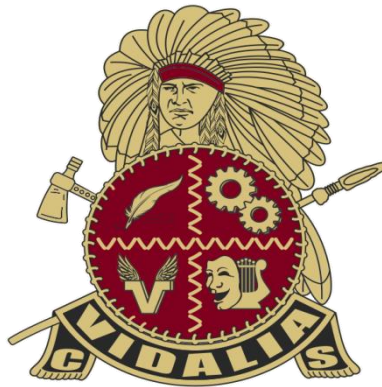


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# VIDALIA CITY

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School District



*Established 1906*

2020/21  
Personnel Handbook

## **F O R E W O R D**

The purpose of this handbook is to set forth on a limited basis procedures and rules of the Vidalia City Board of Education.

It will be necessary to revise the procedures from time to time so as to include any changes, which might affect the operation of the schools in the city.

Any changes, approved by the Vidalia Board of Education would take effect immediately.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	2
Table of Contents	3
Vidalia Board of Education	4
Strategic Plan	5
District Staff and School Administration	6
Organizational Communication and Personnel Complaints	7
Equal Employment / Educational Opportunities	8
Code of Ethics for Educators	9-13
Employment Process	14
Background Checks	14-15
Compensation	15
Employee Benefits	16
Attendance / Absences	16
Timekeeping	17-18
Submitting Absences	19-20
Leave Policy	21-24
Personnel Evaluations	24
Resignation	24
Workers Compensation	25-27
Professional Learning	28
Educator Certification	29-32
Fraud, Waste, Abuse or Corruption	33-34
Child Abuse Protocol	35
Dress Code	36
Staff Lunch Charges	36
Internet Access Agreement	37-43
Field Trips	44
Fund Raisers	44
Accounting Procedures	45
Compliance Director	46

## VIDALIA BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

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Through the years the organization and development of the Vidalia City School System has been dependent upon interested people with leadership ability beginning with the original eleven members of the Board of Education. Today, the board of education consists of five board members who are elected to four-year terms of office and represent constituents in the four city wards with one member at-large.

**Hal Chesser, Chair – Ward 4**  
**Tim Truxel, Vice-Chair – Ward 2**  
**Julee Torrance – At-Large**  
**Doug P. Roper, III – Ward 1**  
**Bruce Asberry – Ward 3**

Meetings of the Vidalia City Board of Education (VBOE) are held the second Tuesday of each month at 5:00 PM in the board room at the Vidalia City Board of Education Office Building at 1001 North Street, West, Vidalia, Georgia. The VBOE also conducts luncheon meetings at 12:00 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of each month (except November – 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday) when school is in session and are they held at the schools on a rotating basis.

To view meeting agendas and minutes, click on the link or copy/paste the address in your browser:

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Index.aspx?S=4167>

### **VIDALIA BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY MANUAL**

The Vidalia City School District operates according to policies established by the Vidalia City Board of Education. The Board, which represents both the State and local community, develops the policies after careful deliberation, and the school administration implements them through specific rules and regulations. The Board then appraises the effects of its policies and makes revisions as necessary. A copy of the Vidalia City Board of Education Policy Manual can be viewed on the following web site:

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Index.aspx?S=4167>

# VIDALIA CITY SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

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**VISION:** All students will become future, productive, contributing members in society.

**MISSION:** Invest, Inspire, Ignite

**BELIEFS:**

- High expectations are essential to develop college and/or career ready students.
- Family and community engagement encourages accountability which is vital to academic success and community economic development.
- Effective teaching practices optimize students' opportunities to learn.
- All extra-curricular activities are an enhancing/integral component of the overall educational program to produce well-rounded citizens.
- Strong relationships are fostered through inclusive and diverse connections that create positive school climate in order to ensure safety of ALL.

**STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:**

- I. Student Achievement AND Development for ALL**
  - a. Increase students' readiness for post-secondary options
  - b. Increase mastery of content
  - c. Improve developmental areas for all students
- II. Organizational and Operational Effectiveness**
  - a. Improve facility safety and security
  - b. Maximize financial efficiency and effectiveness
  - c. Develop and improve cohesive operational processes and practices
- III. Positive Culture and Climate**
  - a. Develop and sustain positive staff-student relationships
  - b. Improve safe, healthy and secure learning environments
  - c. Increase community, family and school engagement
- IV. Quality Staff Learning and Growth**
  - a. Recruit highly qualified staff
  - b. Improve and sustain staff knowledge
  - c. Retain highly qualified staff

# VIDALIA CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION OFFICE

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1001 North Street West  
Vidalia, GA 30474  
(912) 537-3088 office / (912) 538-0938 fax  
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Superintendent of Schools  
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

J. Garrett Wilcox, Ed. D.  
Ginger B. Morris  
April T. Clark

Director of Student Services  
Special Education Academic Coach  
RTI Coordinator  
Behavior Intervention Coach  
Administrative Assistant for Student Services

Katrina Blount-Woodard  
Sarah Craft  
Jennifer Blount  
Latrell Askins  
Kathy Riehkof

Federal Programs Director  
System Social Worker / Migrant Ed Coordinator

Tammy McFadden  
Gwen Warren

Technology Director / Student Information Coordinator  
Communications Director

Sabrina W. Wiggs  
John Koon

School Nutrition Director  
School Nutrition Bookkeeper  
Area Supervisor

E. Denise Parson  
Vickie Messex  
Gloria Helton

Finance Director / CFO  
HR / Payroll Manager  
Accounting Specialist

Norma D. Croft  
Teresa Herrera  
Sandy E. Seidling

Plant Operations Director  
Transportation Director  
After School Program Director

Russell Burkett  
Robert Taylor  
Debbie Jones

## SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

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J. D. Dickerson Primary School

Brenda McLain, Principal  
Charleen Norfleet, Assistant Principal

Sally D. Meadows Elementary School

Scott Stephens, Principal  
Ben Helms, Assistant Principal  
Michael Johnson, Assistant Principal

J. R. Trippe Middle School

Sandy Reid, Principal  
Brandon Boston, Assistant Principal

Vidalia High School

John Sharpe, Principal  
Eric McDonald, Assistant Principal

## ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

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The Vidalia City School District expects employees with professional concerns regarding matters requiring administrative action to follow the appropriate lines of authority. Employees express their initial concerns to their school administrator. When necessary, the administrator will refer such matters to the next highest administrative authority. The Board expects employees to keep their immediate supervisors informed of their professional activities by whatever means their supervisor deems appropriate.

All employees have the ultimate right to appeal a decision made by an administrator through grievance procedures established through the Vidalia City Board of Education Policy GAE Complaints and Grievances. This policy outlines the key elements involved in due process. Lines of authority and structured channels of communication do not restrict, in any way, the cooperation of all employees at all levels in order to develop the best possible school programs and services.

## PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

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It is the policy of the Vidalia Board of Education that certified personnel shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible. The Board of Education encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality where possible. This policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed or, where for any other reason, the certificated employee desires to pursue this procedure.

**Reference:** BOE Policy GAE

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Index.aspx?S=4167>

# EQUAL EMPLOYMENT / EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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## **NON-DISCRIMINATION: TITLE IX, SECTION 504, and AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

(VBOE Policy GAAA)

The Vidalia City Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, marital status, age, native language, religion, creed, or handicap/disability in educational programs and activities, admissions to facilities, or in employment practices. You may contact the Central Office, 1001 North Street West, Vidalia GA 30474. The phone number is (912) 537-3088. Any employee, student, or parent can submit a complaint regarding equal opportunity to the Superintendent. If the employee is dissatisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Superintendent, she/he can then have the complaint referred to the Board of Education. For details regarding the grievance procedure related to equal opportunity, refer to the Board Policy Manual, Policy GAAA.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) sets minimum wage, overtime pay, equal pay, record keeping, and child labor standards for employees who are covered by the act and are not exempt from specific provisions. Vidalia City School System employees who are nonexempt from overtime and minimum wage requirements include most non-certified staff members. All certificated positions and some non-certificated positions are exempt from overtime requirements.

Non-exempt employees are not required to work beyond the 40-hour workweek, and will not be compensated for remaining at work beyond the 40-hour workweek. All over time must be approved in writing by the superintendent in advance.

## **DRUG FREE WORKPLACE (VBOE Policy GAMA)**

The Vidalia City Board of Education recognizes that a drug-free workplace promotes employee productivity and facilitates the accomplishment of the school system's mission and goals. In accordance with federal and state law, the Board prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, sale or use of illegal drugs and alcohol. Specific disciplinary sanctions may include referral for prosecution, completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program at the employee's expense, suspension from employment, termination of employment and other disciplinary measures as appropriate. As a condition of employment, each employee must abide by the terms of the policy and must notify the Board within five days after any criminal charge or conviction for a drug or alcohol related violation.

## **HARRASSMENT (VBOE Policy GAEB)**

It is the policy of this School District to prohibit any act of harassment of employees by other employees based upon race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability at all times and during all occasions while at school, in the workplace or at any school event or activity. Any such act shall result in prompt and appropriate discipline, including the possible termination of employment.



# 505-6-.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

<https://www.gapsc.com/Rules/Current/Ethics/505-6-.01.pdf>

- (1) Introduction. The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.
- (2) Definitions
  - a) "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
  - b) "Child endangerment" occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.
  - c) "Educator" is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.
  - d) "Student" is any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual between and including the ages of 3 and 17 under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.
  - e) "Complaint" is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.
  - f) "Revocation" is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.
  - g) "Denial" is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.
  - h) "Suspension" is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
  - i) "Reprimand" admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
  - j) "Warning" warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
  - k) "Monitoring" is the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.
  - l) "No Probable Cause" is a determination by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.
- (3) Standards
  - a) Standard 1: **Legal Compliance** - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the Commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana

as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

- b) Standard 2: **Conduct with Students** - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
  2. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
  3. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
  4. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
  5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
  6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
  7. failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students who are under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).
- c) Standard 3: **Alcohol or Drugs** - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
  2. being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc).
- d) Standard 4: **Honesty** - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting or omitting:
1. professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
  2. information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
  3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
  4. reasons for absences or leaves;
  5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
  6. information submitted in the course of professional practice.

- e) **Standard 5: Public Funds and Property** - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. misusing public or school-related funds;
  2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
  3. submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
  4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
  5. using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.
- f) **Standard 6: Remunerative Conduct** - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. soliciting students or parents of students, or school and/or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
  2. accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
  3. tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
  4. coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.
- g) **Standard 7: Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
  2. sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
  3. violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
  4. violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.
- h) **Standard 8: Abandonment of Contract** - An educator shall fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or education agency for the duration of the contract. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the employer, and
  2. willfully refusing to perform the services required by a contract.
- i) **Standard 9: Required Reports** - An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
  2. failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
  3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.
- j) **Standard 10: Professional Conduct** - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education 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.
- k) **Standard 11: Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
  2. compromising the integrity of the assessment.

#### (4) Reporting

- a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).
- b) The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

#### (5) Disciplinary Action

- a) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and

performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
  2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
  3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
  4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);
  5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
  6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession; and
  7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.
- b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The Superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

# EMPLOYMENT

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## **Vacancy announcements**

It is the practice of the Vidalia City Schools to post an announcement of the availability of all certificated positions within the local school system and qualified candidates may apply for the same. These announcements will be posted on the state-wide online job data base maintained by the state and on the district web site. Vacancies for classified positions are posted on the system website.

## **Applications**

Employment applications are kept on file for one year from the date of application and are maintained in the district administrative office. These applications are available to the building principals and/or department level director as positions become available.

## **Interview / Selection / Assignment**

State law provides that all employees must be approved by the board of education upon the recommendation of the superintendent. However, school/district level leadership personnel play a key role in interviewing, evaluating and assessing which applicants should be recommended to the board by the superintendent.

The assignment of certified personnel is guided by state and federal regulations as it applies to the specific vacancy. Classified employee assignments are determined by qualifications required for the position.

## **Board Approval**

The board of education must approve to hire all school district employees, but it may not act to hire any employee who has not been recommended by the superintendent. However, the board is not bound to accept the superintendent's recommendation of any particular individual.

Upon board approval, the employment process is initiated by the personnel department. Professional employees who fill positions requiring certificates will be issued a written contract of employment. All other employees holding non-certified or classified positions are not required to have written contracts and are considered "at will" employees.

## **Job Descriptions**

The Vidalia City Schools is required to have a job description for "each certificated professional personnel classification." The system also maintains job descriptions for classified personnel.

## **Background Checks**

A criminal record check will be conducted at or prior to employment on every person who is employed by the Board of Education for the first time to fill either a full-time or part-time certified or classified position with this School District.

For initial hiring purposes, the employee either shall be fingerprinted or shall provide a signed consent on a form designated by the School District, including the employee's full name, address, social security number and date of birth, based upon the requirement of state law or applicable rule or regulation.

All background checks are generated electronically and are initiated by the school system. The individual is required to pay all costs associated with the background check.

Criminal record check information shall be used by the school district and its officials and employees only for the purpose of determining whether to grant regular employment, and in any administrative or judicial proceeding calling such employment into question. Such information shall be stored, restricted, and disposed of in such manner as may be required by federal and state authorities. A breach of confidentiality or the inappropriate use of criminal background check information may constitute a workplace violation and may be grounds for disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination and/or reporting to the Professional Standards Commission.

### **Screening of Criminal Record Checks**

In the event the criminal record check reflects that the employee, whether certified or classified, has been charged with, pleaded to or been convicted of an offense other than a minor traffic violation, the Superintendent shall bring the matter to the board of education at its next meeting or sooner, **if warranted**, for an employment decision. The acceptability of the criminal record check will be at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee. Employment may be terminated at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee for those whose criminal record check is not satisfactory. At the superintendent's discretion, the employee may continue employment in the school district pending final board decision.

In the event an employment decision is made adverse to a person whose record was obtained from the criminal record check pursuant to this policy, the person will be informed by the Superintendent or designee the information pertinent to that decision. This disclosure shall include information that a record was obtained from the Georgia Criminal Information Center, the specific contents of the record, and the effect the record had upon that decision.

Reference: O.C.G.A 20-02-0211.1

### **Compensation**

#### ***CONTRACTED PERSONNEL***

The Vidalia City Board of Education directs that the Superintendent or his/her designee shall establish a process for evaluating, verifying, documenting and awarding experience for placement of certified personnel on the state salary schedule in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 160-5-2-.05.

"Certified personnel" shall be defined as those individuals working in positions for which a professional teaching, leadership, service, technical specialist or permit certification issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) is required by the PSC and/or the School District.

#### ***NON-CONTRACTED PERSONNEL***

Salaries for classified or non-contracted employees are not prescribed by state law, other than minimum salaries for bus drivers and school food and nutrition personnel. The Vidalia City Schools has established a salary scale for all classified personnel positions. A classified employee's salary is based on the number of verifiable years of experience in a similar position and the workday schedule for the position as set annually by the system. The superintendent has the final approval of all verifiable experience. The provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act generally are applicable to non-professional employees.

"Classified personnel" shall be designed as those individuals that are in positions that do not require certification as issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. (i.e. paraprofessionals, clerical, bookkeeper, bus driver, maintenance, school nurse)

*All employees shall be paid on or before the last working day of each calendar month.*

## **Benefits**

The Vidalia City Board of Education provides numerous employee benefits to the employee. Employees should contact the payroll department or visit [www.myvidaliacitybenefits.com](http://www.myvidaliacitybenefits.com) with any questions related to employee benefits.

Benefits available through payroll deduction include:

- Life, long-term disability, short-term disability, flexible spending accounts, legal, vision, and dental insurance
- State Health Benefit Plan
- 403 (b) Plans (Annuity)

Vidalia City Board of Education also participates in the Teacher Retirement System, Public School Employee Retirement and Social Security (for eligible positions ONLY)

The Cafeteria Plan, under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue code, allows employees to put eligible benefits on pre-tax basis.

Automatic Deductions will be made for the following purposes:

- Retirement
- Social Security  
Positions NOT COVERED by Social Security: Educators, Clerical, Bookkeeper, Technology, School Nurse  
Positions COVERED by Social Security: Paraprofessionals, Bus Driver/Monitor, Food Service, Maintenance, After School Program
- Federal and State Income Tax
- Insurance, when authorized
- Teacher association dues, when authorized
- Days of leave in excess of authorized leaves
- Tax sheltered annuity, when authorized

## **Changes in Demographic Status**

In the event that an employee experiences a change in residence/address, name, contact information, or relevant payroll/tax/beneficiary information pertaining to your employment, please contact the Human Resources department. Employees must complete appropriate forms to make changes in address, marital or dependent status, beneficiary information, retirement plans and health plan forms.

## **Attendance / Absences**

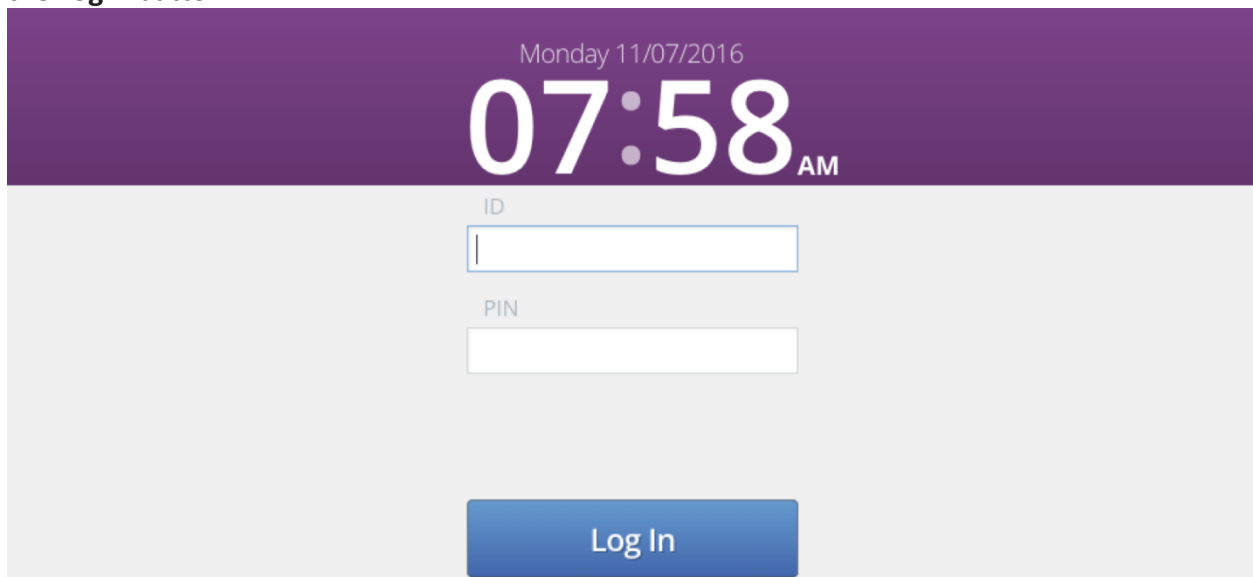
In order for the school system to achieve its desired goals, good attendance and punctuality are necessary. Regular and prompt attendance is expected and required of all our employees. When being absent from work or late to work is unavoidable, the employee must notify his/her supervisor at least one day in advance whenever possible. In case of an emergency or any circumstance when it is not possible to give advance notice, employees must personally call the supervisor or designee before time to report to work. All absences due to sickness, personal leave, vacation (if applicable) or professional leave must be documented in the system's attendance manager platform.

ALL system employees WILL clock in/out at his/her work site each day. A Kiosk is located at several locations within the school buildings and employees will scan a system issued ID cards to capture arrival and departure times. The employee is responsible for this card and WILL BE CHARGE \$5.00 FOR EACH REPLACEMENT CARD.



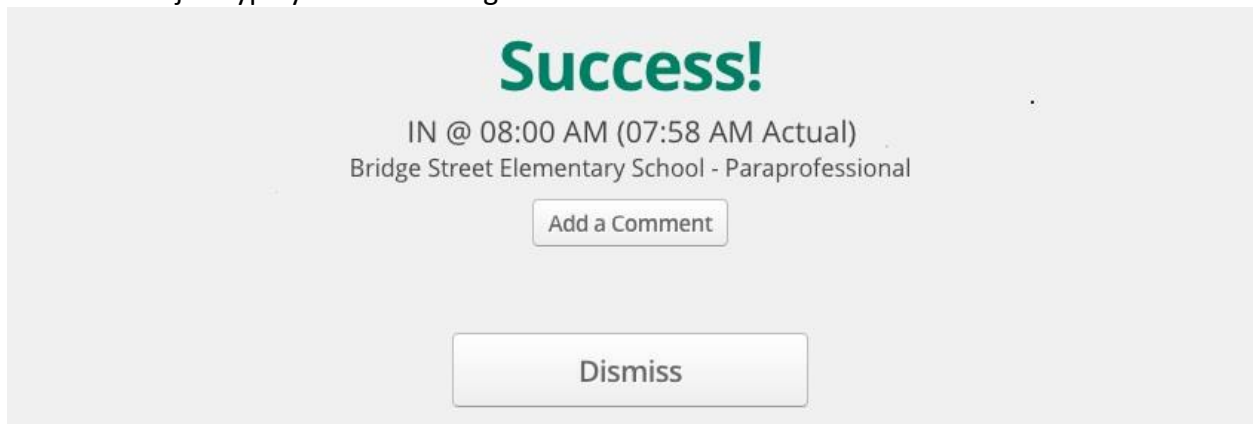
## TIMEKEEPING

Using a Kiosk is easy! First, scan your barcode at the kiosk or enter your ID & PIN. Then, click the **Login** button.

A screenshot of a kiosk login interface. At the top, a purple banner displays the date 'Monday 11/07/2016' and the time '07:58 AM' in large white font. Below the banner, on a light gray background, are two input fields: 'ID' and 'PIN'. The 'ID' field contains a single vertical bar character. Below these fields is a blue 'Log In' button.

On some kiosks, you may need to click the "Use ID/PIN" button in order to manually enter your credentials.

As an employee, if your sign in was successful, you will see a "Success!" message with the location and job type you are working.

A screenshot of a successful login confirmation screen. It features a large green 'Success!' heading. Below it, the text reads 'IN @ 08:00 AM (07:58 AM Actual)' and 'Bridge Street Elementary School - Paraprofessional'. At the bottom, there are two buttons: 'Add a Comment' and 'Dismiss'.

If the sign in was unsuccessful, an error message will appear. If you receive an error message, please report the exact wording of the message to your Administrator.

When you are ready to sign out, follow the same steps as shown above.

### Adding Comments

You may swipe your bar code or enter your ID & Pin. If comments are required, the message "An initial comment is required" is presented. If comments are not required, then they may or may not be entered.

There are three types of comment options that you may encounter.

1. Custom - Open text box allowing the employee to enter their own comment.

2. Pre-defined – Options are limited to pre-defined comments created by the District. These are visible via a drop-down menu.
3. Both – Employee has the option to choose the pre-defined comments or chose “Custom” and enter their own comment.

The following image depicts an example of a custom comment box.

The screenshot shows the attendance system interface for a user named Severus Snape. The header displays the date Wednesday 12/20/2017 and the time 08:15 AM. Below the header, a message states: "An initial comment is required to Sign in for this unscheduled job." The interface is divided into three main sections: SCHEDULE, EVENT HISTORY, and LOCATION & JOB TYPE. The SCHEDULE section shows a list of events for the user, including Regular, WORK, Family Illness, and LEAVE. The EVENT HISTORY section shows a message: "There haven't been any recorded events today." The LOCATION & JOB TYPE section shows "Hogwarts - Teacher" and "SIGN IN/OUT". Below this, there is a "COMMENTS" section with a text input field labeled "Enter comment". At the bottom, there are "Log Out" and "Sign in" buttons.

The following image depicts an example of a predefined comment box.

The screenshot shows the attendance system interface for a user named Severus Snape. The header displays the date Wednesday 12/20/2017 and the time 08:23 AM. Below the header, a message states: "Welcome, Severus Snape". The main content area shows a "Success!" message, followed by "Sign in @ 08:23 AM (08:23 AM Actual)" and "Hogwarts - Teacher". Below this, there is a dropdown menu with the following options: "-- Custom --", "Late- Approved", "Late- Unapproved", and "-- Custom --". The "Late- Approved" option is selected. To the right of the dropdown menu is a "Save Comment" button. At the bottom, there is a "Dismiss" button.

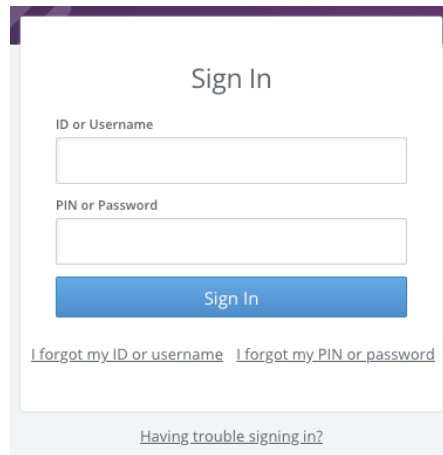
At the end of each leave cycle (payroll cutoff date), the leave clerk will review time sheets to verify that all time and absences have been properly submitted in the attendance program prior to approving time.

## SUBMITTING ABSENCES

### SIGNING IN

Type the following web address in your web browser's address bar: [www.aesoponline.com](http://www.aesoponline.com)

The following Sign In page will appear.



The Sign In page features a white background with a purple header. It contains two input fields: 'ID or Username' and 'PIN or Password'. Below these is a blue 'Sign In' button. At the bottom, there are two links: 'I forgot my ID or username' and 'I forgot my PIN or password', and a link 'Having trouble signing in?' at the very bottom.

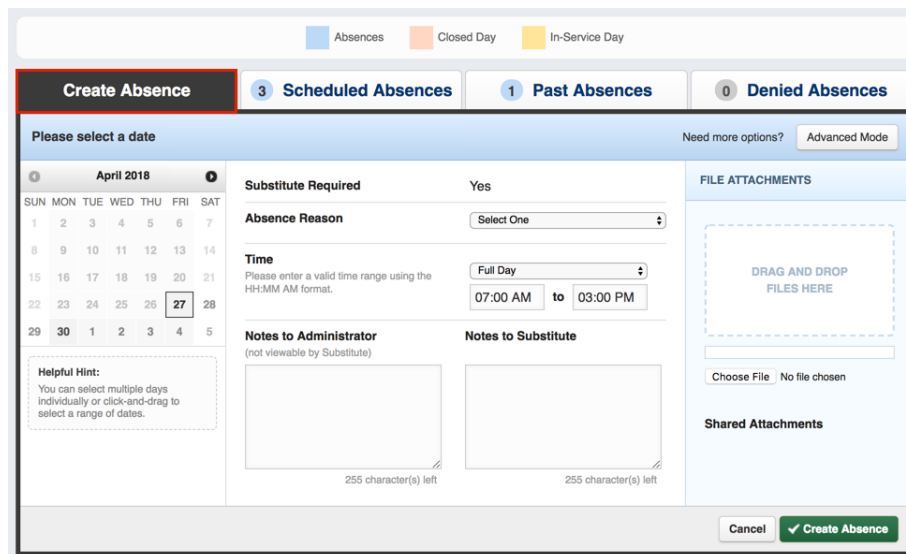
Enter your ID/username and PIN/password and click Sign In.

### RECOVERING CREDENTIALS

If you cannot recall your credentials, use the recovery options or click the “Having trouble signing in?” link for more details.

### CREATING AN ABSENCE

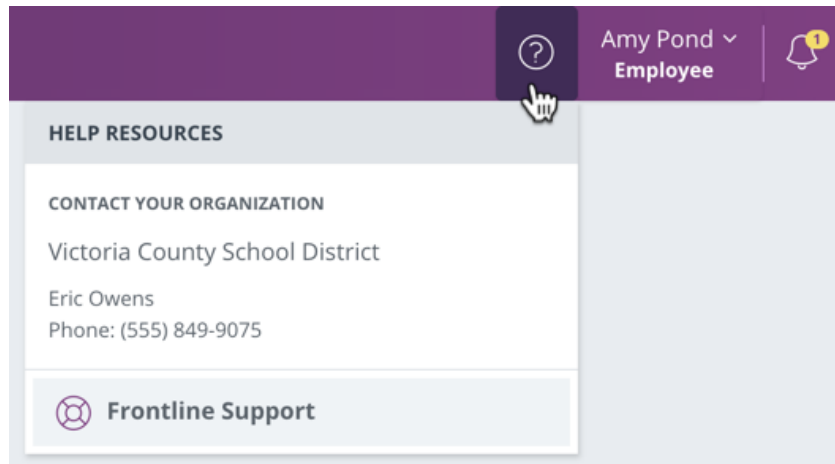
You can enter a new absence from your Absence Management home page under the Create Absence tab. Enter the absence details including the date of the absence, the absence reason, notes to the administrator or substitute, etc. and attach any files, if needed. You can then click Create Absence.



The Create Absence page is a complex form with a light blue header. It includes a calendar for April 2018 on the left, a 'Substitute Required' section with a 'Yes' selection, an 'Absence Reason' dropdown, a 'Time' section with a 'Full Day' selection and a time range (07:00 AM to 03:00 PM), and two text areas for 'Notes to Administrator' and 'Notes to Substitute'. On the right, there is a 'FILE ATTACHMENTS' section with a 'DRAG AND DROP FILES HERE' area and a 'Choose File' button. At the bottom, there are 'Cancel' and 'Create Absence' buttons.

## GETTING HELP AND TRAINING

If you have questions, want to learn more about a certain feature, or need more information about a specific topic, click **Help Resources** and select **Frontline Support**. This opens a knowledge base of help and training materials.



## ACCESSING ABSENCE MANAGEMENT ON THE PHONE

In addition to web-based, system accessibility, you can also create absences, manage personal information, check absence reason balances, and more, all over the phone.

To call the Absence Management system, dial **1-800-942-3767**. You'll be prompted to enter your ID number (followed by the # sign) and then your PIN number (followed by the # sign).

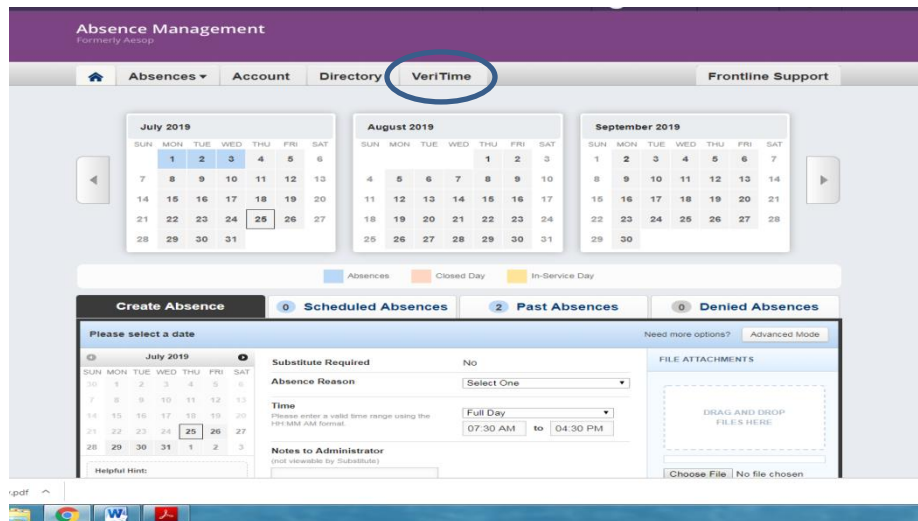
Over the phone you can:

- Create an absence (within the next 30 days) – **Press 1**
- Review upcoming absences – **Press 3**
- Review a specific absence – **Press 4**
- Review or change your personal information – **Press 5**

If you create an absence over the phone, please note the confirmation number that the system assigns the new absence, for future reference.

## VIEWING TIMESHEETS

Timesheets can be viewed your Absence Management account. Once logged in, click on the Veritime tab to view.



### SICK LEAVE

Each person employed by the Vidalia City Board of Education in the capacity of teacher, student service support personnel or administrative and supervisory personnel as provided by Georgia's Quality Basic Education Act shall be entitled to sick leave with full pay computed on the basis of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  working days for each completed contract month. An employee must work a minimum of 10 days per month to earn sick leave. This means that an employee provided under the above section earns  $12\frac{1}{2}$  days on a 10-month contract,  $13\frac{3}{4}$  days on an 11-month contract, and 15 days on a 12-month contract. The Georgia Teacher Salary Schedule provides for teachers to be on a 10-month contract.

All of the above employees may accumulate sick leave from one year to the next up to a maximum of 45 days. Sick leave accumulated up to 45 days is transferable from one system to another. **A doctor's note is required for more than 5 consecutive days of sick leave.**

Paraprofessionals and secretaries are entitled to earn  $12\frac{1}{2}$  days of sick leave each school year computed on the basis of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  days per month of employment for 10 months. Sick leave may accumulate up to a maximum of 45 days. **A doctor's note is required for more than 5 consecutive days of sick leave.**

Bus drivers may earn sick leave computed on the basis of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  days for each completed school month, making a total of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  days per school year. Bus drivers may accumulate sick leave from one school year to the next up to a maximum of 45 days, which is transferable from one system to another. **A doctor's note is required for more than 5 consecutive days of sick leave.**

A lunchroom employee may earn  $12\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $13\frac{3}{4}$  or 15 days of sick leave, depending on 10, 11 or 12 month employment, per school year at the rate of one ( $1\frac{1}{4}$ ) day per school month. All or any portion of this time not used by the end of the school year may be accumulated up to a maximum of 45 days. Sick leave is not transferable from one system to another. **A doctor's note is required for more than 5 consecutive days of sick leave.**

No sick leave is earned if the employee works less than ten (10) days of a school month.

Any unused sick leave and personal leave credited to the employee shall be forfeited if she/he withdraws from service for a period of 12 or more consecutive months, unless the withdrawal is for educational leave to seek a higher level or different field of certification and provided that the withdrawal does not exceed 24 months.

A teacher, paraprofessional, secretary, or custodian may utilize sick leave upon the approval of the principal or supervisor for absence due to illness, or injury, or necessitated by exposure to contagious disease in which the health of others would be endangered by his/her attendance on duty, or for illness or death in the employee's immediate family. The term "immediate family" is defined as including husband, wife, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, son, son-in-law, grandparents, or grandchildren.

It is expected that sick leave for appointments will be requested 72 hours in advance and that an appointment which could be accomplished in half a day would be limited to half of sick leave.

### FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

Beginning August 2004, if an employee will be absent for more than ten (10) days due to circumstances that qualify under the Family Medical Leave Act, the employee must request Family Medical Leave by completing the "Request for Family Leave" form and the accompanying "Certificate of Health Care Provider" and submit to Superintendent for approval. **Reference:** VBOE Policy GAE

### BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

The Vidalia City Board of Education does not formally recognize or provide for “bereavement leave”. Leave for the death of an immediate family member is provided for and explained in the sick leave Policy above. Any such leave is deducted from the employee’s sick leave, provided such leave is available. If the employee has no sick leave, the employee’s pay will be docked for the time away from work.

### MATERNITY LEAVE

An employee is entitled to utilize sick leave for maternity leave absences not to exceed the doctor’s written statement of estimated length of disability. Any employee who is pregnant shall be entitled to a leave of absence to begin at a time to be determined by the employee, the physician and the local school superintendent between the commencement of pregnancy and the anticipated date of delivery. Said employee shall notify the superintendent in writing of her desire to take such leave and, except in cases of emergency, shall give such notice at least sixty (60) calendar days prior to the date on which her leave is to begin. This notice shall include a doctor’s statement of anticipated date of physical disability (beginning and ending dates). The employee may continue in active employment as late into her pregnancy as she desires provided she is able to properly perform the required functions of her job.

Final determination of ability to properly perform the required job function shall be made by the local board of education. An employee wishing to work to the date of physical disability shall be entitled to the use of all accumulated sick leave credited to her and concurrently use any Family Medical Leave for which she qualifies, not to exceed the doctor’s estimated length of physical disability. An employee who has used her sick leave of which she is entitled shall continue to use any Family Medical Leave for which she is entitled and have her salary reduced by one day or her annual salary for each additional day of absence.

In summary, to prepare for maternity leave, please follow these guidelines:

1. Request maternity leave from immediate supervisor (administrator) and advise on leave intentions.
2. Contact Payroll for coordination of leave/benefits. Appointment with payroll personnel should be scheduled as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days in advance of anticipates leave.

### PERSONAL LEAVE

Each certified employee, paraprofessional, secretary, or bus driver may utilize **up to three (3) days of any accumulated sick leave each year for personal reasons**, if prior approval of his/her absence is given by the Principal 72 hours in advance (except in an extreme emergency). Director of Transportation will approve a bus driver’s personal leave.

Each lunchroom employee may utilize three (3) days of any accumulated sick leave for personal leave. Prior approval must be given for lunchroom employees by the Lunchroom Manager and School Nutrition Director 72 hours in advance except in an extreme case of emergency.

Employees are encouraged to use personal leave for the purpose for which it is intended: taking care of personal business, which reasonably cannot be taken care of outside the work day/year. **Personal leave will be granted upon the availability of a substitute and at the discretion of the employee’s supervisor.**

**NOTE: Personal/Vacation leave shall not be taken preceding or following a school holiday or vacation period. Neither shall personal leave be used during pre-planning, post-planning, or in-service days. Neither shall personal leave be taken on the first and last day of school except in extreme cases of emergency unless prior approval from building principal or the Superintendent has been granted. Personal leave days are not cumulative from year to year.**

#### IN-SERVICE DAY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Certified/classified employees of the Vidalia City School System are required by employment contract specifications to work at least 190 days. These days include, but are not limited to, any pre and post planning days and any other days that the Board of Education has specified as "in-service".

Certified/classified employees are reminded that these in-service days are mandatory attendance days and no personal leave days are to be requested during this time. In extenuating circumstances left to the Principal's discretion, an exception may be allowed. Such circumstances should be rare and will be considered on an individual basis. All requests should be made in writing and the Principal should keep this written request for documentation. If permission is given to miss an in-service day(s), the employee will be required to make-up the in-service day(s) and a log should be kept by the Principal to document the make-up day(s). If employee fails to make-up day(s) missed within 30 days of leave, it will be the responsibility of the Principal to report this to the Personnel Director who will document information and submit notification to Payroll to dock employee for time missed.

#### PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

Professional leave must be approved at least one week in advance and is restricted to those activities that are beneficial to the system and/or promote professional growth for the employee.

#### VACATION LEAVE

Vacation leave applies only to those employees who work twelve months. Twelve-month classified central office personnel will earn 10 days after working one year. **Vacation days may not be carried over beyond one fiscal year.**

#### RELIGIOUS LEAVE

Leave for observance of religious holidays may be granted to school personnel including certified personnel, paraprofessionals, secretaries, bus drivers, lunchroom managers and employees, and custodial staff as part of their allowable personal leave. The Principal and Superintendent must approve request for such leave 72 hours in advance.

#### MILITARY LEAVE

Persons employed in any capacity in any school (other than those employed on a temporary basis) shall be entitled to military leave for ordered military duty with full employment and reinstatement rights as provided by law. An employee shall be allowed a leave of absence for his/her duties while performing ordered military duty.

The term "ordered military duty" as defined by O.C. G. A., 38-2-279 shall mean the following- Any military duty performed in the service of the State or of the United States, including but not limited to attendance at any service school or schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States by a public officer or employee as a voluntary member of any force of the organized militia or any reserve force or reserve component of the armed forces of the United States pursuant to orders issued by the competent State or Federal authority, without the consent of such public officer or employee.

An employee shall be paid his/her salary or other compensations for a period or periods of absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from such duty, not exceeding a total of 18 days in one calendar year and not exceeding 18 days in any one continuous period of such absence.

In the event the governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to State active duty as a member of the National Guard, such employee shall be paid his/her salary or other compensation while performing such duty for a period not exceeding 30 days in any one calendar year and not exceeding 30 days in any one continuous period of such State active duty service.

### JURY DUTY LEAVE

Employees summoned to jury duty will be granted administrative leave. This leave will not count against an individual's personal, professional or sick leave. Employees will not be required to reimburse the Board of Education for jury pay received. An employee must inform his/her immediate supervisor of the summons upon receiving it and complete a Request for Leave form and attach a copy of the jury summons.

### TARDIES/EARLY DEPARTURES

All contractual employees are required to perform their duties for an eight (8) hour day. Arrival & Departure times may vary according to assigned duties. Tardiness to work should be rare and only in extreme emergencies. The school administrator will handle late arrival and early departures from work. Continual tardiness/early departure will be reflected in end of the year evaluation.

**REFERENCE:** VBOE Policy GARK

### **Evaluation**

#### *CONTRACTED PERSONNEL*

State law requires that all personnel employed by the school district, including the superintendent of schools, must have their performance evaluated annually by appropriately trained evaluators.

Vidalia City Schools implements the evaluation system adopted by the State Board of Education for elementary and secondary school teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals, as defined by the State Board.

#### *NON-CONTRACTED PERSONNEL*

Non-certified employees will be evaluated annually by their immediate supervisor. An evaluation should be done in narrative and checklist form pointing out what is satisfactory or unsatisfactory, what improvements are needed to become a satisfactory employee, as well as, a timetable for the improvement to be accomplished.

### **Re-Employment**

All employees are considered for continued employment in March / April of each school year. Principals presented their recommendations to the superintendent who presents them to the board of education for their consideration.

### **Resignation**

#### *CONTRACTED PERSONNEL*

Employees wishing to resign from their contract must give adequate notice of such desire. The request for release from contract must be made in writing to the Superintendent. The Superintendent is authorized by the Board of Education to accept a resignation effective on the date when a qualified replacement has been secured to ensure the best possible transition. The Superintendent will present the resignation at the earliest regular Board meeting. A separation notice, as required by the Labor Department, shall be completed and submitted on any employee who is leaving the system.

#### *NON-CONTRACTED PERSONNEL*

Dismissal of non-certified personnel shall be made by the principal of each school. Resignations shall be made in writing to the principal. The Superintendent is empowered to dismiss any bus driver found guilty of violations of bus safety rules. (See Policy EDC) A separation notice, as required by the Labor Department, shall be completed and submitted on any employee who is leaving the system.



# WORKERS COMPENSATION

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**VIDALIA CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROCEDURES**  
State Board of Workers' Compensation  
270 Peachtree Street, N.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30303-1299  
404-656-1299 or 1-800-533-0682  
<http://www.sbwc.georgia.gov>

IMPORTANT!!! FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES WHEN AN ON-THE-JOB INJURY OCCURS MAY PREVENT YOU RECEIVING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS:

1. When an employee is injured at work, he/she must report this injury to his/her supervisor immediately. A report of injury form must be completed.
2. Workers' Compensation will not pay for treatment at the emergency room in non-emergency situations.
3. Follow-up doctor visits should be scheduled before or after work hours where possible.
4. Should an injury require medical treatment, the injured employee must select a physician from the list below:

<b>Accordia Urgent Care &amp; Family Practice</b> <b>3193 E. First Street</b> <b>Vidalia, GA 30474</b>	<b>Meadows Regional Medical Center</b> <b>1 Meadows Parkway</b> <b>Vidalia, Georgia 30474</b>
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## **Responsibilities**

### Employee:

- a. Report all accidents and/or injuries, regardless of how trivial, to his/her immediate supervisor as soon as the accident/injury occurs. If the injury prevents an immediate report, the employee must report the accident/injury within 24 hours or have someone do so on his/her behalf.
- b. Those employees who are witnesses to a job related accident/injury shall provide any information regarding the circumstances surrounding the accident as required by the immediate supervisor or the designated workers' compensation personnel.

### Immediate Supervisor:

- a. Ensure that the injured employee is provided with first aid treatment or, if necessary, with emergency medical care.
- b. File an Accident Report/First Report of Injury with the HR Manager within 24 hours after being made aware that a job-related accident/injury has occurred or is being alleged. Supervisors, not employees, are to complete this report.
- c. Report by phone, to HR Manager as soon as possible, any accident involving a serious injury and/or death.
- d. Thoroughly investigate the accident or alleged accident and include the results of the investigation in the Accident Report/First Report of Injury.

#### Department Heads/Principals:

- a. Ensure that employees and supervisors follow correct procedures for filing job-related accident reports and injury claims.
- b. Assure that supervisors investigate all accidents and report all injuries or alleged injuries, and take the appropriate steps to provide the necessary medical care to treat the compensable injury.
- c. Conduct your own investigation and, where necessary, take appropriate steps to ensure that the cause of the accident is corrected as soon as possible to prevent recurrence.
- d. Report immediately any concerns relating to the accident or injury to the HR Manager.

#### Non-Emergencies:

- a. Employee reports the accident/injury to his/her immediate supervisor as soon as possible but no later than the end of the school/business day.
- b. Supervisor and/or department head assists employee in receiving treatment from a panel physician or, if appropriate, from an emergency room.
- c. ***If appropriate, the supervisor and/or the department head should accompany the injured employee to the physician's office or emergency room.***
- d. The HR Manager will provide a Medical Authorization Form to the authorized treating physician or emergency room.
- e. If an employee is referred to a panel physician and then to a specialist for follow-up treatment, the specialist becomes the authorized treating physician.

#### Clearance to Return to Work:

- a. After minor injuries are treated at an emergency room the employee is expected to return to work immediately upon approval of the attending physician.
- b. For injuries treated by a panel physician or a referral specialist, the authorized treating physician will make a medical determination of the employee's return-to-work status and will give the employee a written form to be given by the employee to his/her supervisor or department head.
- c. The supervisor will notify the HR Manager of employee's return-to-work status as soon as possible after receiving the completed form.

#### **Workers' Compensation, Sick Leave and Short Term Disability:**

- a. An employee cannot draw workers' compensation and sick leave or short term disability benefits at the same time.
- b. An employee has a seven (7) day qualifying period before workers' compensation benefits are paid.

#### **Worker's Compensation Fraud**

Vidalia City Board of Education strongly believes that the vast majority of employees will never submit a fraudulent workers' compensation claim. Nevertheless, workers' compensation fraud exists and can have substantial cost for affected businesses. The information below explains some aspects and consequences of workers' compensation fraud.

You will sign a signature page indicating your receipt and understanding of Waste, Fraud and Abuse. Contact your principal and/or supervisor if you have any questions.

A person commits workers' compensation fraud when, in the course of reporting a claim to obtain benefits, he or she intentionally misrepresents a material fact to obtain a benefit to which the claimant is not otherwise entitled. A misrepresentation is material when it is relevant to whether benefits will be paid or the amount of benefits to be paid.

**Some Examples of Workers' Compensation Fraud:**

- Filing a workers' compensation claim for an injury that is known with certainty to be completely unrelated to employment.
- Lying about earnings received from employment other than the employment in which you were injured.
- Purposely misleading or exaggerating one's current medical condition to receive workers' compensation benefits.

Making false statements for the purpose of obtaining workers' compensation benefits may result in civil and criminal penalties for the individuals that make such statements. Vidalia City Board of Education supports activities to detect and combat workers' compensation fraud!

This is not intended to discourage the legitimate use of the workers' compensation system. You should report any bodily injury that you believe is work-related to your supervisor at once.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

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Characteristics connecting staff development and higher achieving schools include the following:

a greater focus on improving student performance, a greater focus on classroom instruction, more support and direction from leadership, more collective actions by the faculty, and more effective training strategies. (Harkreader and Weathersby, 1998, *Staff Development and Student Achievement: Making the Connection in Georgia Schools*) With these facts in mind, the Vidalia City School System Plan and the school improvement plans of each school reflect Professional Learning that is aligned to the goals and strategies of the respective plans. Through school improvement planning, all certified personnel will participate in opportunities to improve their craft.

Research has shown that effective professional learning activities are ongoing and allow for follow-up of initial training. Evidence of follow-up should be reflected in individual professional learning activities logs, which will be a part of the evaluation process. In addition, results will be reflected in the school's staff development summative evaluation.

**Prior to participating in professional learning, a request must be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent. The professional leave request form is in DocEFill under the "bookshelf" icon. The DocEFill website address is as follows: <http://softdocs.vidalia-city.k12.ga.us/index.aspx>**

### \*\*\*ATTENTION\*\*\*

The employee must complete these steps correctly before the employee can receive reimbursement for expenses.

Requests for reimbursement must be received within fifteen (15) days of the approved activity.

For Professional Learning scheduled off-contract (i.e. summer months), a contract will be issued to the educator via google forms. Contracts must be completed and submitted in order to be eligible for stipends. Vidalia City Schools agrees to pay stipends upon receiving documentation of the program completion from the instructor. Depending on the date such documentation is received in the central office; the stipend will be processed during the next payroll cycle.

# CERTIFICATE RENEWAL

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**Effective July 1, 2017, certificate renewal requirements have been revised. Please carefully read this section to understand the new renewal requirements that apply to the certificate or license you hold.**

Certificate renewal is an outcome of applying Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC)-accepted continuing professional learning toward the continued validity of a state certificate or license. While it is essential for individual educators to maintain valid certificates and licenses, professional learning should be focused toward school improvement leading to improved teaching and increased student learning. The goal of certificate renewal and professional learning is for educators within a Georgia local unit of administration (LUA) to work together to enhance established educational goals for the individual educator, the school and the LUA to assist students in meeting state standards for student achievement. This requirement applies to the design of school and LUA learning communities, the selection of workshops that support learning communities, and any other professional learning designed for certified educators. Click this link to read the rule - [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#)

**Types of renewable certificates:** \*Standard Professional (SR), Performance-Based Professional (PR), Advanced Professional (AP), Lead Professional(LP) and Life (D) certificates. [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.02 CLASSIFICATION](#) [ *\*Most educators have this type of certificate.* ]

**Types of renewable licenses:**

Adjunct, Educational Interpreter, Non-Instructional Aide, Paraprofessional and Support Personnel [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.02 CLASSIFICATION](#)

**Validity periods of certificates and licenses:**

Certificates are valid for a five (5)-year period. Licenses are valid for a period of one (1) to five (5) years depending on the type of license. [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.32 VALIDITY PERIOD & DATING OF CERTIFICATES](#)

**Renewal credit will be comprised of the following** *(must be completed during validity period of certificate or license):*

- Professional Learning Plans and Professional Learning Goals (see below), and/or
- The Special Georgia Requirement in Special Education as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 Special Georgia Requirements.
- School districts may have additional professional learning requirements in addition what the GA Professional Standards Commission requires for certification.

**Professional Learning Plan / Professional Learning Goal:**

Written Professional Learning Plans (PLPs) or Professional Learning Goals (PLGs) shall be required for all certificate holders employed by a Georgia LUA. PLPs outline requirements for the professional growth of educators as well as clearly delineate support the school or school system will provide for the educator's professional growth. PLGs outline identified areas for educator growth for those educators not required to have PLPs.

Educators who hold Professional certificates or higher shall engage in continuous improvement by developing PLGs. Professional Learning Plans will be required for the educators who fall into one or more of the categories listed below:

- Educators under an Induction certificate
- Educators returning to the profession after an absence
- Educators working on non-renewable certificates

- Educators working in a certification field in which they have not worked before
- Educators new to the state
- Educators who have low summative ratings

#### **Certificate Renewal:**

The PLPs and PLGs are developed and maintained locally. When it is time for you to renew your certificate, the principal or other designated official will verify completion of professional learning requirements. The certification official responsible for the electronic renewal of a certificate will also verify that the PLP/PLG has been met prior to submitting documentation.

Applications for educators employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring GaPSC certification must be submitted electronically by the employing LUA. Educators will be notified by the certification official of the application process which includes a criminal record check.

All certified personnel whose employment is continued with this School District shall have a criminal record check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission.

#### **Certificates not eligible for renewal:**

Educators who have received any combination of two (2) Unsatisfactory, Ineffective or Needs Development annual performance evaluations during the previous five (5) year validity cycle that have not been satisfactorily remediated by the employing Georgia LUA shall not be entitled to any certificate except for a Waiver in any field. [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#)

## **PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION**

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In January 2002, the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the "No Child Left Behind Act" were enacted. The purpose is "to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind." Title I of the act discusses methods for the improvement of academic achievement for disadvantaged students. A major component of this discussion is the qualifications of paraprofessionals for each state. This new act establishes Federal eligibility requirements for instructional educational paraprofessionals.

**Federal Requirements** - Paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, shall have one of the following:

- Completion of at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education; or
- An associate's (or higher) degree; or
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate through a state or local academic assessment -
  - Knowledge of, and ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics; or
  - Knowledge of, and ability to assist in instructing, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.

#### **Who has to meet these New Federal Requirements?**

- Any paraprofessional who is hired after January 8, 2002, to be employed in any school working with instruction, regardless of funding source.
- Any paraprofessional hired with Title I funds in a Targeted Assisted School who works with instruction.
- Any paraprofessional hired prior to January 8, 2002, in the above-defined schools has four years to meet the new Federal requirements.

### **Exceptions -**

ESEA requirements do NOT apply to paraprofessionals with:

- Primary duties to act as a translator.
- Duties consisting solely of conducting Parental Involvement Activities.

**Georgia Requirements** – All Georgia Paraprofessionals must hold a valid state certificate issued by the PSC. Vidalia City School System is responsible for ensuring that all applicable Federal ESEA hiring requirements are met.

### **Paraprofessional License renewals that expire in 2018 or later:**

- Employment by a Georgia [LUA](#);
- Certificate holders who are employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring certification must have an individual Professional Learning Plan (PLP) or a Professional Learning Goal (PLG) coordinated with their supervisor and employing LUA. These PLPs or PLGs are developed and maintained locally, and must be aligned with individual educator evaluation results as well as with school and school system professional learning plans. To be acceptable for certificate renewal, the PLP or PLGs must be directly associated with the annual personnel evaluation. (For additional information, please see [Rule 505-2-.36 Renewal](#) effective date: July 1, 2017);
- All certified personnel whose employment is continued with this School District shall have a criminal record check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission.
- Employing school system applies for Certificate.

**It is the responsibility of each certified employee to maintain a valid certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission. Failure to maintain a valid certificate is grounds for termination.**

All background checks are generated electronically and are initiated by the school system. The individual is required to pay all costs associated with the background check.

Individuals who provide voluntary services over an extended period of time shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal record check prior to volunteering in the schools.

Criminal record check information shall be used by the school district and its officials and employees only for the purpose of determining whether to grant regular employment, and in any administrative or judicial proceeding calling such employment into question. Such information shall be stored, restricted, and disposed of in such manner as may be required by federal and state authorities. A breach of confidentiality or the inappropriate use of criminal background check information may constitute a workplace violation and may be grounds for disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination and/or reporting to the Professional Standards Commission.

### **Screening of Criminal Record Checks**

In the event the criminal record check reflects that the employee, whether certified or classified, has been charged with, pleaded to or been convicted of an offense other than a minor traffic violation, the Superintendent shall bring the matter to the board of education at its next meeting or sooner, **if warranted**, for an employment decision. The acceptability of the criminal record check will be at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee. Employment may be terminated at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee for those whose criminal record check is not satisfactory. At the superintendent's discretion, the employee may continue employment in the school district pending final board decision.

In the event an employment decision is made adverse to a person whose record was obtained from the criminal record check pursuant to this policy, the person will be informed by the Superintendent or designee the information pertinent to that decision. This disclosure shall include information that a record was obtained from the Georgia Criminal Information Center, the specific contents of the record, and the effect the record had upon that decision.

### **PSC Clearance Certificate Requirement**

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1 requires that all educators employed by Vidalia City Board of Education on and after January 1, 2011 hold a valid Professional Standards Commission (PSC) Clearance Certificate, subject to the limitations set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1.

For the purpose of this policy, “Educator” means teachers, school or school system administrators, and other education personnel of this state who hold certificates, permits, or other certification documents, including Clearance Certificate, issued by the Professional Standards Commission; and, persons who have applied for but have not yet received or have been denied such certificates, permits or other certification documents from the Professional Standards Commission.

A PSC Clearance Certificate verifies that an educator employed in Georgia has successfully completed fingerprint and criminal background check requirements and has no convictions of any felony, of any crime involving moral turpitude, of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana, or of any sexual offense, and does not have a certificate or license that is currently revoked or suspended in Georgia or any other state.

There are no academic requirements necessary to qualify for this certificate and it does not authorize the holder to be considered in-field for any position. Employees of charter, waiver, and IE2 schools must hold a PSC Clearance Certificate even if not required to hold any other certification. All holders of this certificate are subject to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

To qualify for the PSC Clearance Certificate, the educator must:

Be employed by the Vidalia City Board of Education; have satisfactorily completed fingerprint and criminal background check requirements as outlined above; and not hold an educator certificate that is currently revoked or suspended in Georgia or any other state; and The PSC Clearance Certificate is valid for five years. It may be renewed through the Vidalia City Board of Education upon completion of a Georgia (GCIC) criminal background check and submission of a renewal application.

The PSC Clearance Certificate is not a professional educator certificate and is not part of the Interstate Agreement to be accepted by other states.

### **Time-line for Compliance**

On January 1, 2011, educators holding a professional educator certificate who are already employed by a Vidalia City Board of Education are not required to obtain a Clearance Certificate until their professional certificate is renewed. To renew the professional certificate and add the Clearance Certificate, the Vidalia City Board of Education shall conduct the required Georgia (GCIC) criminal background check. After the criminal background results are in and the educator completes the renewal application, the Vidalia City Board of Education shall submit the information electronically to PSC. No additional fingerprinting shall be required for renewal of the Clearance Certificate.

As of January 1, 2011, educators holding a professional educator certificate who are newly employed by Vidalia City Board of Education are required to obtain a PSC Clearance Certificate at the time of employment.



# FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE OR CORRUPTION

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## **Reporting**

Vidalia City School System employees shall report verbally or in writing to their supervisor, department head, or other appropriate authority, evidence of activity by a district department, agency, or employ constituting:

1. A violation of local, state, or federal law, rule or regulation;
2. Fraud;
3. Misappropriation of resources;
4. Substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety; or
5. Gross mismanagement, a gross waste of monies, or gross abuse authority

## **Definitions**

### **Fraud:**

The intentional deception perpetrated by an individual or individuals, or an organization or organizations either internal or external to federal, state, or local governments, which could result in a tangible or intangible benefit to themselves, others, or the district or could cause detriment to others or the district, state, or federal governments. Fraud includes a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading statements, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives and is intended to deceive.

### **Waste:**

The intentional or unintentional, thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use, or squandering of district, state, or federal resources to the detriment or potential detriment of the district. Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs as a result of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

### **Abuse:**

Excessive or improper use of a thing, or to employ something in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules for its use. Intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment, or misuse of resources. Extravagant or excessive use as to abuse one's position or authority. Abuse can occur in financial or non-financial settings.

## **Staff Responsibilities**

Vidalia City School District employees who suspect that financial fraud, impropriety, or irregularity has occurred shall immediately report those suspicions to their immediate supervisor and/or the Superintendent/designee, who shall have the primary responsibility for initiating the necessary investigations. Investigations shall be conducted in coordination with legal counsel and/or other internal or external departments or agencies as appropriate.

The Superintendent shall inform employees with financial accounting responsibilities of the following anti-fraud regulations established by the Board:

1. The District shall operate in a climate of honesty and ethical behavior with employees doing all within their power to further that goal.

2. Employees shall comply with all state and federal laws, rules, regulations and court orders, as well as Board policy addressing fiscal matters.
3. Employees shall practice good stewardship of District financial resources, including timely reporting of fraudulent expenditures.
4. Employees with financial/accounting responsibilities shall support and follow sound business practices to the best of their ability and in keeping with their assigned responsibilities and job- related training by:
  - Maintaining and protecting District financial records;
  - Performing one's job with the highest attention to detail to minimize and prevent error, falsification of accounting records, and omission of transactions;
  - Reporting knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud, including intentional misstatements and omissions of amounts or disclosures.
  - Guarding against misappropriation of assets;
  - Refusing to reveal unauthorized persons or agencies investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the District; and
  - Resisting incentives, pressures, and negative attitudes that detract from performance or assigned responsibilities.

### **Internal Controls/Investigations**

The Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for developing internal controls to aid in preventing and detecting fraud or financial impropriety or irregularity within the District. Reports or suspected fraudulent activities shall be investigated in a manner that protects, to the extent possible, the confidentiality of the parties and avoids unfounded accusations. Employees involved in the investigation shall be advised to keep information about the investigation confidential. Employees who bring forth a legitimate concern or suspicion about potential impropriety shall not be retaliated against. Those who do retaliate against such an employee shall be subject to disciplinary action.

If an investigation substantiates occurrence of a fraudulent activity, the Superintendent/designee shall issue a report to appropriate personnel and to the Board of Education. Final disposition of the matter and any decision to file a criminal complaint or refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement and/or regulatory agency for independent investigation shall be made in consultation with legal counsel. Results of the investigation shall not be disclosed to or discussed with anyone other than those individuals with legitimate need to know until the results become subject to public disclosure in accordance with state or federal law.

Each employee shall have access to this document, complete a compliance module regarding waste, fraud & abuse and sign attesting that they have indeed received the information and understand its contents

on                      the                      staff                      signature                      page.

# CHILD ABUSE

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## PROTOCOL FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT IN THE VIDALIA CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM

As a Mandated Reporter, school staff must report suspected child abuse or neglect. Each year employees will receive training via a Compliance Director module. Your completion will be recorded and kept on file by the human resources department. If you have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, report these concerns to the school counselor at your first opportunity during the same school day. If you work in a system-wide position, report child abuse or neglect to your direct supervisor. **It is not your duty to investigate child abuse or neglect.** It is your responsibility, however, to report child abuse or neglect so that it can be investigated by a trained professional, usually from the Department of Family and Children Services. Please follow the steps below for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect:

- 1) All school system personnel who have reasonable cause to believe that any student has been abused shall report the suspected abuse to the school counselor or school administration.
- 2) The school counselor or administrator who receives reports shall immediately report in turn to the Department of Family and Children Services and shall notify the school system social worker of all referrals.
- 3) If all school administrators are not available, contact the system social worker. Supervisors of system-wide staff should contact the social worker directly.
- 4) If the system social worker is not available, contact the Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent.
- 5) Upon receiving the report, the administrator, system social worker or school counselor will submit the report via:
  - Email [CPS.Intake@DHS.GA.Gov](mailto:CPS.Intake@DHS.GA.Gov) OR
  - Fax (229) 317-9663 OR
  - Toll Free 1-855-422-4453 OR
  - Local # (912) 526-8117 between the hours of 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Even if a child resides in another county, the Department of Family and Children Services will contact the county in which the child resides.

- 6) If the Department of Family and Children Services are not available to take your report, contact the Vidalia City Police Department, the Lyons Police Department, or the Toombs County Sheriff's Department, depending upon where the child resides.

**Any person or official required by subsection (c) of O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. You may also be disciplined by your school system.**

## DRESS CODE

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All employees represent Vidalia City Schools; therefore professional appearance is expected in order to support a positive educational environment. To insure this, staff clothing must be:

- Reflective of an employee's position as a role model when representing Vidalia City Schools.
- Conducive to the employees' tasks and/or environment.
- Clothing and apparel (accessories including jewelry, shoes, undergarments) that is clean, modest, and safe.

To support employees and administrators, Vidalia City Schools has established the guidelines above for classroom staff (both certificated and support staff) to clarify expectations. The guidelines are the District's minimum guidelines. Administrators may develop more restrictive guidelines for their campus, but they may not create less restrictive guidelines. Directors may develop alternative guidelines for their department. The department guidelines may take into account the employee's job duties and work environment. Administration is expected to review these guidelines with their staff each year.

Employees must always consider that their employment placed them in the position of role models for students. Employees shall be expected to exhibit a professional image to students, parents, and the community. The Board of Education expects the dress and appearance of certificated and support personnel to be professional and appropriate for their job description. So while denim jeans and shorts would not normally be considered standard professional attire, there are occasions/tasks where these would be deemed appropriate (i.e., fundraising, safety). Each school may designate specific activities related to school spirit when jeans may be worn. The building administrator has the decision making authority when addressing professional dress expectations with their staff.

## STAFF LUNCH CHARGES

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School Nutrition is a self-supporting program provided for students and staff. As a result, we do not receive any funding from our system. To insure staff can participate in the program, the following charge policy will be followed at all schools:

- No staff member may charge more than \$20.00 per month.
- ALL charges must be paid by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Failure to do so will result in the staff member not being allowed to charge until the prior charges are paid.
- If charges are not paid monthly, the staff member will be contacted by the Director of School Nutrition first, building administrator and if left unresolved, by the Superintendent of Schools.

# EMPLOYEE INTERNET ACCESS AGREEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

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*Please read the following carefully before signing the signature page. This is a legally binding document. Violations of the Acceptable Use Guidelines may cause an employee's access privileges to be revoked, School Board disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken, up to and including employment termination.*

Internet access is available to students and employees in all Vidalia City Schools. We believe the Internet offers vast, diverse and unique resources to both students and employees. Our goal in providing this service to employees and students is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers.

With the access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Available precautions will be taken to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover controversial information, but we believe the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of this project.

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies, and regional and state networks. In addition, the smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. Users of Vidalia City Schools Network and Internet Access are subject to Administrative Monitoring. Our Internet appropriate use regulations are provided here so that you are aware of the responsibilities you are about to acquire. If a user violates any of these provisions, future access could be denied. The user may also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including employment termination.

Teachers who have access to student data must adhere to guidelines and legal requirements as specified by local Board policy and procedure, state rules and federal law. A breach of confidentiality is a violation of the Educator Code of Ethics for certified personnel.

Access to Vidalia City Schools' Student Information System (PowerSchool) is a privilege, not a right.

When a teacher enters attendance information for a student, the attendance information becomes part of the student's official student record. Falsification of attendance in PowerTeacher is the same as falsification of paper-based student records. It is a violation of the Educator Code of Ethics for certified personnel to falsify student records.

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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### **I. Acceptable Use**

Access to the school's network and the Internet is provided exclusively for educational purposes and research consistent with the school system's educational mission and goals. All employees shall also be required to sign the "Employee Internet Access Agreement and Administrative Procedures" affirming that they have read and understand the administrative procedure on "Use of Electronic Media: Internet Use and Web Page Policy (IFBGA) and understand the consequences for the violation of said policy.

## **II. Privileges**

The use of the school system's Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use may result in the cancellation of those privileges. The Superintendent or designee(s) shall make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated these policies and procedures and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time.

## **III. Unacceptable Use**

The user is responsible for all his/her actions and activities involving the network. Examples of prohibited conduct include but are not limited to the following:

### **A. Accessing materials or communications that are:**

1. Damaging to another's reputation
2. Abusive
3. Obscene
4. Sexually oriented
5. Threatening
6. Contrary to the school system's policy on harassment
7. Harassing
8. Unauthorized access including so-called "hacking"
9. Other unlawful activities
10. Disrupting instruction (i.e. Using chat-rooms and Internet for personal use during school or work hours)
11. Disrupting work hour's productivity (i.e. Playing games, surfing the Internet for personal use, and personal shopping online during school or work hours).

### **B. Sending or posting materials or communications which are:**

1. Damaging to another's reputation
2. Abusive
3. Obscene
4. Sexually oriented
5. Threatening
6. Contrary to the school system's policy on harassment
7. Harassing
8. Other unlawful activities.

### **C. Using the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts or transmitting any material in violation of U.S. and State regulations;**

### **D. Copying or downloading copyrighted material on any system connected to School System's hardware/software without the owner's permission. Only the owner(s) or individuals specifically authorized in writing by the owner(s) may copy or download copyrighted material to the system;**

### **E. Copying or downloading copyrighted material without the owner's written Permission— copyrighted materials can only be distributed with the owner's written permission. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the owner in accordance with applicable copyright laws, Board policy and administrative procedures;**

### **F. Using the network for private financial or commercial gain;**

### **G. Wastefully using resources;**

### **H. Utilizing any software having the purpose of damaging the unit's system or**

user's system;

- I. Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities (hacking);
- J. Invading the privacy of individuals;
- K. Using another user's account or password;
- L. Posting material authorized or created by another without his/her consent;
- M. Posting anonymous messages;
- N. Using the network for commercial or private advertising;
- O. Forging of electronic mail messages;
- P. Attempting to read, delete, copy or modify the electronic mail of other system users or deliberately interfering with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail;
- Q. Using the network while access privileges are suspended or revoked; and
- R. Using the network in a fashion inconsistent with policies, accepted practices and or specific directives from administrators and generally accepted network etiquette.

#### **IV. Supervisor Supervision**

Principals and other supervisors should become familiar with this procedure and should enforce the rules concerning appropriate use of the Internet by employees. When in the course of their duties, principals and supervisors become aware of employee violations of this policy and procedures, they should correct the employee and address the matter in accordance with policy and procedures and the Board of Education general disciplinary policies and procedures.

#### **V. Compensation**

Employees shall be responsible for compensating the school system for any losses, costs, or damages incurred by the school system relating to or arising out of any employee violation of these procedures and policy.

#### **VI. Security**

Network security is a high priority. If the employee identifies or perceives a security problem or breach of these responsibilities on the Internet, the user must immediately notify a principal, his/her designee OR other appropriate staff. They must not demonstrate the problem to other users.

#### **VII. Vandalism**

Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges and other disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy the school unit's equipment or materials, data of another student, the Internet network, or agency. This includes but is not limited to the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

#### **VIII. Telephone Charges**

The Board of Education assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees including but not limited to long distance charges, per minute surcharges and/or equipment or line costs.

#### **IX. Network Expectations**

The user is expected to abide by the generally accepted network expectations. These include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Be polite. Do not become abusive in messages to others.
- B. Use appropriate language. Do not swear or use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.
- C. Do not reveal the personal addresses or telephone numbers of any students.

- D. Recognize that electronic mail (E-mail) is not private. People who operate the system have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- E. Do not use the network in any way that would disrupt its use by other users.
- F. Consider all communications and information accessible via the network to be property of Vidalia City Schools School District.
- G. Limiting streaming music and video files for educational use only.
- H. Employees must be aware that students have access to the Internet from all of the school system's computers. Employees must use good judgment and closely supervise their student's use of the Internet. The School System uses filtering software to help prevent student access to inappropriate web sites. However, it is impossible to block access to all objectionable material. If a student decides to behave in an irresponsible manner, they may be able to access sites that contain materials that are inappropriate for children or are not commensurate with community standards of decency in accordance with Board Policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act.
- I. Employees are required to keep all passwords confidential and secure, including student account IDs and Passwords. Employee passwords will be required to be changed on at least an annual basis.
- J. Employees are responsible for the appropriate storage and backup of their data.

#### **X. Expectations for Communicating Electronically**

Vidalia City Schools (VCS) recognizes that today's students and parents engage in electronic forms of communication for their daily interactions with friends, family, and their larger social networks. VCS too has turned to e-mail, websites, blogs, text messaging, cellphones and use of public social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and others to communicate with similar groups. Whereas these forms of communication are dynamic, mobile, and quickly reach their audience through technologies that have become an integral part of our online lives, they may, in some circumstances, not meet the public and professional standards for communicating with students and parents.

VCS realizes that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of staff, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is a part of 21st century learning. To this aim, VCS has developed the Expectations for Communicating Electronically to provide direction for employees when participating in online social media activities. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by VCS employees is a reflection on the entire district. By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, or other social media for classroom or district use, you agree to abide by these expectations. Please read them carefully before posting or commenting on any blog or creating any classroom blog, wiki and/or podcast.

All employees must adhere to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators (<http://www.gapsc.com/professionalpractices/rules/505-6-.01.pdf>) as stated in VCS Board Policy.

**The expectations outlined in this document are designed for the purpose of:**

- 1. Protecting the students, staff, and the District;**
- 2. Raising awareness of acceptable ways to use electronic communication tools when communicating with students and parents; and**



### **3. Raising awareness of the positive and negative outcomes that may result in using these tools with student and parents.**

The following is a set of expectations that all members of the VCS professional community will adhere to when communicating with students and parents electronically.

#### **Does the communication pass the TAP Test?**

Electronic communication with students and parents must always be **Transparent, Accessible** and **Professional** as defined below.

- 1. The communication is transparent.** – ALL electronic communication between staff, students, and parents should be transparent. As a public school district, we are expected to maintain openness, visibility, and accountability with regard to all communications.
- 2. The communication is accessible.** - ALL electronic communication between staff, students and parents are a matter of public record and/or may be accessible by others.
- 3. The communication is professional.** – ALL electronic communication from staff to student or parent should be written as a professional representing VCS. This includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a VCS professional. Always choose words that are courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike in manner.

If communication meets all three of the criteria above, then it is very likely that the methods of communicating with students and parents that you are choosing are very appropriate; moreover, encouraged.

**Vidalia City Schools does not permit the use of social media sites for students at the current time. Vidalia City will revisit policy & procedures for students accessing social media on the Vidalia City Schools network at a later time.**

#### **Social Media Sites for Personal Purposes (a friendly reminder)**

Staff members presently using social media sites, such as Facebook, to communicate with friends, family and their personal networks should consider adjusting their privacy settings to “Only Friends.” If “Friends of Friends” or “Networks and Friends” settings are used, staff members open their content to a much larger group of people, including students and parents. Since social networking is relatively new to many staff members, the following are guidelines for maintaining a clear line between personal social networking and professional/educational social networking.

**Your Online Identity** As educators, we have a professional image to uphold, and how we conduct ourselves online impacts this image. Mistakenly, some educators assume that being online shields them from having their personal lives examined. Online identities are public and can cause serious repercussions if behavior is careless.

#### **Friending**

One of the hallmarks of online networks, whether personal or professional, is the ability to “friend” others and thus creates an online group that shares interests and personal news. Vidalia City Schools strongly discourages staff members from accepting or initiating invitations to “friend” students within personal social networking sites. When students gain access into a staff member’s network of friends and acquaintances and are able to view personal photos and communications, the student-teacher dynamic is altered. By “friending” current students, staff members provide more information than one

should share in an educational setting. It is important to maintain a professional relationship with students to avoid relationships that could cause bias in the classroom. Social networking can be a way to stay connected with students after they have graduated, but even then staff members should use their best judgment when “friending” students who have graduated.

The potential for “friending” parents of students also exists and can create some awkwardness for educators who want to maintain a clear line between their private and professional lives. Those who find themselves in the delicate position of either “unfriending” parents who are already a part of their social network or of not accepting requests for friendship can use the following language to help them out: “Our district has provided us with guidelines to help us navigate the line between our personal and professional on-line activities. I use my Facebook account solely within the realm of my personal life and would like to maintain that personal/professional distinction. In the spirit of maintaining that distinction I need to not “friend” parents of students.”

**The following are recommended practices:**

*Recommendations for Professional/Educational Social Networking by Staff*

- Let your administrator, fellow teachers, staff, and parents know about your educational network.
- Use district-supported networking tools (e.g. Gmail, PowerSchool...).
- Do not say or do anything using a site attached to your Vidalia City Schools account that you would not say or do as a teacher in the classroom.
- Have a clear purpose and outcomes for the use of the networking tool, and establish a code of conduct for all network participants.
- Adhere to the FERPA guidelines when posting student pictures and using student names. BE CAREFUL. Unsure....check with media specialists or Technology Specialists at district office.
- Pay close attention to the site's security settings and allow only approved participants access to the site.

*Recommendations for Personal Social Networking by Staff*

- Do not access your Personal Accounts on the Vidalia City Schools Network
- Do not accept students as friends on personal social networking sites. Decline any student- initiated friend requests and do not initiate social networking friendships with students.
- Use your best judgment when "friending" former students AFTER they have graduated.
- Do not friend parents of students.
- Do not post to or update your page during work hours. Yes, you may be on your lunch break, but others who see your page may inaccurately infer that you are social networking when you should be teaching.
- Remember that people classified as "friends" have the ability to download and share your information with other people. You don't have control over others with whom they share your information.
- Post only what you want the world to see. Imagine your students, their parents, or your administrator visiting your site. It is not like posting something to your web site or blog and then realizing that a story or photo should be taken down. Once you post something on a social networking site it may be accessible even after it is removed from the site.
- Check your profile's security and privacy settings. At a minimum, educators should have all privacy settings set to "only friends". "Friends of friends" and "Networks and Friends" open your content to a large group of unknown people. Your privacy and that of your family may be at risk.

*Recommendations for All (Personal and Professional) Social Networking by Staff*

- Do not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous. Exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colorful language, obscenity, guesswork, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.

- Staff members receiving information on a social networking site that falls under the mandatory reporting guidelines, must report it as required by law.
- Stay informed and cautious in the use of all new networking technologies.

**X. Unauthorized Disclosure**

Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors is illegal under the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000.

Employees will employ the same supervision and care in determining appropriate use of the Internet as is used with other instructional materials.

**XI. No Expectation of Privacy**

All employees of the school system understand and agree that there is no expectation of privacy in the use of the Vidalia City Schools' network or Internet at any system school or on any other premise under the control of the school district. Employees also understand that every communication and every use of Vidalia City Schools' network and Internet within Vidalia City Schools System may be and periodically will be monitored in the interest of maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of ongoing classroom instruction and school system operations.

## FIELD TRIPS

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Field Trips designed to stimulate student interest and inquiry and provide opportunities for social growth and development are considered appropriate extensions of the classroom. To the extent that they provide the most effective means for accomplishing general curriculum objectives of the Vidalia City Schools, they must be recommended by the building principal to the superintendent of the Vidalia City Schools.

To be educationally beneficial, a field trip requires thoughtful selection, careful advance preparation of the class, and opportunities for pupils to assimilate the experience during and at the conclusion of the trip. To this end, teachers and principals will be expected to consider the following factors in selection of field trips: (a) value of the activity to the particular class group or class groups; (b) relationship of the field trip activity to a particular aspect of classroom instruction; (c) suitability of the activity and distance traveled in terms of the age level; (d) mode and availability of transportation; and (e) cost.

The Superintendent or his/her designee is authorized to approve all field trips except those which extend overnight or leave the State of Georgia.

Field trips which extend overnight and/or leave the State of Georgia must be approved by the Board of Education.

**Reference:** BOE Policy IFCB

## FUND RAISERS

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School clubs, organizations, and groups desiring to raise money through solicitations or sales campaigns must present their request to the principal who will submit request for approval by the superintendent. The teacher in charge and school bookkeeper will be notified of all approved fund raiser requests. At the completion of each fundraiser, a fundraiser analysis form should be completed and provided to the school bookkeeper as documentation that all funds/items were handled properly and that the fundraiser was effective. Although donations may be solicited for school activities, all donations MUST flow through the School Activity Accounts in accordance with procedures established in the School Activity Account Handbook. Social Media Accounts such as "GO FUND ME" SHOULD NOT be utilized by anyone in the name of Vidalia City Schools or affiliated with any school activity or function. Raffles are prohibited by law for nonprofit, tax exempt organizations (please reference O.C.G.A. 16-12-22.1)

Requests to raise funds through solicitations will be considered upon application and must be approved prior to beginning the fund raiser.

Fundraisers involving the sale of food will not occur 30 minutes prior until 30 minutes after the end of breakfast or lunch meal service and may not be sold in the cafeteria and as specified in state board rule 160-5-6-.01.

# ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

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All employees are expected to follow the procedures established regarding financial activity within the Vidalia City School System Accounting Procedures Manual. A copy is available with each school bookkeeper and the district finance department.

## TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS

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Travel reimbursements must be requested on the Employee Expense Form in Softdocs. These forms must be completed in its entirety including the required receipts as well as a copy of the Professional Leave form and agenda from the conference/meeting. Forms without all required information will be returned to the employee. Reimbursement will be delayed pending the completion of the form.

## PURCHASING PROCEDURES via SOFTDOCS

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### **PURCHASE REQUISITION**

1. Teacher/Originator generates Purchase Requisition and routes to....
2. Bookkeeper who codes & verifies availability of budgeted funds
3. Principal/Administrator approves or denies request and routes to....
4. Superintendent (Final Authority for all purchases – Approves or Denies)
5. Accounts Payable then enters into PCGENESIS and creates a PURCHASE ORDER

### **PURCHASE ORDER**

1. PURCHASE ORDER is sent to Teacher/Originator so order can be placed (Bookkeeper also receives a copy for reference).
2. Teacher/Originator places order by mail/fax/email or any preferred method using the P.O. #
3. Upon receipt of goods/services the Bookkeeper/Receiving Agent will check in, verify receipt and obtain Packing Slip.

### **RECEIVING PROCEDURES**

1. The school administrator will designate a receiving agent(s) at each school. A list of all designated agents shall be sent to the Finance Director. List of agents should be kept at a minimum number. One agent must be designated to receive packages during summer months and complete steps 2, 3 and 4 in the absence of the teachers / P.O. originator.
2. The receiving agent will log all packages received on a Package/Parcel Receiving Verification Form.
3. The teacher/individual who placed the order will then be notified to:
  - a. Pick up the package.
  - b. Verify contents and completion of order
  - c. List discrepancies on packing slip
  - d. Sign and date packing slip and return both to receiving agent
  - e. The receiving agent will give the signed packing slip to the bookkeeper

Note: This entire process should be completed within 3 days of date received.

### **AP APPROVAL FORM**

1. Invoice is received at the Central Office by Accounts Payable.
2. Invoice is scanned and attached to an AP APPROVAL FORM by the Invoicing Manager.
3. Form is routed to the School Bookkeeper/Receiving Agent
4. Bookkeeper/Receiving Agent scans Packing Slip and attaches to AP APPROVAL FORM
5. AP APPROVAL FORM is then completed and payment is authorized.
6. Form is received by Accounts Payable Specialist and a Claim for Payment is entered into PCGENESIS by referencing original P.O. in PCGENESIS, making any necessary revisions based upon Invoice/AP APPROVAL FORM.
7. AP APPROVAL FORM is then archived in Softdocs and a check is generated from PCGENESIS.

### **CHECK DISTRIBUTION**

- CHECKS are distributed only on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the last business day of the month.
- CLAIMS submitted by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month will be processed for payment on the 15<sup>th</sup>. (If the 15<sup>th</sup> occurs on the weekend, claims will be paid on the Friday preceding the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month.)
- CLAIMS submitted by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month will be processed for payment on the last workday of the month.



**Compliancedirector.org Log-in Instructions**

**Step 1:** Type **vidaliacity.compliancedirector.org** into your browser.

**Step 2:** Click on the “Register” button in the top right corner.

**Step 3:** Enter the information requested on the registration page. Your email address (preferably your work email) will become your username. You will create your own password. If you do not have a work email address, a personal email address may be used. You should remember your username and password.

The Vidalia City **Keyword** is **Behavior**.      \*\*\* This keyword is case sensitive\*\*\*

**Step 4:** Once you are in your Dashboard, the modules are listed on the right. Click on the module you’d like to complete (your administration will have told you the modules to complete) and **work your way through the module**. **Input your personal information** at the end of the module and **click “submit.”** You will then find yourself back in your Dashboard, where you will see the modules you have completed on the left side of the page. Select the next module you wish to complete on the right side of the page and follow the same process until you have completed all the required modules.

**To logout of your Dashboard**, click on your name at the top of the page and click on “logout.”

**Important:** Once you begin a module, you must complete it in order to create your record of completion for that module. You cannot start, stop, and go back into the module where you left off at another time. You can log in and out of your Dashboard as often as you’d like to take new modules and to see or **print** a list of the modules you have completed.

\*\*\*\* You only need to register the first time you log into ComplianceDirector.org. After you have registered your account in the program, you will input your username and password to log-in thereafter.

Compliance Director Required Modules	
Child Sexual Abuse & Assault Awareness & Prevention	Mandated Reporting
Code of Ethics	Suicide Awareness & Prevention
Ethical Use of Social Media	FERPA Data/Privacy

**If you experience difficulties with this process, please contact the district’s compliance director: Tammy McFadden, Federal Programs Director**