

Policies & Procedures

Cook County School Employees



Cook County School District

- Alert Solution
- Budgetary Process
- Building Use and Rental Process
- Bullying
- Bus Discipline Procedures
- Calendar Process
- Cameras and Viewing
- Carry Permit Policy
- Certification
- Courseware Online
- CrowdFunding
- Discipline
- Discipline - At School- In/Out
- Field Trip Procedures
- Grant Policy
- Handbook Process
- Hiring Process
- Mandated Reporting
- Outside food
- Possession of Weapons by Employees
- Recording Devices
- Requisition Forms
- School Visitors
- Sex Offenders
- Sick Leave for Teachers & Staff
- Social Media
- Students left at school
- Tardy Policy-
- Teacher Discipline Process- Write up to Dismissal
- Treat to self & others- Treat Assessment
- Work Order Process

Alert Solutions-Mass Communication

Cook County Schools uses SwiftK12, previously called Alert Solutions, to contact parents and staff. SwiftK12 allows users to send voice, email, social media and text alerts using real-time contact information from PowerSchool. From automated attendance notifications and general announcements to unexpected school closures, schools can send hundreds of messages to parents, students and staff members instantly and reliably.

Alerts can be sent by individual school or county-wide. Contact lists can be customized to include all students or specific groups. The integration and management of this product falls on the technology/SIS coordinator. School level personnel as listed below are responsible for the announcements.

CCBOE - Allison Ray (county-wide emergency and general alerts)

CPS - Kathryn Surrency
Jeanne Dixon

CES - Tanya Cone

CMS - Lyn Martin
Melissa Harrison

CHS - Lisa Heard
Eric McFee
Joi Williams

Budget Process

February/March

- Finance Director meets with Principals to determine projected student/teacher numbers for next budget year.
- Determine cost for current/alternative scheduling for schools (Current State Class Size vs Current Waiver/Class Size, etc).
- Superintendent and Finance Director meet with Counselors, Assistant Principals, and/or Principals to discuss staffing needs for upcoming fiscal year.
- Finance Director discusses FTE and other student numbers.
- Human Resources Director and Finance Director review and adjust salaries and steps for each certified, non-certified, classified employee, etc. if information is available. Update benefit percentages based on Governor's proposed budget if available.
- Account for health care increases separately.
- Finance Director looks at operating expenditures and forecast current year's compared to current year's budget. Increase expenditures based on projections as needed.
- Finance Director reviews negotiated contracts.
- Finance Director adds any projected numbers known at this point from DOE/Governor, etc.

March/April

- Information about mid-term adjustments comes out. Budget is adjusted and needs and wants are becoming more important. Board members are updated on latest budget projections. Budget work sessions are held with Department Directors as needed.
- Finance Director collects budgets from all departments that impact the local budget.
- Human Resources Director and Finance Director examine pay scales created and project adjustments if needed.
- Finance Director and Athletic Directors examine Athletic Supplement Scale/Academic/Extra Curricular, Admin
- Human Resources Director and Finance Director discuss staff that may be retiring and whether or not they need to be replaced.
- Finance Director continues to add or deduct any projected budget numbers known at this point from DOE/State Agencies/Governor, etc.
- Finance Director ensures all debt service payments can be funded via SPLOST tax dollars and will not require any local funding.

April

- Information becomes more available from legislative session and budget is adjusted.
- Contracts are signed and returned. From those contracts, final salaries and benefits are accurately budgeted.
- Finance Director compares current year expenditures to projected FY expenditures, including any known large purchases.
- Board members are kept informed of the latest developments at the State level and how they will affect the local budget,

- Budget work session dates are determined to get input from the public.

May

- Budget is adjusted to information obtained from State.
- Board approves tentative budget for advertising in the newspaper.

June

- Adopt budget by June 30.

Building Use & Rental Process

Cook County School District supports the community by making facilities available to the general public.

This service is accomplished by utilizing the following procedures and guidelines.

1. The interested party will pick up an application and receive instructions from the Cook County School District's Central Office.
2. The applicant is required to provide proof of insurance. (\$500,000.00 liability and \$100,000.00 property).
3. The form must be approved by the facility's principal and superintendent.
4. The applicant is provided rental fee totals. Rental fees vary due to the nature and impact of different events.
5. The applicant makes payment in advance to Cook County Schools and the event is placed on the master calendar.

Bullying

The Cook County School System expressly prohibits the bullying of any person, by any means or method.

Bullying: In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-751.4, bullying means an act that is: 1) Any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so; 2) Any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm; or 3) Any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, which a reasonable person would perceive as being intended to threaten, harass, or intimidate, that: I: Causes another person substantial physical harm within the meaning of O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1 or visible bodily harm as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1; II: Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education; III: Is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening education environment; or IV: Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. The term applies to acts which occur on school property, on school vehicles, at designated school bus stops, or at school related functions or activities or by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system. The term also applies to acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic communication 1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, 2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and 3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose. For purposes of this Code Section, electronic communication includes but is not limited to any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system.

Harassment and Intimidation: Harassment and intimidation means any gesture or written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic including race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability or disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-related functions or activities, on a school bus, or acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment, if the electronic equipment: 1) is directed specifically at students or school personnel, 2) is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and 3) creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

Visible Bodily Harm: In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 16-5-23.1, visible bodily harm is defined as bodily harm capable of being perceived by a person other than the victim and may include, but is not limited to, substantially blackened eyes, substantially swollen lips or other facial or body parts, or substantial bruises to body parts.

Prohibited Behaviors: Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation may include many different behaviors which ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate another student or school employee. Disciplinary action may also be necessary if off-campus behavior results in a disruption to the school environment. Examples of prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Unwanted teasing
- Threats, taunts and intimidation through words and/or gestures
- Physical violence and/or attacks
- Extortion
- Destruction of school or personal property
- Theft of money and/or personal possessions
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Public humiliation
- Social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
- Rumors or spreading of falsehoods
- Stalking
- Cyberstalking or engaging in conduct to communicate, or to cause to be communicated, words, images, or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to the victim
- Cyberbullying or the willful, hostile and repeated harassment and intimidation of a person through the use of digital technologies, including, but not limited to, email, blogs, social networking websites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) chat rooms, texts, and instant messaging
- The use of cameras or camera phones to take embarrassing photographs of students or school employees and posting them online
- Sending abusive or threatening text messages or instant messages
- Using websites to circulate gossip and rumors to other students

Reporting Procedures:

Bullying is an intentional physical and/or emotional intrusion on a person's well-being and should not be tolerated at any level. Immediate and reasonably appropriate actions should be taken upon receipt of any report of bullying, regardless of the source, identity of the alleged violator/victim, grade level, previous circumstances, and/or personal beliefs. Therefore, all reports of bullying must be taken seriously. School principals are strongly urged to discuss this issue with their entire staff and require that they refer to them any reports/suspicions of bullying. The Superintendent will ensure that the school district's anti-bullying policy is posted throughout all schools in the district, including but not limited to cafeterias, school bulletin boards, administration offices, the school district's website; and in all student and employee handbooks and student codes of conduct. Once bullying has been reported, school officials should take the following actions:

1. Investigate: Upon receipt of any report of bullying, schools will direct an immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel. The investigation should begin no later than the following school day. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and reviewing video surveillance

if available. School police, school counselors, school social workers and/or other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter.

2. Notify: At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, parents/guardians of the accused and the victim must be notified. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical attention should be provided and the parent/guardian should be notified immediately.

3. Discipline: Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused student should be charged with bullying and given an age-appropriate consequence which shall include, at minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances. Students in grades six through twelve found to have committed the offense of bullying for the third time in a school year shall be assigned to an alternative school through appropriate due process by disciplinary hearing officers, panels, or tribunals. Schools should clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action.

4. Follow Up: Follow up is important to the accused and the victim. A planned method to provide after-care and follow up will be implemented. The previously stated prohibition on retaliation will be reiterated to all.

Upon receiving a report of bullying, the following actions are the minimal requirements, pursuant to Georgia's bullying law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4). However, school principals are not limited in performing additional measures as they deem reasonably appropriate. It should be noted that bullying may be witnessed directly by staff or reported by a student, parent or stakeholder by name or anonymously through hotlines such as the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877-SAY STOP (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline. School officials should develop and communicate methods for students and others to report incidents of bullying.

Bus Discipline Procedures

If students violate Cook County School's bus conduct rules, school administrators may take disciplinary action, including suspension from riding the bus for as many as ten days and/or suspension from school for as many as five days. If bus misbehavior is severe, a disciplinary hearing may be called.

Except as otherwise set forth herein, the general progressive discipline plan for bus misbehavior is as follows:

- **1st Violation:** A documented warning from the driver. Disciplinary action will be at the principal's discretion. Parent contacted and documented.
- **2nd Violation:** A documented warning from the Principal or Designee. Parent contacted and documented.
- **3rd Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 2 and Elementary (Loss of School Privilege) Middle School two (2) days. High School three (3) days. Parent contacted and documented
- **4th Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 2 and Elementary one (1) day, Middle School three (3) days. High School five (5) days. Parent contacted and documented
- **5th Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 2 and Elementary three (3) days, Middle School five (5) days. High School seven (7) days. Parent contacted and documented
- **6th Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 2 and Elementary five (5) days, Middle School seven (7) days. High School ten (10) days. Parent contacted and documented
- **7th Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 2 and Elementary seven (7) days, Middle School ten (10) days. High School, a disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing. Parent contacted and documented
- **8th Violation:** Bus suspension for PK – 2 and Elementary ten (10) days, Middle School, a disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing. Parent contacted and documented.
- **9th Violation:** PK-2 and Elementary, a disciplinary hearing will be called. Students are prohibited from riding the bus pending their disciplinary hearing. Parent contacted and documented

**** Any student PK- 2, Elementary, Middle or High School, who has been referred for disciplinary hearing and was returned to the bus, the next violation can result in removal from the bus for the remainder of the semester/school year. ****

Fighting on a bus is among the most serious offenses committed by students, as it endangers everyone riding the bus by causing the driver's attention to be diverted. Fighting on a school bus may result in immediate suspension from the bus and/or school with no prior warning or progressive disciplinary action being taken.

During the period of bus suspension, parents/guardians will be responsible for providing the student's transportation to/from school. Bus suspension is not an excused absence or tardy. If a student causes damage to a school bus, parents/guardians will be required to repay the cost of any damage to the bus. At the discretion of the principal, parents/guardians may be asked to meet with school officials to develop a school bus behavior contract for the student.

Calendar Process

To get to the calendars, please use these links:

Cook County School District - <https://bit.ly/2ZczgAe>

Cook High School - <https://bit.ly/2v8jmsF>

CHS Athletics - <https://bit.ly/2IkufQR>

Cook Middle School - <https://bit.ly/2ZbngPo>

Cook Elementary School - <https://bit.ly/2Pc90I1>

Cook Primary School/Cook PreK - <https://bit.ly/2VNbys2>

All administrators in the Cook County School System should:

- Add each of the above calendars to your Google calendar if you haven't already. These calendars were created this year and will continue to be each school's "major events" calendars for the future.
- These calendars should be added by anyone on your admin staff who may schedule events.
- These calendars can be "turned off" so you don't always see their events by unchecking the boxes on the left.
- When planning events, "turn on" everyone's calendars to check for conflicts.
- Create events with details allowing everyone to be aware of the date, times and locations within your building.

Cameras and Viewing Policy

Cook County School District's camera and viewing policy is in accordance with FERPA, a photo or video of a student is an education record, subject to specific exclusions, when the photo or video is: (1) directly related to a student; and (2) maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. (20 U.S.C. 1232g(a)(4)(A); 34 CFR § 99.3 "Education Record")[1]

If video is made with equipment owned by school, on school property, at a school function, and under the control of school officials, the video is considered a student record, if the video is "directly related" to a student.

A video is considered directly related to a student if:

- The educational agency or institution uses the photo or video for disciplinary action (or other official purposes) involving the student (including the victim of any such disciplinary incident);
- The photo or video contains a depiction of an activity:
 - that resulted in an educational agency or institution's use of the photo or video for disciplinary action (or other official purposes) involving a student (or, if disciplinary action is pending or has not yet been taken, that would reasonably result in use of the photo or video for disciplinary action involving a student);
 - that shows a student in violation of local, state, or federal law;
 - that shows a student getting injured, attacked, victimized, ill, or having a health emergency;
- The person or entity taking the photo or video intends to make a specific student the focus of the photo or video (e.g., ID photos, or a recording of a student presentation); or
- The audio or visual content of the photo or video otherwise contains personally identifiable information contained in a student's education record.
- A photo or video should not be considered directly related to a student in the absence of these factors and if the student's image is incidental or captured only as part of the background, or if a student is shown participating in school activities that are open to the public and without a specific focus on any individual.

To be considered an education record under FERPA, an educational agency or institution, or a party acting for the agency or institution, also must maintain the record.

A single video depicting more than one student could be considered a student record for more than one student.

When a video is an education record of a student, FERPA requires the educational agency or institution to allow, upon request, an individual parent of the student (or the student if the student is an eligible student) to whom the video directly relates to inspect and review the video. FERPA does not require the educational agency or institution to release copies of the video to the parent or eligible student.

When a video is an education record of multiple students, FERPA requires the educational agency or institution to allow, upon request, an individual parent of a student (or the student if the student is an eligible student) to whom the video directly relates to inspect and review the video. FERPA generally does not require the educational agency or institution to release copies of the video to the parent or eligible student.

If the educational agency or institution can reasonably redact or segregate out the portions of the video directly related to other students, without destroying the meaning of the record, then the educational agency or institution would be required to do so prior to providing the parent or eligible student with access. On the other hand, if redaction or segregation of the video cannot reasonably be accomplished, or if doing so would destroy the meaning of the record, then the parents of each student to whom the video directly relates (or the students themselves if they are eligible students) would have a right under FERPA to access the entire record even though it also directly relates to other students.

FERPA permits legal representatives of a parent or an eligible student to inspect and review videos with the parent or eligible student. If videos are education records, educational agencies and institutions may not turn over videos to the police upon request without having first either obtained the written consent of the parent or eligible student or determined that the conditions of an exception to the general requirement of consent have been met, such as if the disclosure is made in connection with a health or safety emergency (20 U.S.C. 1232g(b)(1)(I) and 34 CFR §§ 99.31(a)(10) and 99.36) or the law enforcement officer has presented the educational agency or institution with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena (20 U.S.C. 1232g(b)(1)(J) and (b)(2) and 34 CFR § 99.31(a)(9)).

Under the IDEA, participating agencies must protect the personally identifiable information (PII), data, or records that are collected, maintained, or used by the participating agency. While the definition of “education record” under Part B of the IDEA cross-references the FERPA definition in 34 CFR § 99.3, the application of IDEA requirements may raise different questions. The IDEA states that if circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from otherwise exercising their right to inspect and review the student’s education records (e.g., if the parent lives outside of commuting distance to the school), then the educational agency or institution would be required to either provide a copy of the records or to make other arrangements for the parent or eligible student to inspect and review the records.

Procedures for Viewing Video Images

- Only building administrators and School Resource Officers will have direct access to recorded images or video.
- Staff members may be asked to view images or video to aid in identification of students or to help in the interpretation of what occurs in the image/video.
- If video is used as proof of student misconduct and student is disciplined as a result of the misconduct depicted in the image/video, parent/s or eligible student being disciplined must be allowed, upon request, to view the recorded image/video.

- If image/video includes multiple students, parents/students to whom the video directly relates must be allowed, upon request, to view the recorded image/video.
- Legal representatives of a parent or an eligible student may inspect and review images/videos with the parent or eligible student.
- Images or videos may not be turned over to law enforcement without the written consent of the parent or eligible student except in the case of health or safety emergency or if school has been issued a subpoena for the video.
- The school district is not required to provide a copy of the images/video unless circumstances prevent the parent or eligible student from inspecting and reviewing the student's education records.

Carry Permit Policy Within Cook County School Safety Zone

Unless specifically authorized or exempted by law, persons may not possess, carry or have within their control any weapon or explosive compound of any kind as defined by Georgia Law O.C.G.A. 16-11-127.1 while on school property, in a building attending a school function or on a school bus. In accordance to O.C.G.A 16-11-129, a person who possess a valid Georgia Weapons Carry License (GWCL) and in possession of a weapon, may travel through a school safety zone while dropping off or picking up a student. This refers to “curb side only”. O.C.G.A 16-11-127 requires that firearms and weapons are to be stored in a locked container, compartment or a locked firearm rack in privately owned vehicles parked unattended at any school district facility.

No student may possess weapons of any kind as defined by Georgia Law O.C.G.A 16-11-127.1 while on school property, in a school building, attending a school function or on a school bus. Students are subject to criminal and administrative sanctions for violations.

It shall be unlawful for any person to carry to or to possess or have under such person's control while within a school safety zone or at a school building, school function, or school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school any weapon or explosive compound.

- The provisions of this Code section shall not apply to:
 - A peace officer as defined by Code Section 35-8-2;
 - A law enforcement officer of the United States government;
 - A prosecuting attorney of this state or of the United States;
 - An employee of the Georgia Department of Corrections or a correctional facility operated by a political subdivision of this state or the United States who is authorized by the head of such correctional agency or facility to carry a firearm;
 - A person employed as a campus police officer or school security officer who is authorized to carry a weapon in accordance with Chapter 8 of Title 20; and
 - Medical examiners, coroners, and their investigators who are employed by the state or any political subdivision thereof.

Procedures for Persons with Weapons on Campus

Because all visitors must check in at the front office, any visitor would first encounter the front office staff. If front office staff identifies anyone who is carrying a firearm and does not identify themselves as a law enforcement official, with proper identification, and is serving in an official capacity:

- Armed visitor will be asked to remain in the visitor waiting area of the front office.
- Front office staff will alert administrator or School Resource Officer (SRO).
- Administrator or SRO will confront armed visitor to ascertain their credentials and purpose of visit.
- If armed visitor does not meet the qualifications specified in Georgia Law regarding weapons on campus, the visitor will be asked to remove themselves, or at least the weapon, in accordance with Georgia Law.
- If armed visitor refuses to comply, law enforcement will be alerted and asked to respond to the unlawful intrusion.

- If the administrator or SRO feels the situation deems it necessary, they will place the school in a hard lockdown until the armed visitor is removed by law enforcement.

In the case that a school staff member becomes aware that a vehicle on campus contains a weapon that is not secured according to Georgia Law:

- The staff member should alert an administrator or SRO, or alert the front office so that an administrator or SRO may be contacted.
- The staff member should make every attempt to monitor the vehicle until the administrator or SRO is on the scene of the vehicle with an improperly secured weapon.
- The administrator or SRO responding will confront the driver of the vehicle and inform them of law enforcement involvement if compliance of Georgia Law requiring securing of weapons within a school safety zone is not met.
- If driver of the vehicle refuses to comply, law enforcement will be alerted and asked to respond to the unlawful intrusion.
- If driver of the vehicle is not present, the administrator or SRO responding should make every attempt to locate the owner of the vehicle.
- The administrator or SRO should remain with the vehicle until the driver returns, or if law enforcement is called, until law enforcement assumes responsibility for the vehicle and weapon.

Certification

- For a teaching contract to be valid, a teacher must meet the proper professional qualifications of the Cook County School District. It is the responsibility of all teachers to be certain they possess a valid certificate. Staff members with questions related to certification should contact Dr. Holley in the personnel office or the school principal. It may also be necessary for teachers to deal directly with the Professional Standards Commission in Atlanta, Georgia. The teacher is responsible for submitting an application for a new certificate when he/she is eligible for a higher level certificate and/or adding a new field. The application packet must be completed and sent to the Professional Standards Commission with an official copy of the transcript. The Office of Human Resources can assist the teacher with this. For more information on certification, log onto www.gapsc.com.
- All teachers, with the exception of those holding "life" certificates, are required to make acceptable scores on the GACE Assessment in their teaching area as part of the certification process. Any presently employed teacher who holds a certificate that requires the appropriate subject area test to be successfully completed in order to renew their teaching certificate for the following school year must provide proof of a passing score by the May Board of Education meeting. If written proof is not submitted, the teacher may not be recommended to the Board for employment. The principal may use discretion in holding a position open for any person in this category. TITLE I: In Title I school programs, all teachers hired after the first day of school (effective 2002), who teach core academic subjects must meet professional qualifications requirements. To be a certified teacher, the individual must: Be certified by the State, including alternative routes to certification. Hold at least a bachelor's degree. Pass a rigorous State test on subject knowledge that the teacher teaches and on teaching skills.
- Paraprofessionals in all school programs who are hired after January 8, 2002 must have:
Completed at least 60 semester hours of study at an institution of higher education or
Obtained an associate's degree (or higher) or Met a rigorous standard of quality as demonstrated through a formal state approved assessment the knowledge of and the ability to assist in instruction.
- Certificate holders due for recertification will receive a packet during Spring semester from Human Resources. This packet will include directions to follow for recertification through the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

Crowdfunding

It shall be the policy of the Cook County Board of Education that all gifts or donations presented to an individual school and/or the total school system that would obligate the school system to future operating or upkeep costs must be approved by the Board of Education. All other gifts or donations may be approved in accordance with the following provisions:

Other than gifts or donations as mentioned above, the school Principal is authorized to accept or deny gifts or donations made to the individual school from any source, including booster clubs. The Superintendent is authorized to accept or deny donations made to the total school system.

In accepting any donations of items or services to the athletic programs of the school or school system, the Principal or Superintendent shall establish a valuation of the donation and may request from the donor a valuation or an accounting of actual costs incurred regarding the donation. The Principal or Superintendent also may set a valuation for donations to other programs as appropriate or required for accounting purposes.

Crowdfunding Projects:

Inasmuch as desired enhancements to educational programming have always and will always exceed school resources, school employees may at times choose to seek private funds for school improvements. One modern manifestation of this is commonly referred to as "crowdfunding," or the placement of needs on various websites in order to secure donations to meet those needs. Two popular sites of this sort include GoFundMe and Donors Choose. Such fundraising methods are permissible within the Cook County School District, and the Board commends school employees for their efforts to secure outside funding to better serve the needs of their students. It is the preference of the Cook County Board of Education that employees utilize sites funding supplies or equipment rather than monetary donations. District employees wishing to secure crowdfunding should keep the following requirements in mind:

1. Any person or entity acting on behalf of the district and wishing to conduct an online fundraising/donation campaign for the benefit of the district shall begin the process by seeking prior approval from the building administrator. Pre-approval for technology or non-technology equipment must also be obtained from the technology department or maintenance department. Pre-approval for monetary donations must be obtained from the Finance Director at the Central Office.
2. All monetary donations should be recorded by the school bookkeeper in the School Funds accounting system at each school. A new fund will be created for each new project. Please note, no school banking information should ever be given out. A check should be requested to be mailed to the school in the name of the school, **not to an individual person**. If any funds remain after purchases are made, they will be held at the school in that fund for similar projects for that classroom/program/grade level. If there are not enough funds to cover the purchase, due to price changes, shipping, etc., the shortage will be the responsibility of the employee.

3. All items received/purchased through crowdfunding projects are the property of Cook County Schools, and all inventory procedures apply. It is the intention of the District to ensure that items purchased through such fundraising endeavors remain with the teacher/employee, unless the teacher/employee leaves the district, school, grade level, or the program for which the items were purchased. Should the employee leave the district, school, grade level, or program, the building administrator will disperse the equipment or funds based on similar needs reflected in the original project.
4. A file is to be maintained at the school for any crowdfunding request. This file should include: the Crowdfunding Fundraising Project form and any documentation (receipts, packing slips, e-mails, invoices, etc) pertinent to the project.
5. Employees should be aware that some sites are tax deductible and some are not. It is the employee and donor's responsibility to determine if the donation is tax deductible. Cook County Board of Education will **not** provide a Form 990 for these donations.

When making requests for crowdfunding support, teachers/employees must comply with student privacy and other requirements set out in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Thus, student images, names, and descriptions which would cause students to be identifiable or would allow logical deductions about disabilities or other factors deemed to be within the student sphere of privacy must not be used on such websites or elsewhere, unless written parental permission is secured in advance.

By Students

The Cook County Board of Education believes that certain activities conducted for the purpose of raising funds by students are inappropriate and should be prohibited. Games of chance, raffles and lotteries, if conducted, must be conducted in accordance with Georgia law. Sales of school newspapers, annuals, and other items of this nature shall be handled at the discretion of the building Principal.

Fund-Raising Projects:

The Board believes that extra-curricular activities are an integral part of the total school program. The district cannot provide adequate funds to cover all necessary expenses for these activities; therefore, it is recognized that certain fund-raising projects may be necessary. Acceptable practices will be those which promote and encourage recreation, entertainment, and social involvement of parents, students, and faculty. Fundraising projects at the school level must have approval of the Principal and the Superintendent before being presented to the Board. Participation will not be permitted during school hours. Fund-raising projects must not involve door-to-door solicitations by Pre-K through twelfth (12th) grade students.

- No sales shall be permitted for the purpose of personal gain. (Encyclopedias, etc.)

- Sales of school pictures are permitted at each school at the discretion of the Principal.
- All schools may sell school supplies as a service to students if the Principal so desires.
- All fund-raising projects must be presented to the Board for prior approval on a bi-annual basis. Projects for approval must be presented at the August and January Board meetings.

** Although such fundraising methods are permissible within the Cook County School District and the Board commends school employees for their efforts to secure outside funding to better serve the needs of their students, certain issues have arisen in relation to crowdfunding in other parts of the country. It is the intent of the Board to address those issues through the Gifts and Bequest (Descriptor Code: DKF) policy.

Courseware Online

Edmentum Courseware includes online curriculum aligned to state and national standards. Courseware is designed to provide our students with online courses and curriculum for first-time credit, credit recovery, elective course offerings, and supplemental digital curriculum to meet the needs of the students of Cook County.

The middle and/or high school counselors will up set students up in the courses/sections needed. Students enrolled in Cook Middle and Cook High School are permitted access to Courseware between the hours of 7:30 and 3:30. Any students who needs access to the program outside of these hours must request in writing to:

Mr. Henry Acree

henryacree@cook.k12.ga.us

Cook County Board of Education

Student Services Director

Discipline

It is the policy of the Cook County Board of Education that each school within this school district shall develop and implement age-appropriate student codes of conduct designed to improve the student learning environment and which will comply with state law and State Board of Education Rules. Each code of conduct shall include the following, at a minimum:

Standards of student behavior during school hours, at school related functions, on school buses and at school bus stops designed to create the expectation that students will behave themselves in such a way so as to facilitate a learning environment for themselves and other students. The standards should be designed also to encourage students to respect each other and school district employees, to motivate students to obey student behavior policies adopted by this Board and to obey student behavior rules established at each school within this school district;

Behavior support processes designed to consider, as appropriate in light of the severity of the behavioral problem, support services available at each school, the school system and other public entities or community organizations which may assist students to address behavioral problems;

Progressive discipline processes designed to create the expectation that the degree of discipline imposed by each school will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior of a particular student, the previous discipline history of the student and other relevant factors, while ensuring that each student receives the due process mandated by federal and state law;

Parental involvement processes designed to enable parents, guardians, teachers and school administrators to work together to improve and enhance student behavior and academic performance. The process should enable parents, guardians and school employees to communicate freely their concerns about student behaviors that detract from the learning environment.

All other specific requirements as set forth in any existing State Board of Education Rule or in Georgia law.

Each school shall involve parents in developing and updating student codes of conduct. Each code shall require disciplinary action for each infraction of the code. All student codes of conduct shall be submitted to the board for approval.

The student code of conduct shall be distributed to each student and the student's parents or guardians during the first week of school and upon enrollment of each new student. The parents shall be requested to sign an acknowledgment of the receipt of the code of conduct and return promptly the acknowledgment to the school. The student code of conduct shall be available in the school office and each classroom.

TEACHER REPORTING REQUIREMENT

It is the policy of the Board of Education that the Superintendent shall fully support the authority of principals and teachers to remove a student from the classroom pursuant to Georgia law as cited in 20-2-738 and 20-2-751.5(d).

A teacher shall have the authority, consistent with Board policy, to manage his or her classroom, discipline students, and refer a student to the principal or his designee to maintain discipline in the classroom. Any teacher who has knowledge that a student has exhibited behavior which violates the student code of conduct and repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in his/her class or with the ability of each student's classmates to learn shall file a report of such behavior with the principal or his designee. The principal and teacher shall thereafter follow the procedures set forth in Georgia law, specifically O.C.G.A. 20-2-737-738.

The Superintendent and/or his designee shall ensure that procedures are disseminated as necessary for implementation of this policy and applicable state laws.

Policy Reference Disclaimer: These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the Board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

Discipline Policies and Procedures-Performance Learning Center

Placement:

- Students may be placed through parent/administrator request, through the hearing process, or by a waiver, recommended by the Principal and administered by the Director of Student Services.
- If the student has been placed by waiver due to disciplinary issues, attendance at the Learning Center begins after a three day suspension.
- Students are placed for a minimum of one semester unless they are participating in the Student Assistance Program, have a 45-day alternative placement or their hearing disposition has a different timeline.
- Parent/guardian and student must attend an orientation session for a review of policies and procedures.

Transition from CPLC:

- Students must show satisfactory behavior, attendance, and academics before consideration of return to their regular academic program.
- The transition to regular school is initiated by the site administrator, student's teachers, and with the approval of the Director of Student Services. If student is not approved for return, parents will be presented with an explanation as to why request was disapproved, and they have a right to appeal within 5 working days.
- The final decision for return is made with the agreement of the home school principal, the CPLC site administrator, Director of Student Services and the student's parent/guardian.

Field Trip Approval

Cook County School District Field Trip requests are due to Tammy Cowart by the Thursday before the September board meeting. This includes all Athletics, Competitions, Local, Out of State, and Overnight Field Trips.

As soon as State Playoff games are determined, the field trip form must be submitted by the Thursday prior to the upcoming board meeting.

Grant Writing Procedures

Begin the process by seeking permission from the building administrator.

Obtain pre-approval for technology equipment from the Technology Director or non-technology equipment from the Maintenance Director.

Obtain pre-approval for monetary donations from the Finance Director at Central Office.

When all required pre-approvals have been secured, complete a Grant Approval Form available from Dr. Becky Ratts.

Return the completed Grant Approval Form to Dr. Ratts for placement on the agenda at the next available Board of Education meeting.

Attend the designated Board meeting to present your grant proposal and request permission to apply.

Once Board approval has been obtained, the grant application may be submitted.

When applying for the grant, you must comply with student privacy and other requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Student images, names, and descriptions which would cause students to be identifiable or would allow logical deductions about disabilities or other factors deemed to be within the student sphere of privacy must not be used unless written parental permission is secured in advance.

Maintain a file at the school for any grant request. Include the Grant Approval Form and any documentation pertinent to the project (grant application, budget, receipts, packing slips, e-mails, invoices, etc.).

Checks must be made to the school, not to an individual person. All monetary donations must be recorded by the school bookkeeper in the School Funds accounting system. A new fund will be created for each new project. No school banking information may be shared.

Any funds that remain after purchases are made will be held at the school in the designated fund for similar projects for that classroom, program, or grade level.

If there are not enough funds to cover the purchase due to price changes, shipping, etc., the shortage will be the responsibility of the employee.

All items received or purchased through grant projects are the property of Cook County Schools, and all inventory procedures apply. It is the intention of the District to ensure that items purchased through grants remain with the teacher or employee unless he or she leaves the district, school, grade level, or program for which the items were purchased.

Should the employee leave the district, school, grade level, or program, the building administrator will disperse the equipment or funds based on similar needs reflected in the original project.

Handbook Procedure for Review and Revision

- Each building Principal will form a committee to review student and teacher handbooks each year.
- Committee should consist of Principal, Assistant Principal, Teacher (Lead), and at least one non-certified person.
- Provide an opportunity for faculty and staff to have input (i.e. survey, poll, etc).
- Make changes that the committee deems necessary.
- Submit changes to handbook by highlighting in red what is being removed and highlighting in yellow what is being added. (Provide page numbers on separate sheet.)
- Submit amended handbook to Student Services Director by June 15th each year.

Hiring Procedure

- Human Resources Director is informed of job openings (certified, classified, or non-certified) by department director or school principal.
- Human Resources Director will post the certified and classified positions on the Teach Georgia website as well as on the Cook County School District's Human Resources website.
- A committee will be formed for each job opening to review applications and conduct interviews.
 - A list of job descriptions and interview questions will be provided by Human Resources Department.
- Once an applicant is selected by the committee, the department director or school principal will submit the applicant's application to the Human Resources Director.
 - Human Resources will submit information for Board Approval.

*The CCSD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or gender in its employment practices, student programs and dealings with the public. It is the policy of the Board of Education to comply fully with the requirements of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and accompanying regulations.

Employment advertising, recruiting, interviewing, testing, employment, training, transfer, compensation, promotion, termination, layoff and recall, employment benefits, social, and recreational activities shall be administered without regard to race, color, creed, gender, national origin, age, disability or veteran status.

Mandated Reporting

All employees of the Cook County Board of Education, as well as persons who attend to a child pursuant to their duties as a volunteer for the school system, who have reason or cause to believe that a child is being or has been abused shall notify the principal or school counselor. The school counselor should report the abuse to the district social worker who shall report that abuse immediately, but in no case longer than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused, in accordance with Georgia law and the protocol for handling child abuse cases for Cook County, Georgia.

Under no circumstances shall the principal or school counselor to whom a report of child abuse has been made exercise any control, restraint, modification or make other change to the information provided by a mandated reporter, although the reporter may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant and necessary information when making the report.

Outside Food

Cook County School District (CCSD) will not allow parents or students to bring, drop-off or deliver food and beverage that originates from outside eating establishments due to a USDA non-competition regulation. This regulation protects school cafeterias from the competition of outside food establishments. Since food services in the CCSD is completely self-supported through sales within our schools, allowing outside items serves as direct competition for their business. Students may continue to bring lunches prepared from home.

Recording Devices

Georgia Wiretapping Law:

Georgia's wiretapping law is a "one-party consent" law for purposes of making audio recordings of conversations. Georgia makes it a crime to secretly record a phone call or in-person conversation "originat[ing] in any private place" unless one party to the conversation consents. See Ga. Code §§ 16-11-62(1), 16-11-66. Therefore, you may record a conversation or phone call if you are a party to the conversation or you get permission from one party to the conversation in advance. If you intend to record conversations involving people located in more than one state, you should get the consent of all parties.

In addition, Georgia has a special provision regarding the use of a hidden video camera. The law makes it a crime to use a device to "observe, photograph, or record the activities of another which occur in any private place and out of the public view" unless the person making the recording gets the consent of all the persons observed. Ga. Code § 16-11-62(2).

In addition to subjecting you to criminal prosecution, violating these provisions can expose you to a civil lawsuit for damages by an injured party.

Consult The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press's [Can We Tape?: Georgia](#) for more information on Georgia wiretapping law.

Georgia Law on Recording Court Hearings and Public Meetings:

Court Hearings

You may record state court proceedings in Georgia, subject to a number of restrictions. At the trial court level, in order to record a court hearing, you must file a timely written request on a form provided by the court with the judge involved in the proceeding. The judge may decide to allow only one camera or recording device at a given time, and there is a prohibition on photographing or televising members of the jury.

At the appellate court level, you must make a written request to the court at least seven days in advance, and radio and television media are required to supply the court with a video or audio of the covered proceedings. It is not clear whether this latter requirement would apply to online publishers creating audio podcasts, video podcasts, or other online media similar to radio and television. In the appellate court, limitations are imposed on the number of cameras and photographers allowed in the courtroom at any given time.

In the Georgia Supreme Court, recording, photographing, and broadcasting is allowed without prior approval unless it "distracts from the dignity of the proceeding." The Supreme Court retains the authority to "limit, restrict, prohibit, and terminate the photographing, recording, and broadcasting of any judicial session." Limitations are imposed on the number of cameras and photographers allowed in the courtroom at any given time.

Federal courts in Georgia, both at the trial and appellate level, prohibit recording devices and cameras in the courtroom. For information on your right of access to court proceedings, please consult the Access to Government Information section of the guide.

Public Meetings

Georgia law expressly provides that "[v]isual, sound, and visual and sound recording during open meetings shall be permitted." Ga. Code § 50-14-1. For information on your right of access to public meetings, please consult the Access to Government Information section of the guide and The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press's Open Government Guide: Georgia.

Requisition Forms

(These procedures are to be followed PRIOR to ORDERING)

For QBE funds:

Step 1: The individual should complete a requisition form listing all items.

Step 2: Requisition form is then given to the school bookkeeper to enter account number and verify funds are available.

Step 3: The school bookkeeper then will give requisition form to school principal for signature approval.

Step 4: After approval of the requisition form, it is sent to the Central Office (Attn: Tammie Nix, Acct. Payable) to produce a purchase order.

Step 5: After the purchase order is completed, the purchase order is returned to the school bookkeeper for ordering.

For Federal funds:

Step 1: The individual should complete a requisition form listing all items.

Step 2: The requisition form is given to school principal for signature approval.

Step 3: The requisition form is sent to the Federal Program Director for approval and verification of funds.

Step 4: After approval by the Federal Program Director, follow Steps 4 & 5 from above.

School Visitors

All visitors to any Cook County School building must enter via the main/front entrance and sign in at the front desk.

All campus doors will be locked throughout the school day with the exception of the main/front entrance.

The following information is required at sign in:

- Visitors first and last name
- Person with whom they are visiting
- Purpose of visit
- Visitor must show proof of identity
- Visitor will be issued a visitor's pass which must be worn for the duration of the visit
- Visitor's pass must be turned in and visitor signed out upon leaving the building

Visitors attending school functions that are open to the public, such as parent-teacher organization meetings, plays, concerts, or award ceremonies, are required to enter through the main/front entrance and must sign in at the main office.

Parents or citizens who wish to meet with administration, counselors, or other school personnel must make an appointment by email, a mailed letter, or a phone call which notifies the school employee of the exact day and time of the visit. Anyone wishing to observe a classroom while school is in session will be required to arrange such visits in advance with school administration, as well as with the classroom teacher(s) to minimize class disruption.

School employees who are expecting a visitor must notify the main office staff prior to the visit.

Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to administration and/or the School Resource Officer. Unauthorized or disorderly persons will be asked to leave. Law Enforcement Officers may be called if the situation warrants.

Sex Offenders

To the extent that District officials have actual knowledge that a parent, legal guardian, or other person seeking to be present on school property or at a school sponsored activity is a registered sex offender based on an offense against a child (a person under the age of 17), the following procedures shall apply:

1. Only known registered sex offenders, based on an offense against a child, who are also parents or legal guardians of a child or children enrolled in District schools will be permitted on school property or to be in attendance at school-sponsored activities. No other persons known to be registered sex offenders, based on an offense against a child, will be permitted to be present on school property or at any school-sponsored activity.
2. A parent or legal guardian to whom these procedures apply must comply with all requirements. Failure to do so generally will result in that persons losing the privilege of visiting any District campuses or attending any school-sponsored activities, regardless of location.

For a parent or administrative conference, the person will:

1. Call the campus principal and schedule a meeting before coming to the school;
2. Report immediately to the office upon arriving at school and obtain a visitors badge, as required of all visitors to the school;
3. Be escorted by a school employee the entire time he or she is on campus;
4. Have no access to any commons area of the building, meaning cafeterias, auditoriums, breezeways, open areas for gathering on any campus, and so on;
5. Have no access to any classroom where students other than his or her child are present;
6. Be escorted back to his or her vehicle by a school employee at the conclusion of the visit.

When dropping off or picking up a child from school, the person will:

1. Call the campus principal and schedule the time of drop off or pick up;
2. Pick up or drop off the child in the presence of the campus administrator or designee; and
3. Be escorted back to his or her vehicle by a school employee after the child has been picked up or dropped off.

Before attending any before or after school or extra-curricular event, the person will:

1. Call the campus principal and state his or her intent to attend the event no later than 24 hours before the start of the event;
2. Sign in at a place designated by the campus principal upon arrival at the event;
3. Sign out at a place designated by the campus principal before departing the event; and
4. Be escorted to his or her vehicle by a school employee at the time of the departure from the event.

As an additional safety precaution, the School SRO will maintain an accurate record including pictures of known sex offenders in Cook County. School SRO or designee will observe for offenders at the gate or entrance area of the school sponsored or extra-curricular event.

When picking up or dropping off a student at an extracurricular activity, on or off school property, the

person will:

1. Contact the campus administrator and make arrangements for picking up or dropping off the student; and remain in the vehicle while waiting on the student.

A parent or legal guardian who is subject to these procedures based on his or her identification as a registered sex offender because of an offense against a child is prohibited from transporting any student or child (other than his or her own child) to or from any District campus or school-sponsored activity without express written permission from the parent or guardian of the student. Any person subject to these procedures is also prohibited from working as a volunteer for the District, including but not limited to volunteering for school related activities such as booster clubs and class fundraisers.

Sick Leave

Certified:

Each certificated employee of the Board of Education shall be entitled to leave. All unused leave shall be accumulated from one fiscal year to the next up to a maximum of forty-five (45) days. Certified employees are on ten-month, eleven-month and twelve-month contracts. Certified employees earn 12 1/2 days for 10 months, 13 3/4 days for 11 months and 15 days for 12 month contracts. Leave accumulated by a certified employee is transferable from one school system to another school system, up to a maximum of 45 days.

The leave for medical purposes provided under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness in the employee's immediate family.

For any absence in which leave is used for medical purposes, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. In the event that leave is used to care for a member of the immediate family, the Superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member.

For the purposes of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, sisters, brothers, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law or other relatives living in the household.

Employees may use available leave days for personal reasons if prior approval of the absence has been given by the employee's immediate supervisor and if the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for effective school operation. A leave form must be filed and approved by the principal or immediate supervisor prior to leave. Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent, personal and professional leave will not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days or on the day before or day after holidays. In addition, leave will not be granted during the first week of the student school year or during the last week of the student school year, unless the Superintendent, in his or her discretion, determines that such leave should be granted due to an emergency or extenuating circumstances beyond the employee's control. The Superintendent may refuse to allow an employee to take leave if qualified substitutes are not available. The Superintendent may refuse to allow an employee to take extended periods of leave at his or her discretion.

Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which leave is sought and may state that the absence is for personal reasons. The daily rate of pay will be deducted for each leave day taken in excess of your accumulated balance.

School Bus Drivers:

Cook County School District bus drivers must notify their immediate supervisor at any time they must be absent, stating the reason for such absence.

- The Board provides for a sick leave program for school bus drivers computed at the rate of 1 1/4 days for each completed school month of service during a school term, with one month being the equivalent of 20 days.
 - Effective July 1, 2018, each school bus driver may accumulate unused sick leave from one year to the next without limit. Accumulated sick leave is not transferable from one system to another. Leave previously lost due to a prior leave policy will not be reinstated.
 - If a school bus driver uses more sick leave than has been accumulated the daily rate of pay may be deducted for each excessive day from the annual salary.
 - A credit of a maximum of ten days are provided that in the event of a separation of service, during a period of illness, deduction shall be made from said employee's regular salary which may be due, an amount sufficient to cover the sick leave not earned by the said employee.
 - It is understood that the State Board of Education shall not be legally responsible for sharing in financing the sick leave program more than a maximum of ten days per year per state allotted school bus driver.
 - The term "substitute driver" shall be interpreted as being an individual employed to serve in lieu of the regularly employed driver who is absent from responsibilities because of legitimate reasons as approved by the Board of Education.
 - School bus drivers may utilize sick leave upon the approval of the County Superintendent of Schools, or some person designated.
 - Employees may take leave if prior approval of the absence has been given by the employee's immediate supervisor and if the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for effective school operation.
 - For any absence in which leave is used, the immediate supervisor shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties.

Secretaries, Bookkeepers, Grounds, and Maintenance:

Leave may be accumulated at the rate of 1 1/4 day per working month.

For example:

12 month non-certificated personnel - 15 days a year

11 month non-certificated personnel - 13 3/4 days a year

Paraprofessionals, Custodial, and School Nutrition:

Leave may be accumulated at the rate of 1 day per working month

For Example:

12 month non-certificated personnel - 12 days a year

10 month non-certificated personnel - 10 days a year

Employees may utilize leave upon the approval of the principal (or supervisor).

TRS employees may accumulate all unused leave days from one year to the next up to a maximum of 45 days. PSERS employees may accumulate all unused leave days from one year to the next without limit. Deductions for leave days used in excess of earned leave shall be at the full daily earned rate of pay of the employee.

Employees may take leave if prior approval of the absence has been given by the employee's immediate supervisor and if the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for effective school operation. A leave form must be filed and approved by the principal or immediate supervisor prior to leave. Leave will not be granted during the first week of the student school year or during the last week of the student school year, unless the principal or immediate supervisor, determines that such leave should be granted due to an emergency or extenuating circumstances beyond the employee's control. The principal or immediate supervisor may refuse to allow an employee to take leave if qualified substitutes are not available.

For any absence in which leave is used, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. In the event that leave is used to care for a member of the immediate family, the Superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member.

For the purposes of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, sisters, brothers, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law or other relatives living in the household.

Social Media

Social Media Guidelines

When used herein, the term “educator” shall mean all certified and classified agents and employees of the Cook County School System.

When using any form of social media or electronic communication, all educators are held to the standards outlined in the Code of Ethics for Educators and to FERPA (the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act) which provides that students’ educational records and information are deemed private and confidential. All educators must comply with Board policy, state and federal law, the Code of Ethics for Educators and FERPA when communicating electronically or through social media.

Social Media Usage Professional

Each educator who posts or causes to be posted any message through the Cook County School System computer system, or on the School System website, Facebook pages, sports team pages, photo sharing sites, or other school related sites must insure their message is appropriate and in compliance with Board policy, state and federal law, the Code of Ethics for Educators and FERPA. If an educator is given a message to post or authors a post, he or she must read and re-read the post to ensure it is appropriate and compliant. Staff members may wish to consult with their supervisor before posting any questionable material.

Educators shall not text, email, transmit or share electronically a student’s educational records or any information obtained from such records that is protected by FERPA and School Board policy including but not limited to a student’s work, grades, disciplinary information, attendance records, schedule or any other information that is not directory information. A student or his or her parents can opt out of sharing directory information such as the student’s name, address, telephone number, photographs, honors, awards, date of birth, grade level etc. Educators shall not disclose any directory information without ensuring the student or parents or guardians have not opted out of sharing directory information. Before posting, texting, emailing or otherwise communicating any student’s information electronically, educators must be thoroughly familiar and compliant with the Code of Ethics for Educators, FERPA, the Code of Student Conduct and the Board’s policies and procedures regarding student privacy.

If an educator posts a message in error or determines the content of any post or message is inappropriate or non-compliant, he or she must immediately correct or retract the post or message and notify his or her supervisor and the Technology Director at Central Office.

Social Media Usage Personal

The Code of Ethics for Educators applies to educators twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, and three hundred and sixty five days per year. All educators shall read, understand and follow the

Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics applies to any and all electronic communications regardless of whether the communication is made through a privately owned computer or through the school computer system.

Even when off duty, educators must comply with Board policy, state and federal law, the Code of Ethics for Educators and FERPA when communicating through social media or through other electronic means. Educators must be mindful that they represent the Cook County School System at all times and that the content of their electronic messages and posts on social media can go viral and be readily spread across the world in minutes. Staff members must also be mindful that once an electronic message or social media post is sent, it cannot be retrieved and the recipient has the power to disseminate it to anyone. Standard Nine of the Code of Ethics titled "Professional Conduct" applies to all social media posts and electronic communications made by educators and provides:

An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the teaching profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to any conduct that impairs and or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.

Educators must adhere to Standard Nine anytime they communicate through social media or other electronic means. Educators shall not be "Friends" with students on Facebook and other social media sites. Please note that students are considered students under the Code of Ethics until September 1 following their graduation and include students from any school.

Electronic Communication with Students

E-mail, texting, tweeting and other forms of electronic communication have become very standard. Educators must be mindful that FERPA and the Code of Ethics for Educators including Standard 2 "Conduct with Students" applies anytime they communicate electronically with a student. Educators shall not communicate with students electronically without the consent of the student's parent or guardian. Educators shall not communicate with students electronically unless the message is copied to the receiving student's parent or guardian. If the educator is unable to copy the student's parent or guardian, he or she may communicate with the student electronically if the message is copied to the educator's supervisor.

Mandated Reporters

All educators are Mandated Reporters as defined by Georgia law. All standards and expectations of this designation apply to online activity as well. If an educator witnesses any form of child abuse through the use of social media or electronic means, he or she must immediately report such abuse pursuant to state law and Board protocols.

Students Left at School

The hours of supervision for Cook Primary, Cook Elementary, and Cook Middle school students are from 7:30 am to 3:30 pm and Cook High school students are from 7:45 am to 3:45 pm. Students should not be left unattended outside of the school's hours of supervision.

Only participants of after-school activities may stay on campus beyond the hours of supervision. Parents are expected to arrive on time to pick up students involved in after-school activities.

Consequences and Actions:

- After the 2nd offense, a referral to the parent involvement coordinator will be made.
- After the 3rd offense, a referral to the school social worker will be made to determine if a Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) referral should be made
- After the 4th offense, a referral to DFCS will be made.

Tardies and Early Checkout

Tardy to School: Any student arriving at school following the ringing bell, chime, or other audible signal established by the Principal and intended to indicate the start of the school day. Any student who is on school property but is not in his or her assigned classroom or other authorized area following the bell, chime, or other audible signal will be considered tardy to school.

Tardy to Class: A student is “tardy to class” when he/she arrives to class following the ringing bell, chime or other audible signal indicating the beginning of instructional time.

Excused Tardy: A tardy resulting from events beyond a student’s control shall be determined excused by the Principal or designee. Events may include an accident, road closed due to an accident, area power outage, late bus, or other incidents. Documentation is required to excuse a tardy.

Unexcused Tardy: Incidents including over-sleeping, heavy traffic, errands, delays at a train crossing, or similar excuses determined by the Principal or designee as unacceptable are unexcused. Documentation will not obligate the Principal or designee to excuse an unexcused tardy.

Early Checkout: Leaving school prior to the end of instructional time and/or the end of the official school day.

- Excused: Early checkouts for emergency, illness, or other reasons that the Principal deems necessary or reasonable. Documentation is required to excuse an early dismissal. Records will be kept at each school to document the number of days a student misses due to early checkouts.
- Excessive incidents of unexcused early checkout may result in disciplinary action or referral to the SST as the Principal deems necessary.
- Unexcused: Early checkouts for reasons other than those approved by the Principal. Excessive incidents of unexcused early checkout may result in disciplinary action or referral to the SST as the Principal deems necessary.

Official School Start/End Time: The time designated by the principal and advertised to students and parents as the official start or end of the school day. Correct time will be the time as determined accurate by the school principal, indicated on a designed school clock, and displayed in a prominent location.

Student Support Team (SST): An interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to address learning, behavior, and/or attendance problems of K-12 students in a school.

Unexcused Tardies and Early Checkouts:

- Students accumulating three (3) days of unexcused tardies to school will receive a referral to the Principal or Principal’s designee for violation of Board Policy JCDA: Student Code of Conduct.

- At the school system's discretion, students establishing a pattern of early checkouts may be referred to the Principal or Principal's designee for disciplinary or other appropriate action.
- Students leaving early or arriving late to class may be counted absent from the class or classes missed if they are not present more than 15 minutes of the entire instructional period.

Consequences and Penalties for Unexcused Tardies/Early Checkouts

The Principal or Principal's designee may assign consequences and penalties for unexcused tardies and/or early checkouts that may include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Third Tardy:** Written notification from teacher to notify parent(s), guardian(s) or other person(s) having control or charge of the student of possible consequences for continued tardies.
- **Fourth to Ninth Tardies:**
 - Elementary and Middle School Students: Referral(s) to the Principal or the Principal's designee for Disciplinary consequences, counselor's referral or other appropriate action.
 - High School Students: Upon a student's fourth (4th) tardy, a disciplinary referral will be made to the Principal or Principal's designee. Consequences may include loss of driving privileges, detention, in-school suspension, or other action in accordance with local school system policy.
- **Ten or More Tardies:** Ten or more tardies may result in immediate referral to support agencies outside the school system as the Principal deems appropriate. Among these agencies are the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, Juvenile Court, Family and/or Youth Connections, or other external agencies.

Teacher Discipline Process

Every successful organization must have policies and procedures for it to conduct its business in an orderly and productive manner. No organization can function properly where individuals are without a standard of conduct and behavior. Cook County School District is no exception. In addition to the Code of Ethics for Educators, CCSD needs a standard of conduct so that employees know what is expected in the workplace and to ensure the proper interaction with others.

Therefore, CCSD expects its employees to fully comply with all existing procedures contained in this Handbook, any other provisions that may be subsequently adopted and all policies of the local Board of Education, Georgia State Board of Education, federal and state laws.

The efficient functioning of CCSD depends upon all employees being fully committed to its policies/procedures. Therefore, employees who fail to comply with CCSD policies/procedures, fail to meet performance standards, participate in conduct unacceptable to CCSD or interfere with the mission and operation of CCSD may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination as provided under state law.

To ensure the orderly operation of its activities, CCSD expressly retains and reserves the right to form, change, modify, disseminate and enforce rules of conduct, at its sole discretion, as it determines necessary. It must be further understood that any rules of conduct contained in this Handbook or as subsequently adopted by CCSD are not all inclusive or comprehensive. Instead, they are intended as a general guideline and other misconduct, whether contained in this Handbook or not, that is, in the opinion of CCSD, harmful to its best interest, its employees or students, or any combination of different offenses, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. CCSD's approach to discipline focuses on solving problems and not on punishment. The objective is to correct unacceptable behavior and prevent its recurrence.

- Corrective Measures: Situations may arise where, in the opinion of CCSD, disciplinary action is warranted. Incidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis in order to evaluate any unique circumstances. Disciplinary action deemed appropriate by CCSD may include, but is not limited to:
 - Verbal Counseling
 - Written Warning
 - Letter of Reprimand
 - Suspension With/Without Pay

- Termination of Employment.

CCSD may use any of the above actions, in any sequence, it determines appropriate and necessary. No certified employee or employee with a contract for a definite term shall be subject to suspension, demotion, nonrenewal, or termination except as provided for in the provisions of the Fair Dismissal Act. (O.C.G.A. Annotated §20-2-940 through §20-2-947)

- Major Infractions: There are certain types of behavior that are serious enough to justify immediate suspension and/or discharge without prior warning. Some examples of Major Infractions which may result in immediate suspension and/or termination include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Theft or misappropriation of property belonging to CCSD, other employees or students
 - Dishonesty
 - Insubordinate acts or statements, refusal or failure to carry out instructions or work assignments
 - Physical assault of a fellow employee or others while on duty or on CCSD property
 - Threats to others, willful disrespect or use of abusive language toward a supervisor, employee or student.
 - Careless damage or waste of CCSD property or property of another employee or student
 - Omission or falsification of information on employment forms or other CCSD records
 - Violation of Alcohol/Drug policies
 - Use of tobacco products while on duty or while on CCSD property
 - Absence for three consecutively scheduled workdays without an approved reason and without proper notification
 - Altering or falsifying timesheets, financial or other CCSD records
 - Leaving your work area without permission
 - Interfering with or distraction of other employees in their performance of work, restricting, hindering work, limiting production or attempting to get others to do so
 - Possession or use of firearms or weapons of any kind while on duty or while on CCSD property
 - Unauthorized possession, copying, use, removal or release of proprietary or confidential information or records

- Violation of safety, security or conduct standards that could result or results in injury to the employee, other employees or students or that could result or results in injury or damage to or loss of CCSD property, or property of other employees or students
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness
- Failure to report an on-the-job injury/illness
- Horseplay (non-work related activity resulting in an injury to the employee, another employee or student or damage to CCSD property)
- Sleeping on the job

*There are other examples of Major Infractions not listed that are unacceptable in the opinion of CCSD and are serious enough to warrant immediate suspension and/or discharge without going through any prior notice or disciplinary proceedings.

- Minor Infractions: Should unacceptable conduct occur that is less serious than a Major Infraction, CCSD likewise retains the right to take immediate disciplinary action as it determines appropriate. Disciplinary action for Minor Infractions generally takes the form of written warnings given to employees, with a copy being retained in their personnel files. This section gives a general statement regarding CCSD's expectations for acceptable conduct and performance. Some examples of Minor Infractions which may result in immediate disciplinary action include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Unsatisfactory work performance or careless neglect of assigned duties
 - Using working time and/or school property for personal business or involving other employees in personal business
 - Misuse of time while on duty
 - Violation of safety, security or conduct standards other than the ones considered Major Infractions
 - Use of personal cell phones during instructional periods.

*There are other examples of Minor Infractions, not listed, that may result in immediate disciplinary action.

- Reprimand

The Superintendent may write a letter of reprimand to a teacher or other school employee for any valid reason. A copy of the letter of reprimand will be placed in the teacher's or employee's permanent personnel file. The teacher or employee receiving such a letter of reprimand shall have

the right to appeal the decision of the Superintendent to the Board. The Board shall have the right to either affirm the decision of the Superintendent or to reverse it. If the decision of the Board is to reverse it, the letter of reprimand shall be removed from the teacher's or employee's permanent personnel file. (OCGA 20-2-944)

- Separation Procedure: Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:
 - Resignation - Voluntary employment termination initiated by employees.
 - Discharge - Involuntary employment termination initiated by the system.
 - Reduction-In-Force - Involuntary employment termination initiated by the system for non- disciplinary reasons.
 - Retirement - Voluntary employment termination initiated by employees for retirement purposes including disability retirement.
- Notice Requirement: If a certified employee finds it necessary to resign, advance notice is required. The employee will be required to file a written request to be released from his/her employment contract. The Superintendent and the Board will consider the request and make a written response to the employee.
- Separation Pay Upon Separation: Upon termination, the net amount of any earnings payable to employees, less any applicable deductions, will be applied to the final paycheck. Final paychecks will be distributed in accordance with the regular pay schedule or may be mailed to designated addresses.
- Employee Benefits Upon Separation: Employee benefits will obviously be affected by employment termination. For instance, all accrued and vested benefits that are due and payable at the time of termination will be paid. Some benefits may be continued if the employee so chooses to continue payments. Employees should contact the Human Resources Department regarding any benefits that may be continued and of the terms, conditions, and limitations of such continuance.
- Return of System Property Upon Separation: Terminated employee shall be responsible for items issued by the system such as the following:
 - Instructional supplies
 - Credit cards
 - Equipment (computer, cellular telephone, etc.)
 - Keys

- Written materials (manuals, computer disks, etc.)
- Other system property assigned for use by the employee.

All such property must be returned by terminated employees on or before the last day of work. Final paychecks will not be issued until all system property has been accounted for or returned.

Deductions, to the extent allowed by law, shall be made as compensation for property not returned or returned in unsatisfactory condition. The system may also take all other action deemed appropriate to recover or protect system property.

- Exit Interview Upon Separation: The Human Resources Department will send each terminated employee an exit interview questionnaire at the time of employment termination. The exit interview questionnaire will afford an opportunity for the former employee to discuss such issues as employee benefits, work environment, compensation, suggestions for improvement and concerns.

Threat to Self & Others: Threat Assessment

All employees of the Cook County Board of Education, as well as persons who attend to a child pursuant to their duties as a volunteer for the school system, who have a reason or cause to believe that a child is a threat to themselves or a threat to others shall notify the school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker. The school counselor or school psychologist should assess the threat and inform the student's guardian. If the threat is viable, the school counselor, school psychologist, parent involvement coordinator, or school social worker should report the threat to behavioral health for a more thorough threat assessment by an outside mental health provider.

Work Order Process

All work orders should be approved by building level administrator and then the administrator over facilities at each school will email the work order directly to Larry Young, Facilities Director of Cook County Schools. (lyoung@cook.k12.ga.us). In emergencies, phone requests made by building level administrators to Larry Young and/or staff are permitted with follow up paperwork emailed. All work requests are prioritized and handled promptly with safety being the number one priority. All work requests are vetted and analyzed to make sure they are legal, authorized by administration and affordable under current budget numbers. Maintenance will respond via email to inform whether or not the work order request is approved.

Note: The maintenance department also receives many verbal requests as we circulate through the facilities, and they accomplish many minor on the spot repairs quite frequently. We try to obtain follow up documentation on these repairs as well through email or self generated paperwork. The goals of the maintenance department are to be effective, efficient, energetic, and user friendly in order to support the educational mission of our system.