



# Personnel Handbook

Cumberland County Schools

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## **HANDBOOK GUIDELINES**

In the event of a discrepancy between any of the information contained in our orientation materials, the Employee Handbook and the Cumberland County Schools Board Policy, Board Policy will govern. The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful career with Cumberland County Schools “CCSchools”. This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official Cumberland County Schools Board Policy; rather, it is a guide to and brief explanation of these policies. Not all of the Cumberland County Schools Board policies and procedures are included in this handbook; however, those that are have been summarized.

For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate Central Services department. It is the employee’s responsibility to be knowledgeable of and adhere to Board Policies and Procedures. Updated versions of the CCSchools Board Policy Manual can be found at: [www.ccschools.k12tn.net](http://www.ccschools.k12tn.net). Legal and local board policies that relate to a particular topic are referenced in this Employee Handbook.

Should you have any questions this handbook does not answer, please contact your principal or immediate supervisor.

Questions and comments should be directed to the Human Resources Department at 931-484-6135.

## **EMPLOYMENT AT WILL**

As an employee of the Board you have the right to terminate your employment at any time. Likewise, the Board retains the right to increase, reduce, transfer, or terminate its staffing. Board employment, therefore, has always been considered “at will” permitting either party to freely end the employment relationship at any time, in accordance with Board policy, and the current Memorandum of Understanding with the Cumberland County Education Association (CCEA) and Title 49, Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA).

Only the Board has the authority to enter into an employment contract with any individual employee and it must have a definite duration and be in writing. If you should choose to resign, the Board and the Director of Schools (Director) would appreciate as much notice as possible, preferably thirty days. This will allow time to find a properly qualified replacement.

## **BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Cumberland County Public School System is established and governed by the following:

- (A) The Constitution of the State of Tennessee
- (B) Statutes created by the State Legislature and specifically those governing education and contained in Title 49, TCA.

- (C) Other applicable Federal, State, and local laws
- (D) The Rules, Regulations and Minimum Standards of the State Board of Education
- (E) The policies, rules and regulations of the local Board of Education.

The Cumberland County School System is governed locally by an elected nine-member Board that is responsible for the operation of the schools in compliance with these Constitutional provisions, statutes, rules and regulations. The system is currently comprised of three secondary schools, nine PreK-8 elementary schools and an Alternative school. The Board also assists in selected social services to the community.

It is the Board's duty to hire the Director of Schools and delegates authority to him/her to recommend principals, assistant principals, supervisors, teachers, attendance teachers, educational assistants, clerical/administrative personnel and other licensed and non-licensed support personnel as required to carry out its educational mission.

Further, the Board is empowered to establish salaries and benefits for authorized positions and to establish and approve policy, procedures and programs for its employees. The Board is further responsible for giving the Director full administrative authority to properly discharge the professional duties of his/her office, and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results. The Director works within the framework of policies established and approved by the Board.

Generally, the Director is responsible for the operation of the school system. Some of his/her more important duties include preparation of the annual budget, to recommend personnel for hire, rehire, termination and transfer. Also, to make recommendations to the Board as may be in the best interest for the entire system. Specific responsibilities of the Director are outlined in Title 49, TCA.

## **EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Statement**

Opportunity for employment, as well as continuation and advancement in employment, shall be afforded equally to members of all races, creeds, colors, genders, religions, ages, national origins, and individuals with disabilities or veteran status without regard to any protected genetic information. All employment and advancement decisions will be made only with regard to qualifications for the positions involved.

## **EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES**

### **Applications**

The Director of Human Resources maintains applications for Certified and Classified (non-licensed) positions at the Central Services Building. Applications are maintained for two years and one year

respectively. It is the applicant's responsibility to renew/update applications and to apply according to posted directions on open positions. When an employee is hired, the application is maintained in the administrative files of Central Services.

### **Vacancies**

Certified and Classified (non-licensed) personnel vacancies shall be posted online at <http://www.ccschools.k12tn.net>. Such posting shall take place as soon as practicable after the Director of Schools becomes aware of such vacancies. In addition, employees will be notified of vacancies through the system listserv. Vacancies are posted for a minimum of seven calendar days.

### **Interim Employees -Certified**

Interim positions will be filled at the discretion of the Director of Schools in such a manner as to cause the least disruption in the educational process for students and as quickly as possible to ensure a continuous function of the position.

Persons filling any temporary positions will have no expectancy of continued employment, but such persons will be considered for employment in filling vacancies as they arise.

Interim employees are eligible for insurance benefits only if they are employed for the equivalent of one semester.

### **Job Embedded Pathway to Teacher Certification.**

Applicants hired under the State Job Embedded Pathway to Teacher Licensure Program, will be placed on the BA step O certified teacher scale until they are issued a teaching certificate. Verification of enrollment into a qualified Educator Preparation program is required. Advancement to the next step of the teacher's scale will only occur if the total days worked as a *certified* teacher (verified in TN Compass as having a Tennessee teaching license number) in the first year exceeds 100. Failure to comply with program requirements or obtain a teaching license will result in termination.

### **Applicant Selection**

Various selection methods are used and often in combination for the hiring process. These include:

- a. Personal Interview
- b. Reference Checks
- c. Background Investigations
- d. Licensing/Endorsement Verification

All employees selected for employment are recommended by the building principal or supervisor to the Director of Schools for approval and actual hire. Applicants must have all of the required pre-employment documents completed prior to their start date. All offers of employment are pending final Director approval.

## **Criminal History Background Check**

Knowingly falsifying information shall be sufficient grounds for termination of employment and shall also constitute a Class A misdemeanor. In a continuing effort to further the safety and welfare of students and staff, the CCSchools shall require criminal history records checks for all employees as a condition of employment, and then every five (5) years thereafter. Information shall be verified by fingerprint and criminal history records check conducted by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the national Sex Offender Registry and the Tennessee Department of Health Abuse Registry or other sources as needed. Any costs incurred in conducting such investigations shall be paid by the applicant.

## **Physical Exams**

An initial post-offer of employment examination, to include substance abuse testing, is a requirement. Any decision not to hire or to remove a hiring recommendation, based on this examination, must be job related and consistent with business necessity and when no reasonable accommodation is available. All physical exams are at the applicant's expense.

## **Injured Employee Re-hire**

The school system will not re-hire an injured former employee for the same or similar duties after competent legal authority has determined this former employee to be unable, by reason of on the job injuries, to continue in his or her former position and permanent disability payments have been negotiated.

## **SafeSchools Training Modules**

All employees will be required to complete certain SafeSchools training modules in order to meet state and federal requirements. These include blood borne pathogens, sexual harassment, FERPA, HIPPA, Federal Non-Discrimination notices and other training or notifications as determined by your job classification and duties. They will be assigned by your supervisor or the Human Resource Department. Once your school email is established, you will receive notification of your training modules, a link to the SafeSchools site, and a password. Completion of this training is a condition of employment.

## **CLASSIFICATION AND QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Certified Personnel**

Certified staff members are personnel whose employment and status require certification in accordance with rules and regulations of the State Department of Education.

Certified employees will be responsible for securing a license, verifying its accuracy, maintaining its validity and registering it with the Board of Education. Teaching contracts are automatically invalid if a license is allowed to lapse.

If you have questions about licensing, contact one of the following:

1. Office of Teacher Licensing (615-532-4885)
2. Office of Teacher Licensing website: <https://www.tn.gov/education/licensing.html>
3. Human Resource Director at the Central Services (931-484-6135)
4. Other resources for teacher licensure are available on the district website, click on the HR Portal link.

### **Classified Personnel**

Non-licensed personnel are defined as those in supporting positions not requiring State Board of Education certification, but who may hold professional or trades licensing as a requirement of the position they hold.

All new bus drivers hired after January 1, 2018 must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 25 years old
- Possess at least five consecutive years of “unrestricted” driving experience.
- Possess “good character, competency and fitness.”

The classified staff members are personnel whose regular employment does not require certification in accordance with rules and regulations of the State Department of Education.

### **Full Time Status**

Full-time personnel (certified and classified) are those that are scheduled to work at least thirty (30) hours per week on a regular basis. Bus drivers hired as permanent full time route drivers will be considered full time for insurance purposes.

### **Part Time Status**

#### **Classified less than Full Time:**

Part-time personnel (classified) are those that are scheduled to work less than thirty (30) hours per week on a regular basis. Part-time employees are not eligible for health insurance or life insurance provided by the employer. Accrued paid time off will be prorated based upon actual time worked.

#### **Certified Less than Full Time:**

All temporary contracts (120 days or less) are at the discretion of the director of schools. All contracted employees will be assigned jobs needed by the system. No job will be guaranteed for more than one (1) year. Any job shared arrangement requires the recommendation of the building principal. If a contracted

employee wishes to exit the contract and re-enter into full time teaching in the Cumberland County Schools, he/she must apply for, and be re-hired.

All temporary contracts require a commitment on the part of the employee(s) for the stated duration of contract. There are no fringe benefits associated with the contract. All working days of the contract are to be "teaching days", unless approved and assigned by the director of schools. No paid vacation days, additional retirement benefits, accrued leave, or medical insurance benefits are included in the contractual period. No planning period is guaranteed. BOE Policy 5.1101

## **SALARY CALCULATION INFORMATION**

### **Certified Employees**

Certified employees are compensated based upon a salary schedule that is approved each year. The salary is based upon two factors:

#### **1. Acceptable Experience**

All experience for salary purposes should be verified on the appropriate form (copy of form is available in the Human Resources Office). The experience must be submitted to the State of Tennessee on or before December 1 in order to receive credit for the current school year.

The following types of experience are acceptable:

- Verified administrative, supervisory and teaching experience in public schools or private schools approved by recognized accrediting agencies or approved by the Tennessee Department of Education.
- Full-time higher education teaching experience in an institution approved by a regional accrediting association (must be as a full-time voting member of the faculty).
- Teaching experience in Department of Defense K-12 schools overseas.
- Up to a maximum of five (5) years of active military service in the armed forces of the United States. Military service in the Reserve or National Guard, other than active duty, is not counted. A legible copy of one's DD-214 must be provided for the Business Manager, who will submit it to the State for evaluation.
- Experience gained with a recognized accrediting agency such as: the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or other regional association of colleges and schools; the Departments of Education in the respective states; and for foreign teaching experience, verified with a letter on the respective country's Ministry of Education letterhead indicating that the school in which the experience was gained was an approved Ministry of Education school.
- **In Tennessee, specifically**, the following are recognized approval agencies: the Tennessee Department of Education, the Tennessee Association of Christian Schools, Harding Academy of Memphis, Mississippi Private School Association, Catholic Diocese of Nashville, Association of Christian Schools International, Southern Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist, Kindercare, the Tennessee Association of Non-Public Academic Schools (TANAS), and Catholic Diocese of Knoxville and Memphis.



- Teachers hired mid-year must work a minimum of 100 days to advance to the next salary step the following year.

## **2. Acceptable Education**

The Education factor in determining a teacher's acceptable salary rating is taken **only** from the teacher's license. Only the degree appearing on the license is used. College or university course work must be completed on or before August 31 of the current school year to be counted toward the academic training factor in salary calculation. Documentation of changes must be filed with the State Department of Education on or before December 1 of the current school year.

The educator must file an application with the Office of Teacher Licensing amending the license to show additional degree/education earned. If a valid license is not obtained by June 30 of any year, the experience for that year will not be added to the teaching experience for salary rating purposes.

Certain Board approved extracurricular duties are compensated by means of a local supplement to teacher's pay.

## **Classified Employees**

Most classified employees are compensated based upon a salary schedule that is assigned to their position. The salary schedule is designed to give each classified employee an increase based upon his/her years of experience with Cumberland County Schools, provided the employee was hired prior to December 31 of the calendar year in which he/she is working. Those classified employees hired after December 31 will not receive a year of experience until the end of the following school year. Each year the amount of salary increase for the base salary will be contingent upon the approval of the Board of Education and funding by the County Commission. Certain day care positions or grant funding positions may not qualify for step increases.

Classified personnel who are compensated on a salary schedule will be given credit for previous work experience based upon the following criteria:

- Experience must be verified in writing from the previous employer.
- Only experience related to the position in which the employee is working will be allowed. For example, a teacher assistant would only be eligible for previous experience as a teacher assistant; a secretary would only be eligible for previous experience as a secretary, etc.
- Credit will be given for 50% of related prior experience up to a maximum of 5 years.
- The decision to grant experience for previous employment rests solely with the Director of Schools.
- Experience verification must be submitted within 30 business days of date of hire.

**Longevity Pay – Full Time Non – Certified Staff**

Longevity Pay will be paid based on the following scale:

<u>Full Time Experience</u>	<u>Longevity</u>
16-20 years:	3.0% of salary
21-25 years:	3.5% of total salary
26+ year:	4% of total salary

Full time employees who have completed 15 years of full time service for Cumberland County Schools will be eligible for longevity pay starting the 16<sup>th</sup> year of service\*

Starting with the employee’s 16<sup>th</sup> year of service, Human Resources will verify the employee’s service record. This is submitted to payroll for payment of longevity in the first pay in December of each year. This is paid to the employee in a separate check along with the regular pay on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December.

Employees that resign in good standing and later are reinstated within a two-year period, will maintain their eligibility for longevity pay.

\*Food Service employees, both full time and part time are eligible for longevity while employed in food service. If an employee transfers out of food service, longevity will only be paid based on full time years of service. Credit will not be given for part time years of service when calculating longevity eligibility if a part time food service employee transfers to a non-food service department position.

**Compensation**

All payroll is by direct deposit only.

Personnel will be paid on the fifteenth (15th) and the last day of the month. If the end of the pay period falls on a non-working day, employees will be paid on the last Central Services working day prior to the pay period.

**Payroll Dates:**

Pay dates are the 15th and last day of each month. If those dates fall on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday the pay date will be the Friday before.

Check stubs will be available electronically to all employees. It is the employee’s responsibility to sign up for Paperless Check Stubs and to verify the accuracy of all information on the pay stub. Training will be sent to your school email account for Paperless paystub training through Safeschools.

Employees are encouraged to contact the Director of Human Resources when pay problems arise. The Human Resources Office will coordinate with the Finance Department to resolve problems/inquiries. Password resets are available by contacting County payroll directly at 931-484-8212.

## **HOURS AND WORK SCHEDULES**

### **Attendance Expectations**

All employees are expected to be present during all work hours. Absence without prior approval, chronic absences, habitual tardiness or abuses of designated working hours are all considered neglect of duty and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **Certified Employees:**

The normal school day for teachers is seven and one-half hours. They are expected to be at their school and at their place of duty before and after classes in order to fulfill their professional responsibilities. Any departure from campus during the normal school day, when students are present, must be requested through the building principal who will keep a daily log of those excused.

### **Classified Employees**

Non-licensed employees work schedules vary by position and department. Employee information sheets and work day calendars are provided annually and at time of hire. Contact your building principal for a copy of your work calendar. Employees are expected to be at their place of duty when the school day begins, or at the start of your shift.

Employees should contact the principal/supervisor of any unplanned absence or illness as soon as possible. Excessive absenteeism and tardiness may be grounds for formal disciplinary action and could lead to suspension or dismissal.

School level employees are authorized a 30-minute duty free lunch period each day. Employees are not authorized to leave their campus or duty location during these periods without supervisor or principal permission.

### **Overtime Authorization and Pay**

Prior approval by the Director of Schools is required before any overtime work is performed. Overtime is defined as hours actually worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week. The work week is defined as the hours between 12:00 am Saturday through 11:59 Friday for overtime calculation purposes. Only in extraordinary circumstances is overtime permitted. The provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act will apply to all pay operations.

## **LEAVE POLICY**

### **Certified Personnel**

Certified personnel are allotted 2 paid personal leave days per school year. Unused personal leave is converted to sick leave annually. Except in the case of an emergency, requests to use these days should be submitted to the building principal a minimum of 2 days prior to use.

Certified personnel are allotted 1 paid sick day per month of the school year for illness/medical and or dental appointments. Leave dates should be identified to the building principal as soon as possible prior to their use. All unused sick days are carried over from year to year. Respective forms for taking these types of leave are located at each school office. These request forms require principal approval/signature and submission to the Payroll Department.

### **Classified (non- licensed) Personnel**

The allocation of personal and sick days varies among job classification and the differing work year of some employees. Notification is made to candidates at time of hire. The following reflects the general allocation:

- (a) Educational and Administrative Assistants, Receptionists, Bookkeepers, Attendance Clerks receive 5 personal and 5 sick days per school year.
- (b) 207 day Custodians receive 8 personal and 5 sick days per year.
- (c) 260 day Custodians receive 6 sick days and vacation days listed below with Central Services.
- (d) Bus Drivers receive 5 sick days annually. Bus Drivers are reimbursed annually for unused sick days and may not carry any over to the following year.

Except as noted above, five personal and all sick days may be carried over to the next year.

A maximum of 10 days of *earned* personal leave will be compensated upon termination of employment.

### **Central Services**

Non-licensed 12 month employees hired since August 1996 receive 7 personal and 12 sick days per year. Personal leave is increased by 5 days per year at the 2nd, 4th, and 7th year of employment, to a maximum of 20 days. All sick days and 5 personal days may be carried over. Non-12 month employees receive a prorated allocation of leave days, but have the same carry over limitation.

### **Other Leave**

Requests for other types of leave or leave when days are exhausted must be requested in writing for the Director of School's approval. All leave except for Jury Duty and Court leave requires written request for approval. The Board recognizes the following unpaid leave for all employees:

- a) **Jury Duty.** Regular salary continues during this leave, but the employee submits the per diem payment to County Payroll.
- b) **Court leaves** when duly subpoenaed. The Director approves this leave upon being provided information regarding the need for the appearance and a copy of the subpoena.
- c) **Military leave** is granted while the employee is on active duty with re-serve or guard units. A

copy of active duty orders must be submitted to the Director.

- d) **Legislative leave.** Approved for employees elected to State level law making bodies. This is unpaid leave.
- e) **Maternity leave** for non-licensed personnel is granted for a period up to sixteen weeks with medical verification/certification.

Both classifications for maternity leave require three months advanced notice of the anticipated date of departure, length of requested leave and the intention to return to full time employment.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

All employees who have been employed with the school system for at least 12 months and have at least 1250 hours of service during the 12 months before the leave is requested may be eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, for themselves, with continuing health benefits. Further, when illness affects a spouse, parent, child, brother/sister, and certain in-laws the employee may also be eligible for this leave. Questions regarding eligibility should be directed to the Human Resources Director for further clarification and certification of eligibility. FMLA leave requires Human Resources approval. For more information regarding FMLA leave please see the notice attached to this handbook or visit the HR portal at [www.ccschools.k12tn.net](http://www.ccschools.k12tn.net).

### **Recognized Paid Holidays**

Non-certified personnel employed for 260-day basis, if on active payroll at the time, shall be entitled to the following paid holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (2), Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. Board Policy 5.310

## **Snow Days and Emergency Closings**

### **Inclement Weather**

From time to time it is necessary to delay or cancel classes across the school system due to poor road or school access conditions that have been caused by inclement weather such as rain or snow. The Director of Schools is the only person who may make the decision to close school for any reason. The intent is to make the decision as early as possible to allow parents time to make appropriate arrangements. As soon as the decision to close schools is made, the Director will use all means available to inform the public including news media, internet, e-mail, text and mass telephone notification.

When all schools in the system are closed, the Central Office and designated support services will still report. These include 207 day custodians (report on day shift), 260 day custodians, maintenance staff, bus mechanics, and Central Office staff. The Director will notify these staff if conditions warrant closing Central Office and designated support services. Any staff member may elect to use a sick or personal day (if available) or unpaid day if weather in your location prohibits you from reporting when school is cancelled.

When school is released early due to weather, the Central Office and all school offices will remain open and operational until it is reasonably confirmed that all students have safely reached their homes or have been

picked up by their parents or guardian.

If school is not in session or is dismissed early due to inclement weather, all scheduled activities in which students are involved will generally be postponed or cancelled. Principals will ensure that school phones are manned. No school will cease operation or make a decision to close until the principal reports to the Director's Office and receives permission to do so from the Director of School's, or until a system-wide decision has been made and communicated.

## **EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS.**

### **Social Security**

Coverage is provided to all employees in accordance with the provisions of the Social Security Act and Revisions.

### **Group Health and Dental Insurance**

CCSchools participates in the state benefit plan. Coverage is effective the first of the month following your hire date. Open enrollment is in October of each year, with the new plan year starting January 1<sup>st</sup>. To obtain a copy of your rights and responsibilities in regards to your health insurance information please see the attached HIPPA disclosure available on the HR Portal located at [www.ccschools.k12tn.net](http://www.ccschools.k12tn.net) for plan information.

### **Certified Personnel**

The Board pays the cost of the employee and dependent children for these plans for all full-time employees only. Spouse coverage is offered, but this additional coverage is at the employee's expense.

PREMIUMS Effective January 1, 2019

The Board agrees to pay insurance costs for full time certified personnel as listed below:

Coverage	BOE Share	Employee Share
Employee Only	100%	0%
Employee + Children	100%	0%
Employee + Spouse	100% of Employee Only plus 45% of balance	Balance after BOE pays for Employee portion
Employee + Spouse + children	100% of Employee and Child plus 45% of balance	Balance after BOE pays for Employee plus child portion

- Employee is responsible for the balance through payroll deduction.
- Certified employees married to a Cumberland County employee (certified or non-certified) are covered at 100%

### **Classified (Non-licensed)**

The Board pays the cost of the employee only for these plans for all full-time employees only.

Dependent coverage for spouse and children are offered, but this additional coverage is at the employee's expense.

### **Workman's Compensation**

All employees are eligible to receive Workers' Compensation benefits. All accidents/injuries, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, must be reported to an employee's direct supervisor immediately and to the school nurse.

The Cumberland County School Board has established a medical panel consisting of general practitioners to treat on-the-job injuries. Employees shall ***only*** choose from any of the general practitioners listed on the medical panel for treatment of on-the-job injuries.

### **The current approved medical service centers are:**

- Quality Medical Center, 15 Walker Hill Circle, Crossville, TN 38555 PH: 931-484-1100
- Exac Care, 229 Interstate Drive, Suite 103, Crossville, TN 38555 PH: 931-210-5577
- Pinnacle Health Center, 58 West First Street, Crossville, TN 38555 PH: 931-456-7992

The initial use of a doctor from these medical locations is required in order for the Workman's Compensation Trust to pay expenses to employees injured on the job and off work for more than seven (7) days. A doctor from the panel will arrange any further referrals or specialized examinations.

If an employee needs medical treatment at any time when the doctors' offices on the Workers' Compensation Panel are closed, or if the nurses' office is closed, he or she may go to any area hospital. The employee must notify their supervisor as soon as possible on the next working day.

Certified teachers have benefits comparable to workers' compensation for up to 1 year if they are injured by a physical assault or other violent crime committed against the teacher in the course of the teacher's employment activities.

The Workers' Compensation Law sets limits on the maximum and minimum amounts of weekly compensation paid to injured employees. Sick leave benefits shall be paid to employees only when workers' compensation benefits are not available. All required forms are available at your school building nurses office, or by contacting HR at Central Services. Failure to report work related injuries may impact your ability to receive benefits.

For more information please refer to administrative procedure AP 3.602 for Workers compensation claims reporting procedures located on the districts web site, under Board Policy link.

### **Life Insurance Coverage**

Life and AD&D coverage is provided to all full-time employees at Board expense. Benefit levels vary based upon Certified or Classified (Non-Certified) classification. For plan information please go to the HR Portal at [www.ccschools.k12tn.net](http://www.ccschools.k12tn.net)

## **Insurance Termination**

When certified/classified employees retire, resign, or are terminated, before the end of the school year, insurance coverage terminates on the last day of the month for which the employee's last contribution was applied (*per local education plan document article 4.01 section b*). *This also applies to twelve-month employees.*

When certified/classified employees are not rehired during the annual recommendation period, or they terminate employment after working the full contracted days in a school year, their insurance coverage terminates on August 31. This only applies to an employee that has completed the entire fiscal year for their contracted days. This does not apply to twelve-month employees. The employee's portion of July and August premiums will be deducted from the July 15<sup>th</sup> paycheck. You also have the option to write a check for the August share of premium if you do not want it deducted from July pay. You must notify Finance in writing to cancel your insurance for August. Both Options must be in writing by June 15th.

Board sponsored insurance terminates for a licensed employee who retires with less than 20 years with our school system. Board sponsored insurance terminates for a non-licensed employee who retires with less than 30 years with our school system. The board agrees to pay for retiree health insurance benefits for eligible retiring employees until the retired employee becomes eligible for Medicare benefits. Please refer to BOE policy 5.204 Retirement Incentive and program details.

For information on eligibility to receive insurance benefits in retirement, please refer to page 9 of *The Partners for Health 2017 Eligibility and Enrollment Guide* for the state insurance program. Eligibility guidelines were modified as of 7/1/2015 for new hires. Employees whose first employment with local education began on or after 7/1/2015 will not be eligible to continue insurance coverage at retirement.

Federal law (**COBRA**) provides for continuation of health insurance under specific qualifying conditions following resignation or termination of employment. The State level insurance administrators, of the health insurance plan, notify employees by separate correspondence following loss of employment.

## **Retirement Program**

Participation is mandatory for all employees. All employees are enrolled in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System at time of hire. The program covers licensed personnel immediately upon hire. Non-licensed employees are not covered for the first 6 months of employment, but have the option to obtain credit for this time through the Buy-Probationary Period Option. The Cumberland County Finance Department processes all applications for retirement. Refer to <http://treasury.tn.gov/tcrs> for retirement plan information.



### **403(b) Retirement Savings Plan**

A 403(b) plan is an arrangement available to employees under the Internal Revenue Code to help save for retirement. Section 403(b) of the code allows tax-deferred contributions to be made through voluntary salary reduction. Taxes must be paid on contributions, interest and/or earnings upon withdrawal, usually at retirement. Early withdrawal will result in IRS-imposed penalties.

Contribution to a 403(b) is optional and is in addition to the retirement plan offered under the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System. Eligible employees include those who are regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week. Enrollment is available throughout the year.

### **Section 125 Cafeteria Plan**

Cumberland County Schools provides a 125 Cafeteria Plan that allows you to pay your share of health insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis through payroll deduction. The Plan also offers a Medical Reimbursement Plan, to set aside pre-tax dollars from your paycheck to help pay for out of pocket medical costs (co-pays, deductibles for dental/vision/health). Dependent Care plans are also available.

For more information regarding Annuities, Cafeteria Plan or benefits please visit the HR Portal located at [www.ccschools.k12tn.net](http://www.ccschools.k12tn.net).

## **RE-EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES**

Principals/Supervisors file an annual recommendation for each employee under their supervision choosing to hire or not to rehire in May. Non-tenured teachers are subject to the same rules and regulations and are entitled to the privileges of employment enjoyed by tenured teachers except that they have no claim upon continuing employment or tenure protections. The principal is responsible for discussing deficiencies as part of the evaluation process with the non-tenured teacher and providing assistance for overcoming these deficiencies.

The Director of Schools is under no obligation to re-employ non-tenured teachers at the end of their contract period. If the director of schools determines not to renew the contract of a non-tenured teacher, the following action shall be taken:

The Board shall be notified at the next regular board meeting; Written notice of non-renewal shall be hand delivered or sent to the employee by registered mail so that it will be received by the employee within 5 business days of the last instructional day.

The Director may choose at his/her discretion to rehire or not rehire any non-licensed personnel at the annual re-employment meetings. Written notice of not to rehire shall be hand delivered or sent to the employee by registered mail so that it will be received by the employee within 5 business days of the last instructional day.

All non-certified employees are employed at the will of the Director. The Director of Schools may dismiss any non-certified employee during the year for any lawful reason.

The provisions of State Unemployment Compensation laws/policies will be in effect for any employee who applies for such compensation following dismissal action by the Director.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL FILES**

The Director or his/her designee shall be authorized to maintain administrative records and to permit inspection of the same. The following records shall be maintained for all employees as appropriate in the Human Resources Office:

1. Employee applications and contracts.
2. Professional certificates and other documents required by state and federal law and regulations.
3. Cumulative information files:
  - a. Date and Place of Birth
  - b. Work History
  - c. Employment Qualification
  - d. Physical Exams
  - e. Non-licensed Evaluations
  - f. Military Service Information
  - g. Criminal History Record Check Information
  - h. Discipline Records

Certified employee evaluations and other instruments of communication between the teacher and the principal will be maintained in a secured file in the principal's office, of the school of assignment. Similar files of principals and supervisors shall be maintained in the Office of the Director.

Classified (Non-licensed) employee files are also maintained in the Human Resources Office. They contain copies of the employment application, resume, licenses, insurance / retirement documents, physical exams, payroll forms and evaluations.

All employees are required to promptly notify the Central Services Staff of any personal changes effecting insurance, payroll, marital status, dependent changes, license / endorsement and educational level.

Access to the personnel file of licensed personnel is governed by the current Memorandum of Understanding with the PEO. Access to the file of non-licensed personnel is granted after the employee provides reasonable notification to the Central Office staff. Employee requested copies of these documents would be made with the cost borne by the employee at the established rate.

## **EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS**

This employee handbook is designed to help you understand the Board's personnel policies, procedures, programs and benefits. It is the Board's policy and philosophy that its employees are vital to educational

responsibilities. The Board encourages open communication between its employees, its supervisors and administrators.

Questions or problems regarding your employment or other aspects of the educational mission should start with your immediate supervisor or building principal. If they cannot resolve your concerns, they will consult the Director and / or the Central Services Staff who in turn will make official contact with the Board if necessary.

Licensed employees of the Board also have additional avenues to express concern or dissatisfaction that are outlined in the current Memorandum of Understanding between the PEO and the Board, and also addressed in Board Policy 5.5011. There are also additional procedures and safeguards in place because of specific employment criteria outlined in Title 49, TCA.

All employees are free to exercise their full liberties as citizens, including the right to express their personal convictions on social, economic, religious and political issues, but they must avoid giving the impression that personal views expressed and positions taken by them are those of the school system or the Board.

Further, this expression must not violate the rights of others, State / Federal laws or the policies of the Board.

A Classified (non-licensed) employee who has a complaint should follow these steps:

- a. Discuss the complaint with their immediate Principal/Supervisor.  
*(Principal/Supervisor is required to notify the non-licensed employee of the complaint procedures.)* Official complaints must be in writing.
- b. If the Principal/Supervisor cannot resolve it, it may be forwarded to the Director.
- c. If the Director still cannot resolve the issue, it may be appealed to the Board.
- d. The judgment of the Board is final in all non-licensed employee complaints.

A Certified employee who has a complaint or grievance should follow the procedures outlined in the current Memorandum of Understanding and with the PEO and as outlined in Board Policy 5.5011. These procedures generally follow the steps outlined above, but contain certain negotiated provisions regarding time limits, representation and appeal.

No reprisals shall be made against any employee because of his/her participation in any complaint or grievance.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE**

It is prohibited for any employee of the Cumberland County Schools while at any school, or on other Board property whether on duty or not, or at any school related activity, whether on campus or off, to possess, use, sell, give away or otherwise have under his or her control any alcoholic beverage, marijuana, narcotic or legend drug. Any non-licensed employee in violation of this prohibition shall be subject to immediate suspension and eventual dismissal.

Disciplinary action for licensed personnel involved in these infractions will be processed per the current Memorandum of Understanding with the PEO and Board Policy. Off-the-job use of drugs, alcohol or any other prohibited substances which results in impaired work performance, including, but not limited to, absenteeism, tardiness, or harm to the school system's image or relationship with the community is prohibited.

All employees are subject to reasonable suspicion drug testing and are required to submit to substance screening as outlined in Board policy 5.403.

Random substance screening is required for all system bus drivers under the provisions of the Omnibus

Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991 and current Board policy. Substance abuse screening is also required as part of the initial post-offer physical examination. Applicants/employees are required to sign a consent/release form before submitting to screening. Applicants/employees will be disqualified for hire and/or may be terminated if they test positive, refuse to submit to a test or refuse to execute the required consent/release form.

## **TOBACCO-FREE PROPERTIES**

All use of tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, is prohibited in all school buildings. Smoking is prohibited in any public seating area, including but not limited to bleachers used for sporting events, or public restrooms. The use of tobacco or tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, will be prohibited in all vehicles, owned, leased or operated by the Board, as outlined in Board policy 1.803.

Board employees and students enrolled in school will not be permitted to use tobacco or tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, while they are participants in any class or activity in which they represent the School Board. Each principal/supervisor shall designate an area outside respective school system buildings where the use of tobacco products by adult staff members will be permitted. The designated area may not be located less than 100 feet from the entrance to any building.

## **SCHOOL SYSTEM SAFETY POLICY**

Each employee will take every responsible precaution for the safety of themselves, students, visitors and all others having business with the school system. Each employee will follow all safety policies and guidelines set forth by the school system.

**Employee Reporting** It shall be the responsibility of each employee to report any accident, incident, or unsafe condition immediately to his / her supervisor.

**Back Protection** It shall be the responsibility of each employee who lifts objects that could potentially injure his / her back to wear a back-support belt while lifting and moving objects. Any object determined to exceed the weight limit for one person or to be of such a shape as to be difficult to lift, must be lifted by two

employees wearing back support belts.

**Foot and Slip Protection** Each employee, including but not limited to cafeteria, custodial, and maintenance personnel, working in areas with potentially slick walking-working surfaces are required to wear slip-resistant soled shoes appropriated for the floor surface. All maintenance personnel and each employee working in areas where there is danger of heavy objects dropping on their feet shall wear shoes with safety toes.

**Hand Protection** Employees must wear appropriate protective gloves whose work regularly exposes their hands to hazardous substances, cutting, or burning.

**Eye Protection** Employees shall wear appropriate eye protection when machines or operations present hazards of flying objects, chemical splash, glass breakage, sparks, injurious radiation or combination of these hazards. The appropriate form of eye protection must be matched to the hazard. If an employee is found to be working without using required protective equipment, the following action will be taken:

1st offense—Verbal Warning from the immediate supervisor.

2nd offense—Probation-A written warning shall be prepared by the employee’s supervisor and filed with the System’s Safety Coordinator

3rd offense—A recommendation to the Board of Education for **Suspension** without pay for one workday by the employee’s supervisor. A suspension notice shall be placed in the employee’s personnel file. The supervisor shall call a meeting with the employee and System Safety Coordinator.

4th offense—Recommendation for employment **Termination** will be made to the Board of Education.

State law allows workers’ compensation claims to remain unpaid if the required use of safety equipment is willfully disregarded.

**Fire Safety** Employees should familiarize themselves with the fire safety and evacuation procedures and routes for their respective work sites / areas. These procedures and routes are posted and are periodically tested.

## **REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND / OR NEGLECT**

It is the duty of any Board employee to report any suspected cases of child abuse and / or neglect to their building principal or supervisor. Reports should include sufficient information to allow Child Protective Services to conduct an investigation. For the safety of the child, school personnel should not attempt to investigate suspected cases of abuse neglect.

Formal interviews with students and other investigation procedures are the responsibility of Child Protective Services. If Child Protective Services conduct any interviews on school premises, the principal may control the time, place and circumstances of the interview.

Any employee who fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect may be found guilty of a misdemeanor and/or subject to being sued should a child be subsequently injured.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF EMPLOYEES**

Sexual harassment activity by any employee will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is defined as conduct, advances, gestures or words of a sexual nature which:

- (A) Unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or performance.
- (B) Creates intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- (C) Implies that submission to such conduct is an explicit or implicit term of employment.
- (D) Implies that submission to or rejection of such conduct will be used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee.

Victims of sexual harassment should report these conditions to the appropriate principal or department supervisor. If the employee's direct administrator or supervisor is the offending person, the report shall be made to the next higher level of administration or supervision. Confidentiality will be maintained and no reprisals or retaliation will occur as a result of good faith reporting or charges of sexual harassment.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, all of the circumstances, including the nature of the conduct and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. The Director shall be responsible for investigating all complaints of sexual harassment. If satisfactory resolution of any complaint is not reached, the complainant may refer the matter to the Board. Any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to sanctions, including but not limited to, warning, suspension or termination

## **REQUIRED NOTIFICATIONS**

As a condition of employment, all employees must report to the department head/principal any arrest or criminal citation within 24 hours of the incident. In addition, all employees must immediately report to the department head/principal when the Department of Children Services has named the employee a perpetrator of child abuse.

If the department head/principal cannot be reached within the specified time frame, an employee must make the report immediately the next workday. It is not necessary to report traffic citations unless required by the department.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

It is unlawful for any member, officer or employee of the Board to have any interest in any contract, unless he is a sole supplier and public acknowledgment is made of the interest entered into while he is a member of or employed by the Board.

Neither the facilities, the name, the staff, nor the students of the school system, nor any part thereof shall be employed for advertising or otherwise promoting the interests of any commercial, political or other non

school agency or organization except as specifically authorized by Board policy.

Political literature may not be distributed through the school to staff, students, nor sent home to parents, nor placed in teachers' mail boxes, lounges, or on school premises.

## **EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Nepotism**

No employee shall be under the immediate supervision of a member of the employee's immediate family. With the exception of substitute teachers, members of an immediate family shall not be assigned to the instructional staff in the same school building unless some unusual circumstance exists which makes it in the best interest of the educational program as recommended by the Director of Schools.

No employee shall be under the direct supervision of a member of his immediate family. Immediate family shall be defined as spouse, child, parent, parent-in-law, brother, sister, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law.

A principal and an immediate family member (first degree affinity or consanguinity) shall not be assigned to the same school.

Relatives may be assigned to the same school where neither is a principal, upon the recommendation of the principal and the Director of Schools.

### **Supervisor-Staff Relationships**

As an extension of the nepotism and harassment policies, the CCSchools strongly discourages romantic relationships between supervisors and anyone whom he or she directly supervises. Such relationships may negatively impact other employees and, therefore, lead to complaints and grievances or other interruptions of workplace functioning.

### **Staff-Student Relationships**

Staff members will maintain professional relationships with students at all times and develop wholesome and constructive relationships with them. Staff members are expected to regard each student as an individual and to accord each student the rights and respect that is due.

Staff members are expected to use good judgment in their relationships with students beyond their work responsibilities and/or outside the school setting and must avoid excessive informal and social involvement

with individual students. [*Adherence to professional standards of conduct and communication includes social media – Facebook, Twitter, etc.*] Any appearance of impropriety is to be avoided. Sexual relationships between employees and students are prohibited.

### **Teacher Code of Ethics** TA 49-5-1003 as amended July 2018.

As amended, the Teacher Code of Ethics added a new section to the code in July 2018 to include that a teacher shall not engage in any sexually related behavior with a student, whether verbal, written, physical, or electronic, with or without the students consent. Educators who have personal knowledge of a breach of the teacher code of ethics by another educator shall report the breach to the educator’s immediate supervisor or director of schools. Such reports shall be made within 30 days of discovering the breach. Failure to report may result in disciplinary action including suspension of the teachers license for failure to report.

### **EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

All Cumberland County Schools employees must represent Cumberland County Schools in the highest professional regard with honesty, integrity and excellence. All employees are expected to represent the school system, school, and the community in a positive manner and in accordance with the Teacher Code of Ethics contained in state law and board policy. Employee conduct, while on or off duty, that is damaging to the reputation of Cumberland County Schools, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. “Unethical conduct” includes but is not limited to the following.

- Immorality
- Conviction of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude
- Dishonesty, unreliability, continued willful failure to one’s just and honest debt (excessive garnishments)
- Disregard of the Tennessee Teacher Code of Ethics by certified employees
- Theft
- Falsification of records
- Possession and/or consumption of alcohol or drugs or being under the influence thereof while on school premises or off premise school sponsored events
- Unauthorized possession, willful destruction or defacement of school property or property of any individual in schools, offices, or premises of the school system
- Use of abusive, threatening, or obscene language
- Disorderly conduct of any kind in schools, offices, or school system premises
- Violation of safety, security, and/or fire prevention rules
- Gambling or promoting lotteries, etc., on school system premises
- Performing personal business during work hours
- Habitual tardiness, chronic absenteeism, or time away from assigned work area
- Insubordination or refusal to follow instructions, policies or to perform designated work/tasks
- Neglecting one’s own job, duties, and responsibilities
- Falsely stating or making claims of injury



## **MISCELLANEOUS CONDUCT STANDARDS**

There are certain standards of conduct generally expected in a professional organization that may impact the regard held of that organization by the community.

**Personal Appearance:** Employees are expected to present a neat, clean appearance in order to project a professional image to students, fellow employees and the public.

### **School Level and Central Office Personnel**

Employees (professional and paraprofessional) are expected to present a neat, clean appearance in order to project a professional image to students, fellow employees and the public. The following clothing is considered acceptable in the projection of this professional image during regular school hours.

- Suits, sportcoats or blazers.
- Dress slacks, casual slacks or pantsuits.
- Dress shirts and blouses (with or without collars), collared pullover style shirts, turtlenecks, sweaters, cotton knit pullover blouses and sweater sets. Sleeve length, vests and neckties are optional.
- Dresses and skirts for female employees. All are to be worn no higher than three (3) inches above the middle of the knee.
- Clothing that would exhibit bare shoulders is not permitted.
- Shorts are only permitted for employees involved in athletic or physical education instruction and only in the immediate area where the instruction is conducted. The employee will be required to change into other approved apparel when departing that area.
- Nylon "running style" suits are considered professional dress only for physical education and wellness teachers.
- Denim jeans may be worn while on extracurricular duty such as ballgames.

The following types of clothing are otherwise specifically prohibited except on casual days: All denim jeans, shorts, skorts, cotton sweat suits, tee shirts and nylon "running style" suits.

The Board Dress Code for employees is outlined in policy 5.6001 available at [www.ccschools.k12tn.com](http://www.ccschools.k12tn.com)

**Telephone Practices:** Proper telephone etiquette is always expected. Identify yourself, your organization/school and request the identification of the caller if not offered. Employees should limit outgoing calls to official business and incoming personal calls should be for emergencies only. Any conduct of personal business on official phones should be limited to non-peak times and with permission of immediate supervisor, or conducted on cell phones during lunch/breaks.

**Electronic Devices:** It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that the use of any personal electronic communication devices does not interfere with fulfilling their job responsibilities. Personal cell phones and other communication devices should be used with discretion. Employees are expected to follow all laws and reasonable safety precautions while using cell phones during the operation of a system-owned or personal vehicle when on school-related business. School bus drivers shall not use electronic devices on

the school bus. Violation of this will result in termination and/or loss of license. If an emergency occurs, the bus should be safely pulled over, and overhead lights activated, and be at a complete stop. Students shall not be boarding or de-boarding during this time. Two-way radio communication is preferred, unless there is no signal.

**Visitors to Work Sites:** Visitors should be limited to official business only or emergency situations. In all cases visitors must sign in /out and be cleared with school officials or Department offices.

**Parking:** Employees will park only in areas designated by Principals / Supervisors. Employees are expected to obey speed limits and traffic patterns in and around system schools and facilities.

**Housekeeping:** Employees are expected to keep immediate work areas in a clean, neat and safe condition. Also, to promptly report unsafe conditions to maintenance, custodians or Supervisor.

**Moonlighting:** Licensed personnel have specific restrictions regarding moonlighting in education jobs as identified in Title 49, TCA. Otherwise, there are no restrictions on outside employment for any employee as long as this employment does not adversely impact Board employment. Also, the conflict of interest provisions must be observed.

**Use of Board Owned Property:** Board owned property and equipment will not be removed from Board facilities unless the property / equipment is required to support an approved off campus activity or for the conduct of recognized operations in other Board facilities, such as maintenance or training.

**Required OSHA Compliance Management Plans:**

A copy of the following OSHA Compliance plans are provided to all employees at time of hire, and delivered annually through Safeschools training module. A link on the districts website is found under the HR Department to the Safeschools portal for access at any time.

- Hazard Communications – delivered at new hire and available through Safeschools
- Exposure Control Plans – delivered at new hire and available through Safeschools

**AHERA Asbestos Management Plan:** A copy of the Asbestos Management Plan is on file at each school, at the office of the Director of Schools and the office of Maintenance Director. This plan can be viewed during normal school hours by inquiring with the office personnel at the individual school. You can also view this plan the Maintenance office of the Cumberland County Board of Education during business hours 7 am until 3 pm week days. For further information please call Maintenance Office at 931-484-5763.