

# Athens Independent School District

## Professional / Paraprofessional Employee Handbook 2014 – 2015



**Athens Independent School District**  
**104 Hawn Street**  
**Athens, Texas 75751**  
**903-677-6900**  
**Fax: 903-677-6908**

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The information in this handbook is subject to change. Changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or eliminate the information summarized in this booklet. As the district provides update policy information, the employee is responsible for reading and abiding by the changes. Employee understands that no modifications to contractual relationships or alternations of at-will relationships are intended by this handbook.

# Employee Handbook Receipt

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Name

Campus/Department

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Athens ISD Employee Handbook. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

Employees have the option of receiving the handbook in electronic format or hard copy.

*Employee Handbook is on the Athens ISD website at [www.athensisd.net](http://www.athensisd.net) in the employee portal.*

Please indicate your choice by checking the appropriate box below:

- I choose to receive the employee handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing it according to the instructions provided.
- I choose to receive a hard copy of the employee handbook.

The information in this handbook is subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this book. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will employment relationships are intended by this handbook.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my supervisor or department head of any changes in personal information such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor or the Personnel Office if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign and date this receipt and forward it to the Personnel Office.

# Introduction

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

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

# District Information

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## Description of Athens Independent School District

Athens Independent School District encompasses 210 square miles of Henderson County and serves more than 3,400 students in their pursuit of a quality public education.

### Student Ethnic Distribution:

African American .....	11.7%	Amount expended per student for education: \$8,020.00
Hispanic .....	50.9%	
White .....	31.7%	
Other .....	5.7%	
(American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Multi-Racial)		

### District Accreditation Status:

Accredited

## Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

*Policy AE*

### Mission Statement

Athens ISD will create an environment where all students are given the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive, successful citizens.

### Purpose

The purpose of the district is to graduate every student on time, college and work ready.

### Vision Statement

Igniting Potential – Inspiring Success

### Theme

‘Dare Greatly’

## **Our Core Beliefs:**

- Our business is teaching and learning.
- We believe that all children can learn at or above grade level.
- We believe that it is important to have high expectations so that all children reach their learning potential.
- We believe that our schools have an important and profound impact of every child's life.
- We believe that the school's involvement is one that should demonstrate and promote respect for students, parents, teachers and all school stakeholders.
- We believe that all children should be taught in facilities that are wholesome, pleasant and safe.
- We believe that we have the responsibility to build good citizens for Athens, Henderson County and our state.

## **Our Board of Trustees Goals:**

- Expect and achieve academic excellence at every campus for all students
- Attract, retain and develop exemplary employees for all jobs in the district.
- Develop/expand programs and services that promote parent/community satisfaction.
- Promote participation in school-sponsored extra/co-curricular activities.
- Provide for all operations in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible.

## **Board of Trustees**

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

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

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

Current board members include:

- Robert Risko, President
- Steve McElhany, Vice President
- Robert Spears, Secretary
- Alicea Elliott
- David Freeman
- Ginger Kirk
- Eric Smith

The board usually meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. The meetings take place in the Board Room of the District Support Center, located at 104 Hawn Street, Athens, Texas. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district Web site and on the front door of the District Support Center at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

### **Board Meeting Schedule for 2014-2015**

July 28, 2014	January 26, 2015
August 25, 2014	February 23, 2015
September 22, 2014	March 23, 2015
October 27, 2014	April 27, 2015
November 2014 (TBD)	May 2015 (TBD)
December 2014 (TBD)	June 22, 2015

## **Administration**

### **Campuses**

#### **Athens High School**

Grades 9 – 12

Jami Ivey, Principal

708 East College

Athens, Texas 75751

903-677-6920

#### **South Athens Elementary**

Grades Pre-K, Head Start, K 1, 2, 3

Kelye Garcie, Principal

718 Robbins Road

Athens, Texas 75751

903-677-6970

#### **Athens Middle School**

Grades 6 – 8

Winston McCowan, Principal

6800 State Hwy 19 South

Athens, Texas 75751

903-677-3030

#### **Bel Air Elementary**

Grades PreK, K, 1, 2, 3

Rosalie Dennis, Principal

215 Willowbrook

Athens, Texas 75751

903-677-6980

#### **Athens Intermediate School**

Grades 4 – 5

Ginger Morrison, Principal

307 Madole Street

Athens, Texas 75751

903-677-6960

**Athens Independent School District (DSC)  
Divisions and Services  
2014-2015**

<b>Superintendent of Schools</b>	<b>Blake Stiles</b>	
Executive Assistant	Gail Carnes	677-6903
Receptionist	Dede Sims	677-6900
<b>Assistant Superintendent/Human Resources</b>	<b>Dr. Janie Sims</b>	
Executive Assistant	Gail Carnes	677-6903
Human Resources Specialist	Robin Carpenter	677-6905
<b>Chief Financial Officer</b>	<b>Randy Jones</b>	<b>677-6937</b>
Accountant	<b>Kelly Allen</b>	<b>677-6904</b>
Data Analyst / PEIMS	David Alexander	677-6948
Risk Management/Payroll	Betty Christian	677-6931
Employee Benefits/Insurance	Debbie Partridge	677-6990
Bookkeeper	Patsy Teasdale	677-6958
<b>Director of Special Populations</b>	<b>Brooke Brock</b>	<b>677-6949</b>
Secretary	Kathy Lutter	677-6907
PEIMS Clerk	Kasey Garcia	677-6901
Homebound Teacher, RTI, 504, etc.	Meg Johns	677-6994
Counselor	Stacy Risko	(AMS) x6126
Counselor	Jan Thompson	(AMS) x6161
Behavioral Specialist	Erin Loper	677-6933
LSSP (Licensed Specialist in School Psychology)	Nicole Sherwood	677-6918
LSSP	Ashley Guerrero	677-6936
Speech Pathologist/Supervisor	Heather Cain	677-6984
Diagnostician	Angie Fitzgerald	677-6953
Diagnostician	Cindy Carter	677-6935
ARD Facilitator	Terri Easley	(AHS) x6239
ARD Facilitator	Carol Kamp	677-6901 x6505
<b>Director of Student Services</b>	<b>Dr. Diana Vaughn</b>	<b>677-6932</b>
Parent Liaison	Yadira Chairez	677-6913
Secretary	Sara Hamilton	677-6950
<b>Coordinator of Academic Performance &amp; Secondary Education</b>	<b>Matt Caffey</b>	<b>677-6947</b>
Secretary	Peggy Oldham	677-6906
<b>Coordinator of Leadership Development &amp; Elementary Education</b>	<b>Renee Campbell</b>	<b>677-6965</b>
Secretary	Peggy Oldham	677-6906

<b>Communication Specialist</b>	<b>Toni Clay</b>	<b>677-6900</b> x6954
<b>Technology Coordinator</b>	<b>Stacy Dunacusky</b>	<b>677-6951</b>
PC Support Technician	Tony Brooks	DSC x6312
PC Support Technician	Mark Scotchmer	DSC x6311
PC Support Technician	Dora Hempling	DSC x6310
PC Support Technician	Kyle McClung	DSC x6313
PC Support Technician	Josh Emsoff	DSC x6959
<b>Director of Maintenance &amp; Operations</b>	<b>Barry Choate</b>	<b>677-6911</b>
Secretary (Maintenance)	Lana Smith	677-6910
Transportation Supervisor	<b>David Glover</b>	<b>677-6912</b>
Secretary (Transportation)	Basha Cox	677-6952
Child Nutrition Representative (Chartwell's Employee)	<b>Traci Campbell</b>	<b>677-6914</b>
AISD Rep / Federal Applications	Jennifer Pauley	677-6930
<b>Chief of Police (AHS)</b>	<b>Paul Redic</b>	681-3230
Sergeant (AMS)	Barbara Garcia	292-6405
Officer (AIS)	Mary Head	203-2013
Officer (DAEP)	Shawn Moore	275-4293
Officer (High School Information Booth)	Rhonda Givens	286-2263
<b>Athletic Director / Head Football Coach</b>	<b>Paul Essary</b>	<b>677-6992</b> x6232
Secretary	Dorothy Bundy	677-6992 x6233



# 2014 - 2015 ATHENS ISD SCHOOL CALENDAR

**August**  
 12-13 New Teacher & New-to-District Training  
 15-22 Staff Development / Work Days  
 25 First Day of School / Begin 1st Six Weeks

**September**  
 1 Labor Day Holiday

**October**  
 3 End 1st Six Weeks  
 6 Staff Development  
 7 Begin 2nd Six Weeks

**November**  
 14 End 2nd Six Weeks  
 17 Begin 3rd Six Weeks  
 24-25 Staff Development / COMP Days  
 26-28 Thanksgiving Holidays

**December**  
 19 Early Release  
 22-31 Christmas Holidays

**January**  
 1-2 Holidays  
 16 End of 3rd Six Weeks  
 19 MLK Holiday  
 20 Begin 4th Six Weeks

**February**  
 27 End 4th Six Weeks

**March**  
 2 Begin 5th Six Weeks  
 9-13 Spring Break  
 Texas Public Schools Week in March

**April**  
 3 Good Friday Holiday / Bad Weather Day  
 17 End 5th Six Weeks  
 20 Begin 6th Six Weeks

**May**  
 25 Memorial Day Holiday / Bad Weather Day

**June**  
 2 End of 6th Six Weeks / Early Release  
 3 Workday  
 5 Graduation

1st Semester - 88 Days  
 2nd Semester - 89 Days

**177 Student Days**

187 Teacher Days  
 2 Bad Weather Days

**Comp Days**  
**Testing Days**

**July 2014**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**August 2014**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**September 2014**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**October 2014**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**November 2014**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**December 2014**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**January 2015**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**February 2015**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

**March 2015**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**April 2015**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

**May 2015**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**June 2015**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

**Begin 6 Weeks**  
**End 6 Weeks**

(6/24/14, gc)

# Employment

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## Equal Employment Opportunity

*Policies DAA, DIA*

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

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment should contact Mr. Blake Stiles, Superintendent at 903-677-6903, the district Title IX coordinator. Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should contact Dr. Janie Sims, Assistant Superintendent/HR Director at 903-677-6903, the district ADA/Section 504 coordinator. Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent.

## Job Vacancy Announcements

*Policy DC*

To the extent possible, announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on the district web site. Vacancies are also posted at university placement centers, regional service centers and on the Internet. Postings can be found on the district's web site at [www.athensisd.net](http://www.athensisd.net) under the 'Human Resources' link.

## Employment After Retirement

*Policy DC*

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

## Criminal History

*Policy DC*

A criminal history background check is completed on all new employees and volunteers with Athens Independent School District before they are allowed to start work.

## **Contract and Noncontract Employment**

### *Policy DC series*

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

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

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

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

**Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees.** Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as noninstructional administrators) are not employed by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

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

## **Certification and Licenses**

### *Policies DBA, DF*

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

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

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

### *Policy DHE*

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

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

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted if an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs is allowed to return to duty.

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact Barry Choate, Director of Maintenance and Operations at 903-677-6910.

## **Health Safety Training**

*Policies DBA, DMA*

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification or training in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extracurricular athletic activity safety. Certification or documentation of training must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification or documentation to Paul Essary, Athletic Director, by the end of the first six weeks each year.

## **Reassignments and Transfers**

*Policy DK*

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

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

## **Workload and Work Schedules**

*Policies DEA, DL*

**Professional Employees.** Professional employees and academic administrators are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the district. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including start and end dates and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year.

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation including conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level but must provide at least 450 minutes within each two-week period in blocks not less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. Teachers and librarians are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The district may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one day a week when no other personnel are available.

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

## **Notification to Parents Regarding Qualifications**

*Policies DK, DBA*

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. NCLB also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under NCLB is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call the Human Resources office at 903-677-6905.

## **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

*Policy DBD*

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

## **Performance Evaluation**

*Policy DN series*

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

## **Employee Involvement**

*Policies BQA, BQB*

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

## **Staff Development**

*Policy DMA*

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

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

# Compensation and Benefits

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## Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

*Policies DEA, DEAA, DEAB*

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as non-exempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation*, page 24.)

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

Employees should contact the Human Resources office for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

## Paychecks

All AISD employees are paid semi-monthly with the first check issued in September. Payments are made in twenty-four (24) equal checks. Paychecks will be disseminated at each campus.

Paychecks will not be released to any person other than the district employee named on the check without the employee's written authorization. During summer breaks, paychecks will be picked up on the employee's home campus. An employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information, and the amount of leave accumulated.

The schedule of pay dates for the 2014-2015 school year follows:

ATHENS ISD

PAYROLL CALENDAR

2014-2015

TARGET PAYDAYS: **3RD & 18TH**

IF THE 3RD OR 18TH FALLS ON A WEEKEND OR HOLIDAY,  
PAY DAY WILL BE THE PRECEDING SCHEDULED WORK DAY.

<u>PAYDAY</u>	<u>PAY PERIOD STARTS</u>	<u>PAY PERIOD CUTOFF* &amp; ENTRY OF SUBSTITUTES IN SKYWARD</u>	<u># DAYS IN PAY CYCLE</u>
		7/18/2014	
08/18/2014	07/19/2014	08/01/2014	14
09/03/2014	08/02/2014	08/15/2014	14
09/18/2014	08/16/2014	08/29/2014	14
10/03/2014	08/30/2014	09/19/2014	21
10/17/2014	09/20/2014	10/03/2014	14
11/03/2014	10/04/2014	10/17/2014	14
11/18/2014	10/18/2014	10/31/2014	14
12/03/2014	11/01/2014	11/14/2014	14
12/18/2014	11/15/2014	11/28/2014	14
01/02/2015	11/29/2014	12/19/2014	21
01/16/2015	12/20/2014	01/02/2015	14
02/03/2015	01/03/2015	01/16/2015	14
02/18/2015	01/17/2015	01/30/2015	14
03/03/2015	01/31/2015	02/13/2015	14
03/18/2015	02/14/2015	02/27/2015	14
04/02/2015	02/28/2015	03/20/2015	21
04/17/2015	03/21/2015	04/03/2015	14
05/01/2015	04/04/2015	04/17/2015	14
05/18/2015	04/18/2015	05/01/2015	14
06/03/2015	05/02/2015	05/15/2015	14
06/18/2015	05/16/2015	05/29/2015	14
07/02/2015	05/30/2015	06/19/2015	21
07/17/2015	06/20/2015	07/03/2015	14
08/03/2015	07/04/2015	07/17/2015	14
08/18/2015	07/18/2015	07/31/2015	14

\*Payroll data is due to the Business Office payroll desk as soon as possible on the next business day.

## **Automatic Payroll Deposit**

Employees can have their paychecks electronically deposited into a designated account. A notification period of two weeks is necessary to activate this service. Contact the Business Office at 903-677-6990 for more information about the automatic payroll deposit service.

## **Payroll Deductions**

### *Policy CFEA*

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

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS)
- Federal income tax required for all full-time employees
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986)

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include deductions for the employee's share of premiums for health, dental, life, and vision insurance; annuities; and higher education savings plans; and savings deposits and loan payments through the business office. Employees also may request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

## **Overtime Compensation**

### *Policy DEA*

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

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday and ends at 12:00 midnight on Friday.

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

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

## Travel Expense Reimbursement

### *Policy DEE*

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor must give approval. For approved travel, Athens ISD reimburses mileage based on the Texas state mileage reimbursement rate as published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (\$0.56/mile as of January 1, 2014, subject to change). For overnight travel, a rate per day up to the current state travel reimbursement for meals shall be paid as a per diem meal allowance (currently set by AISD at \$36./day). Receipts shall not be required (but are encouraged to be submitted), but confirmation of attendance at the function shall be required. Employees must submit receipts when travel is funded by federal or state grant funds, to be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage. Questions may be addressed to the Business Office.

The following mileage chart may be used or a print out of MapQuest or Google Map showing mileage to destination. **Mileage listed is doubled.**

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>MILEAGE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>MILEAGE</u>
Austin	400	Huntsville	300
Brownsboro	30	Jacksonville	80
Carthage	210	Kaufman	88
Cedar Hill	178	Kilgore	130
Chapel Hill	84	Lancaster	168
Commerce	180	Lindale	100
Corsicana	80	Longview	140
Dallas	180	Lufkin	300
Denton	240	Mineola	116
Eustace	30	Murchison	14
Frankston	42	Nacogdoches	190
Fort Worth	240	Palestine	80
Gladewater	120	Paris	240
Grand Saline	80	Salado	300
Greenville	162	San Antonio	570
Henderson	150	Tyler	80
Houston	420	Whitehouse	100

## Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

### *Policy CRD*

Group health insurance coverage is provided for all full-time and permanent part-time employees. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, prices, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees. Dental and vision insurance may be purchased by the employee. Retired employees who are members of TRS-Care are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

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

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

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

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each spring. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet. Employees should contact the Benefits Office at 903-677-6990 for more information.

***New employees to the district: Based on the potential renewal period, there may be two premiums withheld during the month of September for August and September. Dependents must be picked up when employees are picked up. If your dependents are on COBRA at your former district, you may leave them on COBRA for one month and then discontinue your COBRA payment the month your dependent's insurance becomes effective with AISD. By doing this, you will only have to make one payment in this district. If you have questions, please contact the Business Office.***

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

*Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for Cancer, dental, vision, disability, etc. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact Business Office for more information.

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

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

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

## **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

### *Policy CRE*

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. The district has workers' compensation coverage from Deep East Texas Self-Insurance Fund. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the employees' supervisor. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See *Workers' Compensation Benefits*, page 34 for information on use of paid leave for such absences.

## **Unemployment Compensation Insurance**

### *Policy CRF*

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

## **Teacher Retirement**

### *Policy DEG*

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Business Office as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available in the Business Office. Additional inquiries should be addressed to: Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web ([www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)).

# Leaves and Absences

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*Policies DEC, DECA, DECB*

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

**Use of Leave.** Leave is available for the employee's use at the beginning of the school year. However, state personal and local leave is earned on a daily basis. If an employee leaves the district before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days taken shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Leave must be used in ½ day increments. However, if an employee is taking family and medical leave, leave shall be recorded in one-hour increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order:

- Local leave
- State sick leave accumulated before the 1995-96 school year
- State personal leave

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

**Medical Certification.** Any employee who is absent more than three (3) days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and—in the case of personal illness—the employee's fitness to return to work.

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

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

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

## Personal Leave

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is earned at a rate of one-half (1/2) day per every eighteen (18) days worked. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts, and generally transfers to education service centers. There are two types of personal leave: nondiscretionary and discretionary.

**Nondiscretionary.** Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave allow very little, if any, advance planning. Nondiscretionary leave will be granted to employees in the same manner as state sick leave. Check with your campus administrator as to whom you are to contact when you are going to be absent.

For purpose of personal illness, illness in the immediate family, family emergency, or death in the immediate family, available leave shall be used in the following order:

1. Local sick leave, if any.
2. State sick leave accumulated prior to the 1995-96 school year.
3. State personal leave.
4. Extended local sick leave.

**Discretionary.** Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the anticipated absence. The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor. Discretionary personal leave will be subject to the following limitations.

A maximum of five (5) percent of employees per campus will be permitted to take discretionary personal leave at the same time. (This will be rounded off to the next highest number.)

Discretionary leave may not be taken on the following key days:

- immediately preceding or following a holiday
- on the first or last day of a grading period
- during the period of administration of TAKS or other pertinent testing
- during the five days immediately preceding the end of a term/semester

## State Sick Leave

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. When exceeding **three days**, an employee must have a statement from

his/her physician concerning the illness. Exception to this rule occurs when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on intermittent or reduced-schedule basis and workers' compensation benefits. If an employee uses more sick leave than he or she has earned, the cost of unearned sick leave will be deducted from the employee's next paycheck.

State sick leave may be used for the following reasons only:

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

*All persons absent from duty shall be charged leave as used even if a substitute is not employed.*

## **Local Leave**

Athens Independent School District's employees shall be provided five (5) local days of leave per year. This can be accumulated locally; however, it does not transfer to another district should an employee leave the employment of AISD.

## **Catastrophic Sick Leave Bank**

The catastrophic sick leave bank (CSLB) provides emergency sick leave to members who are unable to work due to an unplanned personal (or immediate family) illness, injury or quarantine, and who have exhausted all of their sick, compensatory, and annual leave balances.

Membership in the catastrophic leave bank shall be available on a voluntary basis for all full-time employees.

The CSLB shall be administered by a nine-member committee composed of one teacher from each campus, one administrator, and one auxiliary employee. The director of human resources is an ad hoc member. All members of the committee shall have a minimum of three years' service in the District.

The CSLB committee shall be responsible for receiving requests, verifying the validity of requests, recommending approval or denial of requests, and communicating decisions to the member and the business office. Their decision is final and non-appealable. The CSLB committee shall meet as the need arises.

Days donated to the catastrophic sick leave bank are available for use by any member for a qualifying condition. Leave shall be granted only after a member has exhausted all accumulated state and local leave and any accumulated compensatory time and vacation days, as applicable.

Leave shall be granted in no more than 15-day increments, renewable one time. The cumulative amount of leave granted to any one employee in any one school year shall not exceed 30 days. A “day” granted to an employee shall be equivalent to the number of hours in that employee’s typical workday.

Contributions made on the appropriate form shall be authorized by the employee annually. Employees who have used the bank the previous year shall be eligible only after having worked for 60 consecutive days in the new year.

All full-time employees of the District are eligible to participate in the catastrophic sick leave bank. Participation is voluntary, but requires a contribution to the bank of two local sick leave days. Only contributors shall be permitted to use the bank for payment for qualifying incapacitating conditions during regularly scheduled duty days.

New staff members employed by the District during any school year shall join within 30 days of their employment date by donating two of the sick leave days to be earned that year.

Eligible employees who elect not to join the catastrophic sick leave bank at the first opportunity afforded to them shall not be permitted to join until the subsequent annual open enrollment period.

Catastrophic illness is defined as that of a serious nature, not a passing disorder or temporary ailment, requiring treatment by a physician and hospital admittance. Although some degree of permanency is usually involved, the disease need not necessarily be incurable or permanent. To qualify for the benefits of the program, a catastrophic illness or injury shall result in the employee’s temporary or permanent incapacity to perform his or her job function for an extended period of time.

Each separate application for a grant from the bank shall include a new physician’s statement on the appropriate bank form. The form shall include authorization by the employee to release medical reports to the District CSLB committee. The information provided to the committee shall not include the employee’s name.

All requests to draw upon the bank shall be made upon a bank request form and submitted to the CSLB committee within 15 calendar days of the first date bank usage is requested. All requests to draw upon the bank shall be accompanied by a physician’s statement confirming the cause of illness or confinement and certifying the existence of an inability to perform assigned duties. The form shall be personally signed by the physician. All medical information provided to the sick leave bank committee shall be confidential. All committee members shall acknowledge their duty to protect the confidentiality of the information presented.

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

The following text is from the federal notice, *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Under the Family and Medical Leave Act*. Specific information that the district has adopted to implement the FMLA follows this general notice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Enforcement.** An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

The FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

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

For additional information:

1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627  
[www.wagehour.dol.gov](http://www.wagehour.dol.gov)

## Local Family and Medical Leave Provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period from July 1 through June 30.

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

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

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

**District Contact.** Employees that require FML or have questions should contact the Human Resources office for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## Temporary Disability Leave

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

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

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

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

## Workers' Compensation Benefits

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

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

## Assault Leave

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

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

## Jury Duty

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service from the County Clerk.

## Other Court Appearances

Employees will be paid while on leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding and will not be required to use personal leave. Other absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business must be taken as personal leave or leave without pay (if no personal leave is available). Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

## Military Leave

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

**Reemployment After State Military Leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into active duty with the Texas National Guard or Texas State Guard may return to employment if they are honorably discharged or released within five years. Employees who wish to return to

the district will be reemployed in the same position they previously held or reassigned to a position of similar seniority, status, and pay, provided they are still qualified to perform the required duties of the position. Application for reemployment and evidence of honorable discharge or release must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources within 90 days of discharge or separation.

**Reemployment After Federal Military Leave.** Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States Armed services may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed in the position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position provided they are still qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment to the Office of Human Resources.

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

# **Employee Relations and Communications**

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## **Employee Recognition and Appreciation**

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities. Recognition and appreciation activities also include end of year activities, teacher of the month luncheon, teacher of the year for secondary and elementary teachers, teacher appreciation week in May.

## **District Communications**

Throughout the school year, the Athens ISD publishes newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

# Complaints and Grievances

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## *Policy DGBA*

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

The formal process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, employees can bring concerns or complaints to the board of trustees. For ease of reference, the district's policy DGBA (Local) can be found at [www.athensisd.net](http://www.athensisd.net).

The forms on the following pages are provided to assist the District in processing employee complaints on levels one, two, and three.

- Employee Complaint Form: Level One – 1 page
- Notice of Appeal: Level Two – 1 page
- Notice of Appeal to the Board: Level Three – 1 page
- Supervisor/Administrator Report of Level One Conference – 1 page

EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT FORM: LEVEL ONE

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

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

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

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

4. Please state your complaint including the individual harm alleged and the remedy sought:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTICE OF APPEAL: LEVEL TWO

This form must be filled out completely by an employee appealing a level one decision to the Superintendent or designees in accordance with the District's policies DGBA and DGBA (LOCAL) or any exceptions outlined therein.

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

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

3. To whom did you last appeal? \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you will be represented in pursuing your complaint, please identify that individual or organization:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Attach copy of original complaint.

6. Attach copy of complaint decision being appealed.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTICE OF APPEAL TO THE BOARD: LEVEL THREE

This form must be filled out completely by an employee appealing a complaint decision to the Board in accordance with the District's policies DGBA and DGBA (LOCAL) or any exceptions outlined therein.

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

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

3. To whom did you last appeal? \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you will be represented in pursuing your complaint, please identify that individual or organization:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Attach copy of original complaint and all complaint decisions.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR/ADMINISTRATOR - LEVEL ONE CONFERENCE

1. Complainant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

3. Date and time of conference: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Set forth the facts as presented by the complainant: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. In your opinion, were the allegations made in the original complaint adequately supported by the facts submitted?      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. In your opinion, is the remedy sought by the complainant justified by the facts submitted?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What decisions were made or recommendations agreed upon as a result of the conference?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Attach a copy of the complainant's original written complaint and a copy of the written response from the supervisor/administrator before submitting.

Received by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Employee Conduct and Welfare

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## Standards of Conduct

### *Policy DH*

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

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

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent first learns of the incident. See *Reports to Texas Education Agency*, on page 62 for additional information.

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

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

#### **Purpose and Scope**

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

## **Enforceable Standards**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Standard 3.9** The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communication. Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

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

## Faculty Dress Code

Administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals are expected to dress in a professional manner appropriate to their assignment. Professional and paraprofessional employees for all campuses and the central office are to adhere to the following:

- No jean-cut trousers except on special occasions designated by the principal. If wearing jeans, an Athens ISD Spirit shirt with a collar is required.
- Special occasions are “as determined by each campus principal”.
- No shorts or skorts are to be worn.
- Physical education and athletic staff are to wear warm-ups/sweat-pants when entering an AISD building while away from their assignment. When in an instructional setting, the staff will wear professional, business casual clothing.
- No leggings are acceptable without an outer garment that would be acceptable by itself.
- Shoes should be appropriate for the job.
- Women’s dresses, shirts, blouses, etc. shall be business casual with sleeves. No low cut garments shall be allowed.
- Appropriate undergarments should be worn and should not be visible.
- Dresses should be of an appropriate length. Dresses are to be no shorter than the top of the knee.
- Men’s shirts must be neat, business casual with sleeves and collars.
- Tattoos for all employees must be covered.
- Male employee’s hair length may not extend below the bottom of the collar. Male employees are not to have ponytails, braids or dread locks. Hair for all employees shall be a natural hair color.
- Facial hair must be neatly trimmed.
- Exposed visible piercing shall be relegated to female ears only.
- Final decisions on the appropriateness of school dress rest with the building administrator.

### Consequences

*If a staff member arrives at his/her assignment not properly attired he/she will be asked to change.*

### Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

*Policies DH, DIA*

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not

engage in prohibited harassment of other persons including board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action.

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

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation is found within the board policy manual which can be found at [www.athensisd.net](http://www.athensisd.net).

### Harassment of Students

*Policies DF, DH, FFG, FFH*

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

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is found within the board policy manual which can be found at [www.athensisd.net](http://www.athensisd.net).

The definition of solicitation of a romantic relationship in DF (Legal) and text of FFH (Local) may be found within the board policy manual at [www.athensisd.net](http://www.athensisd.net).

### Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

*Policies DF, DG, DH, FFG, GRA*

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

- Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
- Causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material

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

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

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to the local CPS office, Athens Police Department (903-675-5454), to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400), or on the Web at [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.

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

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

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

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

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

The district has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at the school principals' office. As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or

neglect. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS). Employees are required to follow the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

## **Technology Resources**

*Policy CQ, DH*

The district's technology resources, including its network access to the Internet, are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

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

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

Employees who are authorized to use the system are required to abide by the provisions of the acceptable use policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. ***Passwords are not to be given to anyone else for Internet access. Sharing passwords can result in the loss of district Internet access.*** Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Technology Department at 903-677-6951.

## **Personal Use of Electronic Media**

*Policy DH*

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *Policy DH*

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

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

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

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

includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.

- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee’s personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*: however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

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

- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.
- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including:
  - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
  - Copyright law [Policy CY]
  - Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DF]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students.

- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

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

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

### *Policy DBAA*

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

## **Employee Arrests and Convictions**

### *Policy DH*

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

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

Moral turpitude includes the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence
- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor
- Crimes involving any felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance

- Felonies involving driving while intoxicated (DWI) or driving under the influence (DUI) of drugs or alcohol
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the SBEC rules

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

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

*Policies DH, DI*

Athens ISD is committed to maintaining an alcohol- and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The district's policy regarding employee drug use may be found online within the board policy manual at [www.athensisd.net](http://www.athensisd.net).

## **Tobacco Use**

*Policies DH, FNCD GKA*

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

## **Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

*Policy CAA*

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district

- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

## **Conflict of Interest**

### *Policy DBD*

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

- A personal financial interest
- A business interest
- Any other obligation or relationship
- Nonschool employment

## **Gifts and Favors**

### *Policy DBD*

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

## **Copyrighted Materials**

### *Policy CY*

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

## **Associations and Political Activities**

### *Policy DGA*

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

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

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

## **Charitable Contributions**

### *Policy DG*

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

## **Safety**

### *Policy CK series*

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

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

The following are some important general professional and administrative staff safety rules that each employee is required to follow:

- Furniture, desks, chairs, file cabinets, etc., should be kept in safe condition and positioned so drawers do not open into walkways or halls.
- Desk and file cabinet drawers should not be left open.
- File cabinet drawers should be opened one at a time, and lower drawers should hold the heaviest load.
- Furniture should not be used as stools or ladders.

- Walkways, aisles, halls, and stairways should be kept clear of obstructions.
- Do not attempt to move heavy objects; get help from maintenance or custodial personnel.
- Office machines should be double insulated or grounded with ground wire or three-prong plugs.
- Do not attempt to make any electrical repairs on equipment or electrical cords.
- Electrical extension cords should be three-wire, ground type. Ensure they are not placed where they may cause a tripping hazard.
- Store supplies in an orderly fashion. Heavier items should be stored waist high. Light items can be stored on upper or lower shelves.
- Flammable liquids should be stored in approved Flammable Liquid Storage cabinets.
- Room doors that open into hallways should be opened slowly.
- Duplicating machines that use ammonia, methanol, or other toxic liquids should be ventilated.
- Personnel operating office equipment should be trained before operating equipment.
- Employees should be trained in how to use portable fire extinguishers and should be familiar with building evacuation procedures.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the Director of Maintenance and Operations at 903-677-6910.

## **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

*Policies FNCG, GKA*

Employees, visitors, and students, including those with a license to carry a concealed handgun, are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or call AISD Chief of Police at 903-681-3230 immediately.

## **Visitors in the Workplace**

*Policy GKC*

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

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

*Policy CKA*

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the

district's management plan is kept in the Maintenance office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

## **Pest Control Treatment**

*Policies CLB, DI*

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located in an area of common access where the employees are likely to check on a regular basis. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written or electric means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request. Information regarding the application of pesticides is available from the Maintenance Department at 903-677-6910.

# General Procedures

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## Bad Weather Closing

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

KCKL 95.9 FM  
Channel 5  
Channel 4  
Channel 7 KLTU  
Region 56 News KETK-Ch. 3  
KYYK Radio Palestine  
Cable TV Athens  
106.5 FM Jacksonville

## Emergencies

*Policies CKC, CKD*

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

## Purchasing Procedures

*Policy CH*

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

## **Management of School Funds**

Campus Activity Fund - used for various purposes such as school pictures, yearbooks, and student IDs, etc.

Student Activity Fund - student council, cheerleaders, band, clubs, etc., that are officially sanctioned by local school district policy; these funds are controlled by the student groups themselves under the supervision of a member of the professional staff.

All provisions that apply to school district (budgetary) funds also apply to campus and student activity funds. All of these funds are included in the annual audits, as well as the annual financial report.

Student Activity Funds are funds raised by or from student groups to promote the general welfare, education and morale of all the students and to finance extracurricular activities of the student body.

A student group must have officers, bylaws, and a plan and is responsible for its actions. The existence of a student group implies that the group has a purpose, which is to be stated in the group's bylaws. The group must have a plan that outlines its activities for the year. There should also be a statement that in the event the group disbands, how the remaining funds, if any, are disbursed.

Campus Activity Funds are funds generated by or from vending machines, student IDs, sale of advertising for yearbook, etc. They are a part of the overall budgeted funds of AISD, but are raised at the campus level.

To ensure funds are being recorded in the proper fund, "Campus or Student" is based upon the following questions:

Do other persons besides the students involved in the activity fund have the ability to use the activity fund money in a manner that does not directly benefit the students, but will benefit the campus? If so, this money should be accounted for as a Special Revenue Fund in Fund 461 – Campus Activity Funds. Does the activity fund financial decisions rest solely with the students? If so, the activity should be accounted for as a Student Activity Account for a student club or class funds.

All school funds shall be handled through a standard district-wide, school fiscal accounting system, keyed to budget classification with respect to the purposes of disbursements and the source of receipts. This system is a requirement of the Texas Education Agency.

The person making the deposit must code each bank deposit. It is recommended that a separate deposit is made for each coding. One copy of each deposit must be turned in to the District Support Center Business Office. Also, along with the coding, an explanation should be on the deposit slip stating the source of the revenue. Failure to so code and explain will cause the deposit slip to be returned for this information. Each check deposited should include a written explanation of what the check was for (e.g., name of club, etc.). This will help identify any returned checks from the bank.

Purchase Orders are issued only from the DSC Business Office. Procedures for purchasing are in the Business Procedures & Policy manual. Some points to remember about the purchasing process are:

- A. An approved Purchase Order is required before a purchase may be made.
- B. All purchases must be approved through the Principal/Director. Verbal approval from the Superintendent /Principal/Director for a special purchase does not exempt that purchase from completing the proper paperwork.
- C. Clubs, classes, or organizations that have accounts in the Activity Fund will deposit such funds in the bank account mentioned above with the proper coding on the deposit slip. The sponsor will authorize payments from these Activity
- D. Fund accounts by completing a Remittance Request form. Activity Fund monies are considered school funds even though control or use of these funds is left up to the organization. The Superintendent or designee and the Business Manager must cosign all payments in excess of \$2,000.00.
- E. All staff members are expected to follow the guidelines in the AISD campus and student activity funds handbook. Extra copies are available from your campus principal.

## **Name and Address Changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the Human Resources office at 903-677-6905 if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary.

## **Personnel Records**

### *Policy GBA*

Most district records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. A limited amount of personal information may be withheld. Employees may choose not to allow public access to or have the following information included in a staff directory by submitting a written request to the Office of Human Resources:

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

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

## **Building Use**

*Policies DGA, GKD*

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The Campus Administrator is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the Building Principal or Athletic Director to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

# Termination of Employment

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## Resignations

*Policy DFE*

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

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

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

## Dismissal or Nonrenewal of Contract Employees

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

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

## Dismissal of Noncontract Employees

*Policy DCD*

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic

information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See *Complaints and Grievances*)

## **Exit Interviews and Procedures**

*Policies DC and CY*

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the district. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on his or her employment experience. All district keys, books, property including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. The district may withhold the cost of any items not returned from the final paycheck.

## **Reports to Texas Education Agency**

*Policy DF*

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

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

The superintendent is also required to notify TEA when a certified employee resigns and there is reasonable evidence that would support a recommendation to terminate employment because of the conduct listed above.

The reporting requirements above are in addition to the superintendent's ongoing duty to notify TEA when a certified employee has a reported criminal history. "Reported criminal history" means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction.

## **Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding**

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

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

# Student Issues

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## Equal Educational Opportunities

*Policies FB, FFH*

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to Dr. Janie Sims, Assistant Superintendent, 104 Hawn Street, Athens, Texas 75751, 903-677-6903.

## Student Records

*Policy FL*

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

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights
- The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student's records before this time.
- School officials with legitimate educational interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

## Parent and Student Complaints

*Policy FNG*

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

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

## **Student Immunizations**

*Policy FFAB*

The District shall permit the provisional admittance of new to district students who have not received all immunizations required by law; students have thirty days to comply with immunization requirements.

## **Administering Medication to Students**

*Policy FFAC*

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

## **Dietary Supplements**

*Policies DH, FFAC*

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

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

*Policy FFAC*

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

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

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

## **Student Conduct and Discipline**

*Policies in the FN series and FO series*

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by the district. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal. Teachers must file a written report with the principal or another appropriate administrator when they have knowledge that a student has violated the *Student Code of Conduct*. The principal or administrator will send a copy of this report to the student's parents within 24 hours.

## **Student Attendance**

*Policy FEB*

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

## **Bullying**

*Policy FFI*

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to t The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students can be found at local policy FFI in the board policy on line at [www.athensisd.net](http://www.athensisd.net).

## **Hazing**

*Policy FNCC*

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or

permitting “hazing” is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.

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