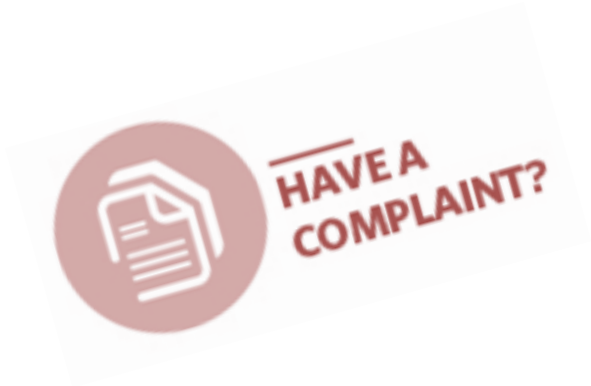
For more information, see policy [JGI Child Abuse or Neglect](#).

## **Supervision of Students**

Students should be under assigned adult responsibility when they are in school, traveling under school auspices or engaging in school-sponsored activities. Employees assigned to students are expected to make decisions based on what is best for students, including providing for the safety of students in their charge.

## **Employee Organizations**

All employees have the right to freely organize, join and participate in any professional association or labor organization of the employees' choice. The district does not discriminate against employees who choose to participate in any professional association or labor organization. The Randolph County Board of Education also does not discriminate against any institution for any grievance, complaint or proceeding.



## **SECTION 4**

### **COMPLAINTS & DUE PROCESS**

#### **Complaint Policy Purpose**

Randolph County Schools has a [complaints and grievance policy \(GAE\)](#) to help resolve work-related problems that may arise.

The Superintendent/designee has developed specific procedures to assist employees in sharing a concern.

Grievances are individual in nature and must be brought by the individual employee. The Board shall not hear grievances or complaints concerning simple disagreement or dissatisfaction with a personnel action.

An employee should consider informally discussing any problem with the immediate supervisor before filing a formal grievance. *Do not delay*—grievances must be filed within 10 days of the incident.



# HUMAN RESOURCES

## SECTION 5

### BEGINNING EMPLOYMENT IN RANDOLPH COUNTY SCHOOLS

#### Required Documents

The Office of Human Resources (HR) requires the following documents from all employees prior to the first date of employment:

- An Employment Eligibility Verification Form from Human Resources to establish your right to work in the U.S. (when applicable);
- A photo ID;
- Appropriate certificates/licenses.

#### Certification Information

If assigned to a position that requires certification or licensure, an employee must secure and maintain a valid certificate or license from the appropriate authority. For details, please contact the [Georgia Professional Standards Commission](#) at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com).



## SECTION 6

### WORKING IN RANDOLPH COUNTY SCHOOLS

#### Work Year

All regular, full-time RCS employees work either 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, or 240 days. The official, contractual academic year (or work year) and payroll schedule for each of these schedules is as follows:

##### 180, 190, 200, 210, 220 Day Employees

The required working dates for each work year are based on the board-approved student calendar and are posted each year on the [district website/ HR](#).

The annual salary for each of these work calendars is divided evenly into 12 payments over 12 months.

##### Annual Duty (230/240 Days)

The work year begins July 1 and goes through June 30 of the following year. This schedule coincides with the Board's fiscal year. The annual salary is divided evenly into 12 payments over 12 months.

#### Workday Schedules & Punctuality

The *minimum* on-premises workday for all full-time employees is 7.5 hours. The 7.5-hour workday for teachers and paraprofessionals includes lunch. The 7.5-hour workday for all other employees does *not* include lunch. Each employee's work schedule is set by the supervisor based on the needs of the work site.

Whatever the assigned job is, please be on time and ready to work upon arrival. Being on time is critical to the safety and success of students and for the smooth operations of the school system.

#### Emergency Closings

Randolph County Schools cooperates fully with local emergency management preparedness authorities for natural and man-made disasters. The Superintendent may close individual schools or all schools in the event of abnormal conditions, hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the safety, welfare, or health of students or employees. In cases of emergency closures, some critical employees, primarily in the Maintenance and Operations Department, may be required to report to work.

Tune in to the [RCS Website](#), or [RCS Facebook page](#) for news about emergency closings.



## Dress Code

All RCS employees serve as role models for the students and as representatives of Randolph County Schools. Consistent with these roles, all employees, volunteers, and substitutes shall dress professionally and appropriately for their job responsibilities and adhere to the established dress code rules which set a positive standard for an effective learning environment. Supervisors will determine appropriate and inappropriate dress for the work activities and work site.

## Records Management/Retention

Each employee is responsible for maintaining, managing, and producing public records related to his/her work according to state and federal laws and Randolph County Schools policy. Records may be maintained electronically or in hard copy. When no longer needed, records must be destroyed in an appropriate manner—records containing sensitive information must be shredded, and we encourage recycling whenever possible. Records destruction must be logged, and these logs must be maintained according to the retention schedule.

## Subpoenas

A subpoena is an enforceable court order requiring a person to appear at a certain time and place to provide testimony in court or by deposition. Some subpoenas require the production of records and other tangible things. *If an employee fails to comply with a proper subpoena, the employee could be held in contempt of court; so, in the event of receiving a subpoena, employees should make it a top priority.* If an employee receives a subpoena related to RCS business (e.g., students, personnel, etc.), he or she should immediately inform the assigned building or worksite administrator and work with the administrator to determine (1) what information is being sought by the subpoena, (2) whether any student/family or employee privacy rights are at issue, and (3) the type and duration of leave that may be required in order to comply with the subpoena. Contact the Human Resources Department at **(229) 732-2106** with questions.

## Electronic Media Usage

Any electronic activity conducted via the RCS network or using RCS computers—including the RCS e-mail account—is subject to inspection and monitoring. There should not be any expectation of privacy. Electronic systems should primarily be used for instructional and administrative support. *Limited* personal use is permitted. Use of RCS Internet and technology resources is a privilege that may be revoked at any time. *If an employee violates the national, state, local and system provisions regarding the use of electronic resources, the employee will lose access to the electronic network and/or face disciplinary actions.*

Examples of inappropriate use include accessing or sending offensive materials or messages, including sexually explicit, defamatory, abusive, obscene, or profane images/messages; racial or ethnic slurs; or threats. Other examples include messages or images promoting illegal activities such as controlled substances, partisan political activities, or sectarian religion.

For details, please refer to [policy IFBG Internet Acceptable Use](#).





## **Social Media Usage**

Social media is a useful tool for effectively communicating with stakeholders about the work of the district. “Social Media” is defined as all social media activities by district employees, including but not limited to the use of blogs, forums, social networking sites and any other web-based communications on publicly available sites. Social media activities related to the work of the district are encouraged to take place in a classroom or district office setting so long as such activities do not detract from the employee’s effectiveness or other job duties.

The use of social media, even off duty and off premises, must not violate any Board policies or otherwise interfere with the employee’s performance of duties. The Board expects all employees to exercise professionalism and good judgment in any social media activities, district-related as well as non-district related. Furthermore, any social media activities must comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), copyright, trademark, defamation, privacy, securities, and any other applicable laws and regulations. Any communication which is unprofessional or prohibited in any other form is also unprofessional or prohibited on social media. Employees should be mindful that any social media post, even from an employee’s personal, non-district account, may be interpreted as being made on behalf of the district.

For details, please refer to [policy IFBG Internet Acceptable Use](#).

## **Unauthorized Tape Recordings**

Conversations and communications generally should be free and open among employees. So, the employee and/or anyone acting on said employee’s behalf may only use audio or video to record or reproduce any conversation among employees while on RCS premises and/or while conducting RCS business if the employee receives the expressed, written consent of everyone engaged in the conversation or communication. RCS may record public presentations, board meetings, hearings, grievances, procurement activities and official investigations.

## **Infectious Diseases**

If an employee has a medical condition that poses a substantial health or safety threat to the school or workplace, the employee must leave the premises until that employee’s attendance on duty no longer poses such a threat. RCS relies upon public health and medical experts’ advice to determine when to require the removal and permit for an employee to return to work.

## **Weapons**

The Board shall act forcefully to control anyone who brings weapons of any kind to school or school-sponsored activities. Anyone who unlawfully brings weapons to school or school functions shall be subject to prosecution under the provisions of the law. RCS employees who violate this policy are also subject to disciplinary action.

For details, please refer to [policy JCDAE: Weapons](#).



## Care of RCS Work Environment

Please follow these guidelines from the Facilities Services Department to help maintain the cleanliness and safety of all workspaces.

- Refrain from dragging furniture and file cabinets across floors. Please request assistance or use dollies.
- Please use only wall mounting tape and tabs to affix materials to the walls. Avoid using masking, packing or duct tape, staples, and glue in direct contact with all wall surfaces.
- Windows in classrooms should only be opened in emergency situations.
- Exterior doors should never be propped or left open.
- Breakfast in the classroom: ensure that all debris is placed in the appropriate container and placed in the hallway after breakfast. Custodians will not enter the classroom once the school day has begun to discard breakfast trash.
- Refrain from storing food items and/or food containers in desks and closets. This reduces the need for pest services in the building.
- Refrain from disposing of any food items in the classroom sinks.
- Recycling: separate all debris from paper and cardboard and place in the appropriate containers. Break down all empty boxes and place them in the designated recycle areas.

## Arrests and Convictions

Any RCS employee who is arrested for any offense must report the arrest to the superintendent within twenty-four (24) hours or the next business day, whichever is greater.

Within twenty-four (24) hours or the next business day, whichever is greater, an RCS employee must report to the superintendent any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to pre-trial diversion intervention program, or entering a plea of guilty or nolo contendere for any criminal offense, other than a minor traffic violation (driving under the influence (DUI) is not minor and must be reported).

Failure to appropriately report an arrest or conviction will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.



## SECTION 7

### PAY & BENEFITS

#### Pay Dates

All RCS employees are paid on the last day of each month. If the last day of the month falls on a weekend, employees are paid on the Friday prior to the weekend.

#### Direct Deposit

All payroll checks are directly deposited into employees' bank accounts unless otherwise specified by the employee.

#### Payroll Deductions

The Payroll Department must deduct the following items from an employee's paycheck:

- Federal and state income taxes;
- Medicare tax of 1.45 percent of an employee's earnings if RCS hired the employee after March 31, 1986, or if the employee work part time (daily or hourly); and
- Pension contributions, depending upon your employment status.

#### Salary Level

Employees will be placed on the appropriate board-approved salary schedule based on their years of creditable and verified experience and degree level, where applicable. Please refer to the [RCS Human Resources Compensation Web Page](#) and the [2021 Salary Schedule](#) for information about salary schedules, positions by grades, and compensation guidelines.

#### Summer Salary

The pay for full-time employees on 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230 and 240 day schedules who are present for the full contract year is prorated in 24 installments throughout the year including the summer months. Summer pay will also be prorated for 201, 202, 211, and 231 day employees who are present for at least one-quarter of the school year if they are:



- Employed after the beginning of the regular school year;
- Separated from the school system after the regular school year ends; or
- Absent from duty without pay during any part of the required period of employment.

## Annual Open Enrollment

Each employee must re-enroll in the flexible benefits program annually. *An employee will lose benefits for the following calendar year if the employee fails to complete open enrollment. Pay close attention to RCS e-mail notifications in October for instructions to enroll.* The Employee Benefits Department will provide assistance with open enrollment.

## Flex Plan

If an employee works full time, the employee can pay for certain employee health plan benefits on a tax-free basis. This is called the Flexible Benefit Plan or Flex Plan. RCS announces open enrollment for the Flex Plan each school year. Participation with Flex Plan is voluntary. The plan allows employees to reduce taxable income by the amount of premiums paid for certain benefits such as:

- Health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance

If an employee has a tax-deferred supplemental retirement plan, the maximum payroll deduction for tax-deferred retirement savings may be reduced. Please contact the Lincoln Financial Group representative for details.

For additional details, please contact the Human Resources Department at **(229) 732-2106**.

## Insurance Choices

Randolph County Schools currently provides various insurance options, including health insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, dependent life insurance, vision care insurance, disability insurance, additional voluntary disability insurance, supplemental plans, dependent daycare accounts and medical spending accounts.

## Worker's Compensation

If an employee is hurt on the job, the employee must report the injury immediately to the employee's immediate supervisor.

The department head will file a detailed injury report. Risk Management must receive this report within 48 hours of the injury. The employee's personnel file will contain a copy of the full report.

If the State Workers' Compensation Act covers an employee's injury, the employee is eligible for income benefits if the injury causes an absence of seven (7) workdays. The employee can use earned sick days or annual leave during the seven-day absence.



Whenever workers' compensation income benefits are payable, the amount will meet the state workers' compensation guidelines.

## **Retirement**

Please refer to "Ending Employment with RCS" on page 28 for more information.



## 21



Leave Act leave. The employee must use accrued sick leave for the duration of the FMLA absence until it is exhausted. For leaves in the first year of a child's life, in cases where both parents are RCS employees, the parents may use a total of 12 weeks of FMLA leave.

If an employee experiences unpaid leave during the school year for twenty (20) days or more, the employee's salary for the remainder of the year will be recalculated based on the number of days to be worked until the end of the school year. *This means that the salary after returning from unpaid leave will be less per pay period than before the leave began.* The Compensation Team will notify the employee of the change after returning to active duty.

For details about FMLA, see policy [GARH: Employee Leaves and Absences](#).

## **Maternity, Paternity & Child Adoption Leave**

Please refer to "Sick Leave/Family and Medical Leave Act" on pages 21-22.

## **Personal Leave**

In July of every school year, up to three days of accumulated sick leave will be transferred into the employee's personal leave accrual. Employees must have more than three (3) days of accumulated sick leave on June 30 to be able to transfer sick leave into personal leave. The employee may use this leave to be absent from duties for personal reasons. There is a three (3) day maximum accrual/usage of personal leave each school year.

For planned absences, employees must complete and submit time off requests to the principal or department head as soon as possible. Please note that if a leave request coincides with a critical workday, the supervisor may deny leave. For unplanned emergencies, such as car trouble or a burst pipe at home, the employee must inform their immediate supervisor as soon as possible when being tardy or absent. The supervisor may ask for documentation of the employee's emergency upon return. *Failure to follow the worksite's reporting procedures may result in unexcused, unpaid absences and discipline, up to termination.*

## **Annual Leave/Vacation**

Annual duty (230/240-day) employees and employees who worked a 231-day assignment before May 13, 1986, and continue to do so without interruption, are eligible to accrue annual leave up to 30 days. School-based employees may have restricted times when annual leave will be approved due to school schedules. Non-school-based employees may use your annual leave at any time during the year if your supervisor and division or department head approves it. You must complete and submit your time off request through Kronos to your principal or department head as soon as possible. Keep in mind that if your leave request coincides with a critical workday, your supervisor may deny the leave.

Upon your separation from RCS employment, RCS will pay you for your accumulated, unused annual leave. RCS will also pay you for your accumulated leave when you change from a position earning annual leave to a position ineligible to earn or use annual leave.



## **Bereavement Leave**

If an immediate family member or a relative who lives with the employee dies, the Principal or Supervisor may authorize the use of sick leave for a maximum of three (3) sick leave days per bereavement episode. The immediate family includes husband, wife, father, mother, grandparent, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild of the employee and these relatives-in-law. If requesting to be absent for more than the allowed sick leave, the employee must request personal or annual leave.

To request sick leave for bereavement, complete and submit the time off request to the principal or department head as soon as possible along with written documentation stating the relationship with the deceased.

For more information, contact Human Resources at **(229) 732-2106**.

## **Educational Leave**

To take an unpaid leave of absence for work-related or other study, employees must meet the following conditions:

- Be a regular, full-time employee with at least three years of continuous service.
- Request the leave in writing to the Absence Management Team with an explanation of the manner in which the study will enhance the employee's work with the district.
- Provide proof of enrollment from the accredited postsecondary institution.
- Provide proof of successful completion for each term the employee is on approved educational leave.

Upon return from educational leave, the superintendent may assign the employee to a similar, but not necessarily identical, position and status as the previously held position if a position is available. *Reemployment is not guaranteed if no similar position is available.*

If an employee goes on unpaid leave during the school year, the salary for the remainder of the year will be recalculated based on the number of days to be worked until the end of the school year. *This means that the employee's salary after returning from unpaid leave will be less per pay period than before the leave began.* The HR Compensation team will notify the employee of the change upon returning to active duty.

## **Military, Government Service & Political Campaign Leave**

Employees ordered to annual tours of duty for the reserves or National Guard during the work year are granted paid leaves up to eighteen (18) days per year. Longer military leaves without pay are granted any time the service of an employee is required by the U.S. Armed Forces for an extended period. Upon satisfactory completion of the military service, the employee will be restored to a similar position and status as the previously held position, if the employee applies to return within ninety (90) days of being relieved from duty. Proper evidence of official orders must be presented to the Absence Management team at least two weeks in advance of the requested leave.

Government service leave allows you to serve up to 12 months at one time, without loss of status, in the





governments of the city of Randolph County, the state of Georgia or the federal government. When you return from government service leave, the superintendent may assign you to a similar, but not necessarily identical, position and status as your previously held position.

For employees who have been with RCS for at least three years, unpaid leaves of one semester or one year may be granted to qualify and campaign for a public office.

For details, see [GARH: Leaves and Absences](#).

## **Jury Duty**

RCS encourages all employees to serve when called for jury duty. RCS will not excuse employees from jury duty under normal circumstances. You must complete and submit your time off request to your principal or department head as soon as possible.

When you are summoned for jury duty, RCS will:

1. Pay your regular salary for the days served. You lose no pay due to jury duty.
2. Consider your jury duty pay as payment for extra expenses incurred.

If the court subpoenas you as a witness for personal reasons, you must use your personal or annual leave and you must apply to your supervisor for approved leave for the day(s) involved. If the subpoena is related to official RCS business, you may be granted administrative leave to appear before the court.

## **Leave for Employee Representatives**

Employees may act as representatives of other employees in the grievance process if permission is granted by the supervisor. An employee may be absent with regular pay for the purpose of processing grievances and attending grievance meetings and formal disciplinary hearings for himself/herself and/or for others for a maximum of four hours in any one week. An employee representative may be granted permission for an additional absence in a given week without pay. If permission is denied, the supervisor must state the reasons in writing to the employee. An employee representative who misses work without first obtaining permission will not be paid for the absence.

## **Disputes Regarding Leave Balances**

An employee who believes his/her leave balances contain an error must submit a written request for review to the Payroll Office. Requests must be made within one calendar year of the pay period(s) in question. The Director of Payroll, Benefits, and Risk Management or his/her designee shall issue all final determinations regarding corrections. Contact the Payroll Department at (229) 732-2243 for additional assistance.



## SECTION 9

### YOUR PERSONNEL RECORDS

#### Annual Evaluation

RCS annually evaluates all employees' job performance. An employee's supervisor should also share an annual evaluation with the employee. The evaluation is considered confidential under Georgia state statute and will not be released without appropriate approval or legal authority.

#### Change in Job Status

The job status of an employee can change for many reasons: a promotion, probation, transfer, demotion, re-assignment, or re-employment. General information about each status follows:

- Promotions/Probations – Most promotions require a six-month probationary period for new or re-employed employees. It can be longer if the superintendent grants the request of the supervisor.
- Transfers – Employees may voluntarily or involuntarily transfer within a department, among different departments, to another location or to a new work shift. However, the transfer must be in RCS' best interest and with approval from the employee's supervisor and other authorities.
- Reassignments – When an employee switches to a similar job and pay as the previous position, this is a reassignment. This change can result with approval from the division head and other authorities.
- Re-employment – If an employee voluntarily left their assigned job and are in good standing, the employee is eligible for re-employment in a similar position. However, he or she must meet certain job requirements and be on probation. The salary will be based on verified prior work experience.
- Demotions – Employees may voluntarily take a lower ranking position. However, an employee must request it in writing, there must be a vacancy, the employee must meet the job's minimum qualifications and the proper authorities must grant approval. Employees will be placed on the newly assigned scale at the appropriate step, not to exceed the maximum.

#### Change in Personal Status

In order for an employee to keep their file current and to ensure seamless, accurate delivery of critical employment information, promptly report changes in personal status to the Human Resources Department, Benefits Department, or the Payroll Department.



## **Reduction in Force**

Declining student enrollment, program changes or fiscal demands can force the Randolph County Board of Education to eliminate jobs, reduce the work year and salary, and/or reduce the number of employees.

## **Records to Retain after Separation**

Upon separation, employees should retain a record of their final leave balance. If an employee leaves the district for another employer and return to RCS at a later date, the accrued sick leave may be reinstated. The employee must retain evidence of their leave balance in case any dispute arises. Similarly, if the employee leaves the district and eventually retires from the Teacher Retirement System, the sick leave accrued with RCS may be applied toward retirement benefits. Employee must retain evidence of the leave balance in case any dispute arises.

## **Confidentiality and Access to Personnel Records**

Human Resources and an employee's worksite maintain both publicly available and confidential files about each employee. Some information about employment with RCS is subject to release to the public, if requested under the Georgia Open Records Act, such as the application for employment, salary information and disciplinary records. Confidential information is not released, such as social security numbers, home addresses and phone numbers, transcripts, medical forms, and evaluations.

An employee is the only person who may view the entire file unless a court order or other legal mandates require otherwise. The law does protect certain information, including pre-employment information, letters of recommendation and medical records. Therefore, these items are not available for viewing.

An employee may request a copy of the personnel file by contacting the Human Resources Department at 229-732-2106 for additional details and assistance.

## **Employment Verification**

Randolph County Schools (RCS) Human Resources Department will provide verifications for mortgage lenders, banks, apartment complexes, and others who may need proof of employment or income. Please contact the Human Resources Department at 229-732-2106.

If an employee is requesting verification of Prior Years of Experience with Randolph County Schools or requesting completion of a Student Loan Forgiveness Form, submit the request to the Human Resources Department for completion. Requests will be returned to the requestor within 3-5 business days.

All experience verifications will provide information as of the date it is prepared. If an employee is requesting an experience verification form before the last day of work at Randolph County Schools, please know that RCS will not provide a future end date based on a planned resignation. Most school districts require an employment end date, and we will not be able to report an employee's employment end date until after that date has occurred and the employee has officially separated. If the employment separation date has not occurred, please wait until after the last day of employment to request an experience verification.



When submitting a request for Prior Years of Service or Student Loan Forgiveness Form to the Human Resources Department, please provide the following:

1. The Verification or Loan Forgiveness Form
2. Please include for reference:
  - a. Employee's first name
  - b. Employee's last name
  - c. The last school, location or site worked
3. Also, please include for reference:
  - a. Approximate dates employed with RCS
  - b. Any former last names, if applicable
  - c. The employee identification number, if available
  - d. The last 4 digits of social security number
  - e. An email address or mailing address to send the requested information
  - f. A contact phone number to be reached
  - g. Any additional information that may help us in completing the request (additional instructions, email or mailing addresses, addition school or work site information, etc.).



## HUMAN RESOURCES RESIGNATION & RETIREMENT PROCESS

# SECTION 10

## ENDING EMPLOYMENT WITH RANDOLPH COUNTY SCHOOLS

### Retirement

The [Teacher Retirement System \(TRS\) of Georgia](#) and Randolph County Schools provide retirement plans for all employees.

Randolph County Schools will:

1. Pay certified employees who retire from their position.
2. Pay for accumulated, unused annual leave.
3. Pay for accumulated, unused sick leave.

For details, please call the Employee Benefits Department at (229) 732-2243.

### Resignation

The Randolph County Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or his/her designee to accept, on behalf of the Board, resignation from employment by any employee. The Board shall be notified of the action no later than the regular legislative meeting in the month after the resignation has been tendered and accepted in writing. Written resignations shall be tendered at the earliest possible date prior to the proposed effective date. Failure to provide adequate notice of separation or resignation during a contract period may constitute ineligibility for rehire with RCS. Additionally, contracted employees may be subject to liquidated damages and Professional Standards Commission sanctions in cases of breach of contract. Contracted employees may seek approval for resignation requests during a contract period for medical reasons, promotion, or spouse relocation for employment. For annual-duty employees, upon departure, RCS will pay employees for accumulated, unused annual leave. See policy [GBO: Professional Personnel Resignation](#).

The District also reserves the right to designate employees as ineligible for rehire, based on resignation in lieu of termination, termination for cause, or other circumstances.



## **Separation Process**

If an employee separates from Randolph County Schools' employment, the employee should follow the formal separation process or risk having the final paycheck delayed. Emailed resignations to Human Resources may also be accepted in certain circumstances. The steps in this process may vary, depending on the employee's reason for leaving.

In order to separate from Randolph County Schools, an employee must submit a letter of resignation/retirement AND provide a copy to their assigned principal or supervisor. The letter must be dated and include the effective date of the resignation/retirement, reason for separation, along with the employee's signature.

The steps include, but are not limited to the following:

1. An exit survey;
2. The return of all RCS property; and
3. Repayment of any monies owed to RCS.

## **Employee Acknowledgement**

I understand that it is my responsibility to read the handbook and adhere to the policies and practices described within it. I understand that this handbook replaces any and all prior handbooks, policies, and practices of Randolph County Schools. If I have any questions concerning the information, application, or interpretation of the policies or procedures in this handbook, I will bring them to the attention of a school leader or the Department of Human Resources.

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Employee Signature

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[Publish Date]

