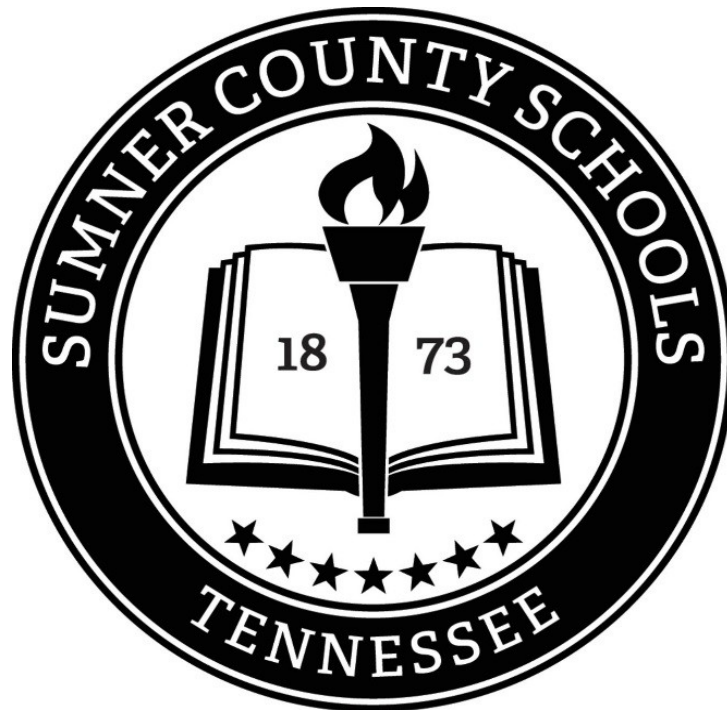


# Sumner County Board of Education

## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

### Certified Staff



Last updated: January 2022

# Welcome

Welcome to Sumner County Schools (SCS)! We are delighted that you have chosen to join our organization and hope that you will enjoy a long and successful career with us. As you become familiar with our culture and mission, we hope you will take advantage of opportunities to enhance your career and further SCS's goals.

You are joining an organization that has a reputation for outstanding leadership, innovation, and expertise. With your active involvement, creativity, and support, SCS will continue to achieve its goals. We sincerely hope you will take pride in being an important part of SCS's success.

Sumner County Schools, lifelong mission, commits to growing learners who are college and career ready through quality instruction, effective use of resources, building a collaborative culture, and strong leadership.

Please take time to review the policies contained in this handbook. In the event of a discrepancy among any of the information contained in our orientation materials, the Employee Handbook and the SCS Board Policy, the SCS Board Policy will govern. The online version of this publication is the governing document; therefore, all printed versions of this document are unofficial copies. For electronic access please visit [www.sumnerschools.org](http://www.sumnerschools.org).

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that may help with questions you have and pave the way for a successful career with SCS.

If you have questions, feel free to ask your supervisor, principal or contact the Human Resources Department.

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**Employee Handbook Acknowledgment and Receipt**

## **Employment**

All employment is contingent upon adequate funding and programmatic need for the position.

Nothing in this employee handbook is intended to create an employment agreement, expressed or implied. Nothing contained in this or any other document provided to the employee is intended to be, nor should it be, construed as a contract that employment or any benefit will continue for any period of time.

Any salary figures provided to an employee in annual or monthly terms are stated for the sake of convenience or to facilitate comparisons and are not intended to and do not create an employment contract for any specific period of time.

Nothing in this statement is intended to interfere with, restrain, or prevent concerted activity as protected by the National Labor Relations Act. Such activity includes employee communications regarding wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment. SCS employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities. However, it is asked that it be done outside of working hours, allowing employees to focus on tasks at hand.

## **Equal Opportunity and Commitment to Diversity**

### **Equal Opportunity**

Sumner County Schools provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, gender identity, results of genetic testing, or service in the military. Equal employment opportunity applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave of absence, compensation, and training.

Sumner County Schools expressly prohibits any form of unlawful employee harassment or discrimination based on any of the characteristics mentioned above. Improper interference with the ability of other employees to perform their expected job duties is absolutely not tolerated.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Reasonable Accommodation**

To ensure equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, SCS will make reasonable accommodations for the known disability of an otherwise qualified individual, unless undue hardship on the operation of the business results.

Employees who may require a reasonable accommodation should contact the Human Resources Department to begin the process.

## Commitment to Diversity

Sumner County Schools is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace in which all employees have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the success of the business and are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives. This commitment is embodied in policy and the way business is done in SCS. It is an important principle of sound business management.

## Harassment and Complaint Procedure – Formal Documentation

Sexual and other unlawful harassment is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), as amended, as well as many state laws. Harassment based on a characteristic protected by law, such as race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristic protected by state or federal law, is prohibited.

It is SCS's policy to provide a work environment free of sexual and other harassment. To that end, harassment of SCS's employees by management, supervisors, coworkers, or nonemployees who are in the workplace is absolutely prohibited. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual or other harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated. SCS will take all steps necessary to prevent and eliminate unlawful harassment.

**Definition of Unlawful Harassment.** "Unlawful harassment" is conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities because of the individual's membership in a protected class.

Unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, epithets; slurs; jokes; pranks; innuendo; comments; written or graphic material; stereotyping; or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

**Definition of Sexual Harassment.** "Sexual harassment" is generally defined under both state and federal law as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of any individual's employment or as a basis for employment decisions; *or*
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Other sexually oriented conduct, whether intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending on the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwanted sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not;
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comments about an individual's body, comments about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
- Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing up against the body, sexual gestures, or suggestive or insulting comments;
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; *and*
- Discussion of one's sexual activities.

All employees should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of sexual harassment complaint are unlawful and will not be tolerated at SCS.

**Complaint Procedure.** Any employee who believes he or she has been subject to or witnessed illegal discrimination, including sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, is requested and encouraged to make a formal complaint in writing. Employees may, but are not required to, complain first to the person they feel is discriminating against or harassing them. Employees may complain directly to their immediate supervisor or principal with whom they feel comfortable bringing such a complaint. Similarly, if an employee observes acts of discrimination toward or harassment of another employee, he/she is requested and encouraged to report this to one of the individuals listed in the preceding sentence.

No reprisal, retaliation, or other adverse action will be taken against an employee for making a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment or for assisting in the investigation of any such complaint or report. Any suspected retaliation or intimidation should be reported immediately to one of the persons identified in the above paragraph.

All complaints will be investigated promptly and, to the extent possible, with regard for confidentiality. Please note that false accusations can have a serious detrimental effect on innocent parties. Any person who knowingly and intentionally makes a false accusation, for any reason which would be contrary to the spirit and intent of this policy, shall be subject to immediate and appropriate disciplinary action.



If the investigation confirms conduct contrary to this policy has occurred, SCS will take immediate, appropriate, corrective action, including discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

## **Staff Responsibilities, Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

### **Staff Responsibilities**

Employees should familiarize themselves with and abide by, the laws of the state, as these affect work, the policies of the Board, Code of Ethics and the procedures designed to implement them.

Employees should exercise good judgment in selecting issues for discussion and balance the relative maturity of his/her students and the students' right to know.

Employees should remain courteous and helpful in interacting and responding to parents, visitors and members of the public.

Employees should keep all records and prepare and submit promptly all reports that may be required by state law, state board regulations, Board policy and administrative procedures.

Employees should wear appropriate dress for work according to Board guidelines and local school rules.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Sumner County Schools expects all employees to conduct themselves and company business in a manner that reflects the highest standards of ethical conduct and personal integrity, and in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. This includes avoiding real and potential conflicts of interests.

It is not possible to define all the circumstances and relationships that might create a conflict of interest. If a situation arises where there is a potential conflict of interest, the employee should discuss this with a supervisor for advice and guidance on how to proceed.

Employees will not engage in, or have a financial interest in, any activity that raises a reasonable question of conflict of interest with their duties and responsibilities as members of the school staff.

School employees may not purchase any goods or equipment for sale to students or render any service to the school system on a commission basis.

Employees who have patented or copyrighted any device, publication, or other item shall not receive royalties for use of such item in the school system.

Employees may not engage in any type of work where the source of information concerning a customer, client, or employer originates from information obtained through the school system.

The Board of Education may not purchase supplies, materials, or equipment from a school system employee; employees shall not sell instructional supplies, equipment and reference books in a territory that includes the parents of the children of the school in which the employee is assigned.

Moreover, the Director of Schools, members of the Board of Education, administrative, supervisory, or teaching personnel or other school officer shall have no financial interest, directly or indirectly, in supplying books, maps, school furniture, or apparatus or other compensated services for the schools or to act as agent for any author, publisher, bookseller, or dealer in school furniture or apparatus.

## **Confidential Information**

In certain circumstances, employees will receive confidential information regarding students' or employees' medical, educational or court records. Employees are required to keep student and personnel information in the strictest confidence and are legally prohibited from passing confidential information along to any unauthorized individual.

This provision is not intended to, and should not be interpreted to, prohibit employees from discussing wages and other terms and conditions of employment if they so choose.

## **Employment Relationship**

### **Job Postings and Applications**

Principals and Department Supervisors are responsible for requesting the posting of open positions at their locations as well as the interviewing and hiring for these positions. The Human Resources Department is responsible for administering these postings in our Applicant Tracking System (ATS) at [www.sumnerschools.org/careers](http://www.sumnerschools.org/careers).

### **Orientation and Processing**

All new employees must report for processing prior to any work done with SCS. This is imperative to timely processing of government requirements such as I-9s.

## Transfers

Existing employees who wish to transfer to a new location or position are required to use their existing account in ATS in order for a transfer to take place. External candidates must submit an application for the desired job posting. If selected for the new position or location, the transferring employee will need to provide the old location/position with 14-day grace period. For additional questions and clarification, please contact the Human Resources Department.

The Director of Schools may transfer employees as necessary for the efficient operation of the schools.

## Rehire/Returning Employees

All employees who leave and return will be subject to a new Criminal Background Check (CBC) through fingerprinting, including orientation processing, and will be subject to any associated fees.

## Employment Classification

In order to determine eligibility for benefits and to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, SCS classifies its employees as shown. SCS may review or change employee classifications at any time. Certified workers are those whose jobs require a teaching license.

Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis and are not eligible to receive compensatory time. (*Certified Teachers*)

Non-exempt employees are paid on an hourly basis and are eligible to receive compensatory time for hours worked over scheduled hours. Pay is determined based on range and step on the Hourly Compensation Schedule found on the SCS website.

Full-time employees are not in a temporary status and work a minimum of 30 hours weekly and maintain continuous employment status. Generally, these employees are eligible for the full-time benefits package and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.

Part-time employees are not in a temporary status and are regularly scheduled to work fewer than 30 hours weekly, but at least 20 hours weekly, and maintain continuous employment status.

Substitutes work as a replacement resulting from any short-term absence. A substitute may only work up to 19 consecutive days for the same employee absence and are paid at the substitute daily rate. If the position requires more than 19 consecutive days, then the position is categorized as an interim position.

Interim employees are paid on an hourly basis and usually for a predetermined amount of time.

## **Work Week and Hours of Work**

Work week and hours of work will be determined based on position, location and needs of SCS.

## **Meal Break**

Employees are entitled to a duty-free meal. The lunch period for each teacher shall be at least the same amount of time as that allowed for students.

## **Time Records**

All non-exempt employees are required to complete accurate weekly time reports showing all time actually worked. These records are required by governmental regulations and are used to calculate regular and compensatory time (COMP time). At the end of each period, the employee and his or her supervisor must sign the time sheet attesting to its correctness before forwarding it to the Payroll Department.

## **Compensatory Time Off**

When required due to the needs of the business, SCS may ask non-exempt employees to work COMP time, for FLSA non-exempt classified employees who work beyond their weekly scheduled hours. COMP time is paid time-off in lieu of overtime pay. Employees at risk of working overtime must request and receive pre-approval from their principal or department head in advance of actually performing any overtime work. Employees must report monthly pre-approved overtime to the Payroll Department on the Classified Attendance Sheet or its equivalent. COMP time will be earned as follows:

In any single week, the total number of hours worked between the employee's scheduled work hours and forty (40) hours is considered straight time. COMP time will be accrued at one (1) hour for each hour of overtime.

Any hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week will accrue COMP time at 1.5 hours for each hour worked over 40 hours.

Whenever possible, principals and administrators should encourage flex time (within the seven (7) day work period) to reduce COMP time for overtime service and should be judicious in granting the use of annual leave and COMP time use so as to minimize accrual of additional COMP time.

Accumulated COMP time should be used as soon as possible after accrual. The employee may request COMP time-off during their regular scheduled hours and will be permitted to use it within a reasonable period after making the request, if the request does not unduly disrupt the operations of the office, school, or classroom. The approval process for the use of COMP time should be similar to the approval process for annual leave. Approval for the usage of COMP time should not be unreasonably withheld. COMP time may never be taken before it is earned.

An employee shall not be approved to work overtime that would permit them to exceed an accumulated cumulative balance of forty (40) hours without the express approval of the Director of Schools (or his/her designee).

Principals and administrators shall ensure accrued COMP time is used by June 1 of each year, in order to prevent carry-over of COMP time from one school year to the next.

## **Paychecks**

Sumner County School's pay period for all employees is monthly on the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>). If pay day falls on a federal holiday, employees will receive their paycheck on the preceding workday. Paychecks are directly deposited into the employee's checking and/or savings accounts. If direct deposit is not setup prior to payday, the payroll check will be delivered via courier to the school location or home depending on the assignment.

## **Direct Deposit**

All employees are required to enroll in Direct Deposit (Checking or Savings) or the Sumner County Board of Education will issue the employee a VISA® pay card for payroll purposes.

When you sign up for direct deposit you agree to the following:

"I hereby authorize Sumner County Board of Education to directly deposit my pay in the bank account I have provided either through the Direct Deposit Form or ESS Direct Deposit submission. This authorization remains in full force and effect until the Sumner County Board of Education Finance Department has received written notification from me of its termination in such time and in such manner as to afford the Sumner County Board of Education Finance Department and DEPOSITORY a reasonable opportunity to act on it. I hereby grant Sumner County Board of Education the right to correct any such electronic funds transfer resulting from an erroneous overpayment by debiting my account to the extent of such overpayment. I understand and agree that Sumner County Board of Education is not responsible for the accuracy of the banking information I provide."

## **Access to Personnel Files**

Employee files are maintained by the Human Resources Department and are subject to the Tennessee Open Records Act. Personnel files accessed by current employees and former employees upon request will be permitted within two (2) business days of the request but may take longer. Please note that any individual may request a copy of anyone's file, however the employee will be notified of the person requesting the file, personal identifying information will be redacted, and the requesting party must show a TN ID/DL in order to receive this information. All inquiries including those made by the media must be referred to Jeremy Johnson, Assistant Director of Schools for Board, Community Relations and Records Custodian by fax at (615) 451-6518 or by email at [public.records@sumnerschools.org](mailto:public.records@sumnerschools.org).

## **Employment of Relatives/Nepotism**

Relatives and domestic partners may be hired by the company if the persons concerned will not work in a direct supervisory relationship, and the employment will not pose difficulties for supervision, security, safety, or morale. For the purposes of this policy, “relatives” are defined as spouses, children, siblings, parents, or grandparents. A “domestic partnership” is generally defined as a committed relationship between two individuals who are sharing a home or living arrangement.

Current employees who marry each other or become involved in a domestic partnership will be permitted to continue employment within the location provided they do not work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other or otherwise pose difficulties as mentioned. If employees who marry or live together do work in a direct supervisory relationship with each other, SCS will attempt to reassign one of the employees to another location. If no such position is available, one of the employees may be required to leave the district or school.

As a general rule, family members will not be assigned to the same school or location. Any exceptions must be requested and approved by the Director of Schools prior to any position being offered or any paperwork being submitted for processing by the Human Resources Department. This policy shall not prohibit relatives from working at the same location so long as their work does not require the relatives to work together as a normal part of their job responsibilities.

## **Voluntary Separation from Employment**

Certified personnel are under one-year contracts which should be honored. In the event a resignation is the only viable option for the employee and/or the school system, the teacher must provide a 30-day notice. These employees will likely be considered to have resigned in good standing and generally will be eligible for rehire. If an employee leaves SCS, he/she will be treated as a new employee including but not limited to fingerprinting and processing.

In the event an employee voluntarily terminates without a 30-day notice or submits written notice the immediate supervisor will have the authority to terminate an employee based on failure to report to work. The TN Licensure Office will be notified per TCA and board policy which could result in suspension of license for up to one year.

## **Workplace Safety**

### **Criminal Background Check through Fingerprinting**

Sumner County Schools requires a Criminal Background Check (CBC) for all applicants upon hire and every five years thereafter. Backgrounds must be verified and cleared by the Human Resources Department before an employee can begin working. This information is obtained through fingerprinting, which includes TBI & FBI reports, DCS and sex offender reporting. Any

break in service, other than transfers will require a new CBC, and this cost is covered one time for each employee.

## **Communicable Diseases**

Employees shall inform the principal or Director of Schools whenever they contract a contagious disease so that proper precautions can be taken for the protection of students, other employees, and the infected employee.

No employee who has any communicable disease shall perform his/her duties in any location where such might endanger the health of school children. The Director of Schools shall reassign or suspend any employee who is suspected of having a communicable disease, which might endanger the health of children, pending investigation and final disposition of the case before the Board of Education.

To assist the Board in making final disposition of the case, the Director may refer it to the County Health Office, or other medical experts. The Board shall determine, in light of a written report, the employment status of the employee.

The Board of Education shall require any employee to submit to a physical examination by a physician whenever there is reason to believe that the employee has any communicable disease.

## **Illegal Drugs, Alcohol, and Prescription Drug Abuse**

Sumner County Schools is committed to providing employees and students with a safe environment free of the misuse of illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and alcohol keeping with the spirit and intent of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. SCS is also committed to operating in compliance with all applicable Tennessee laws, Department of Transportation Regulations and to maintaining its reputation in the community as a school system where laws are obeyed and safety for students and employees are practiced. Alcohol and prescription drugs misuse and illegal drugs are inconsistent with all these commitments and will not be tolerated.

Employees are expected to be fit for duty – which means able to perform all their job functions safely and efficiently – whenever they are working, present on SCS's property, operating SCS's vehicles or officially representing SCS. Employees who are not fit for duty – regardless of the reason – should immediately notify a supervisor of their lack of fitness and should never endanger themselves, their co-workers or students of SCS.

Employees are prohibited from using, possessing, buying, selling, making, or dispensing all drugs or illegal drug paraphernalia whenever they are working, present on SCS's property, operating a SCS vehicle, or officially representing SCS. Closely related activities, such as offering

or conspiring to sell any drugs to students, vendors or co-workers after work or off SCS's property are also prohibited. SCS also expects employees to refrain from off-the-job illegal drug activities such as trafficking, which could seriously damage SCS's operations or community reputation.

Employees are also prohibited from "alcohol and prescription drugs misuse." Alcohol and prescription drug misuse includes:

- Working, being present on SCS property, or operating SCS's vehicle while impaired by alcohol or drugs (even if the employee is not impaired enough to violate state DUI/DWI laws);
- Consuming alcoholic beverages while working or operating a SCS vehicle;
- Abusing alcohol and/or prescription drugs off-the-job to the extent that attendance or on-the-job performance problems occur.

To enforce these expectations and educate its employees on the dangers of drug abuse, SCS tests applicants and employees working under DOT Regulations for drugs and alcohol, consistent with applicable federal and state laws, conducts inspections of all portions of its facilities for drugs and other contraband, and cooperates appropriately with law enforcement prosecutions of employees and students who commit crimes.

Employees will not be permitted to work while under the influence of the misuse of drugs and/or alcohol. Individuals who appear unfit for duty may be subject to substance screening as part of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy. Refusal to comply with the SCS policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline, up to and including termination, for the first offense.

## **Smoke-Free Workplace**

Smoking is prohibited at any time on SCS property, in all buildings as well as vehicles, owned, leased or operated by the district. "Smoking" includes the use of any tobacco products including smokeless tobacco, electronic smoking devices, e-cigarettes, juul and vaping devices. The use of these products is prohibited while participating in any class or activity in which they represent the school or district.

Signs will be posted throughout the district's facilities to notify students, employees and all other persons visiting the school that the use of tobacco and tobacco products is forbidden.



## **Workplace Violence Prevention**

Sumner County School is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for all employees. Due to this commitment, employees are discouraged from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual or from behaving in a threatening or violent manner. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any employee will not be tolerated. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate others, menacing gestures, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, and/or destructive actions taken for the purposes of intimidation. This policy covers any violent or potentially violent behavior that occurs in the workplace or at district- or school-sponsored functions.

All SCS employees bear the responsibility of keeping the work environment free from violence or potential violence. Any employee who witnesses or is the recipient of violent behavior should promptly inform their supervisor, principal, or the Human Resources Department. All threats will be promptly investigated. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat in good faith under this guideline.

Any individual engaging in violence against the district or school, its employees, or its property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. All acts will be investigated, and the appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threatening behavior may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Sumner County Schools prohibits the possession of weapons on its property at all times, including parking lots or district vehicles. Additionally, while on duty, employees may not carry a weapon of any type. Weapons include, but are not limited to, handguns, rifles, automatic weapons, and knives that can be used as weapons (excluding utility knives or box cutters that are used to open packages, cut string, and for other miscellaneous tasks), martial arts paraphernalia, stun guns, and tear gas. Any employee violating this policy is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal for the first offense.

The district reserves the right to inspect all belongings of employees on its premises, including briefcases, purses and handbags, gym bags, and personal vehicles on school or district property.

## **Commitment to Safety**

Protecting the safety of employees and visitors is the most important aspect of running the district and schools.

All employees have the opportunity and responsibility to contribute to a safe work environment by using commonsense rules and safe practices and by notifying management when any health or safety issues are present. All employees are encouraged to partner with leadership to ensure maximum safety for all.

In the event of an emergency, employees should notify the appropriate emergency personnel by dialing eight (8) for an outside line then by dialing 911 to activate the medical emergency services.

## Emergency Closings

Sumner County Schools will always make every attempt to be open for learning. However, if a decision is made to close, information will be sent to the media no later than 5:30 AM.

If the Central Office officially closes during the course of the day to permit employees to leave early, non-exempt employees who are working on-site as of the time of the closing will be paid for a full day. If employees leave earlier than the official closing time, they will be paid only for the actual hours worked. Exempt employees will be paid for a normal full day but are expected to complete their work at another time. Central office staff and school administrators are to report to their sites unless the Central Office is closed.

## Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Tennessee Code Annotated 37-1-403 requires all persons to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. "Any person who has knowledge of or is called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from or has sustained any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition shall report such harm immediately if the harm is of such a nature as to reasonably indicate that it has been caused by brutality abuse, or neglect or that, on basis of available information, reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect."

Sumner County Schools requires all employees to use the Child Abuse Intake Form to immediately report concerns of child abuse or neglect. This form details the procedures to be followed and should be available in the counseling offices of all schools.

Examples of Child Abuse and Neglect:

**Physical Abuse** - Non-accidental physical trauma or injury inflicted by a parent or caretaker on a child. It also includes a parent's or a caretaker's failure to protect a child from another person who perpetrated physical abuse on a child. In its most severe form, physical abuse is likely to cause great bodily harm or death.

**Neglect** - Failure to provide for a child's physical survival needs to the extent that there is harm or risk of harm to the child's health or safety. This may include, but is not limited to abandonment, lack of supervision, lack of adequate nutrition that places the child below the normal growth curve, lack of shelter, lack of medical or dental that results in health-threatening conditions, and the inability to meet basic clothing needs of a child. In its most severe form, physical neglect may result in great bodily harm or death.

**Sexual Abuse** - Includes penetration or external touching of a child's intimate parts, oral sex with a child, indecent exposure or any other sexual act performed in a child's presence for sexual gratification, sexual use of a child for prostitution, and the manufacturing of child pornography. Child sexual abuse is also the willful failure of the parent or the child's caretaker to make a reasonable effort to stop child sexual abuse by another person.

**Psychological Harm** - A repeated pattern of caregiver behavior or extreme incident(s) that convey to children that they are worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or only of value in meeting another's needs and may include both abusive acts against a child and failure

to act, or neglectful behavior when age-appropriate action is required for a child's health development. It can occur as part of a one-time incident but is usually chronic.

School teachers, school officials, and other school personnel must maintain confidentiality of all information regarding any child abuse or child sexual abuse report made pursuant to this section and all information regarding the suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse must be maintained by the school child abuse coordinator in a confidential file separate from the child's educational file.

School child abuse coordinators, school teachers, school officials, and other school personnel shall not provide any information relevant to the suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse to the child's parent or guardian, and must refer any questions from the child's parent or guardian to the investigating law enforcement agency and the department. DCS records are confidential.

TN Child Abuse Reporting training will be provided upon hire and annually thereafter through Sumner County Schools - Public School Works.

## **Workplace Guidelines**

### **Email Account**

All employees are issued an email account upon hire for school use. Please note that all required training and benefit communications will be sent to this SCS email account. Employees should follow up with their principal or department supervisor for login information.

### **Public School Works (PSW)**

Public School Works is the mandatory training system for all district employees, no matter the position. All new employees are required to complete this training within the first 30 days of employment and thereafter annually.

### **Attendance**

Absenteeism, whether excused or unexcused, is detrimental to daily operations and often causes hardship on co-workers. With the exception of scheduled time off that has been approved in advance, all employees are expected to report to work promptly at the beginning of each scheduled shift and be ready to work.

If unable to arrive at work on time, or if an employee will be absent, the employee must contact his/her supervisor as soon as possible. One (1) day absent is considered an occurrence and multiple days for the same reason will be charged one (1) occurrence.

Excessive absenteeism (four (4) or more occurrences in a semester) or tardiness will result in discipline up to and including termination. Failure to show up or call in for a scheduled shift without prior approval may result in termination. If an employee fails to report to work or call

in to inform the supervisor of the absence for three (3) consecutive days, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned employment.

## **Job Performance Evaluations**

Communication between employees and supervisors or principals is very important. Discussions regarding job performance are ongoing and often informal. Employees should initiate conversations with their supervisors if they feel additional feedback is needed.

Generally, formal performance reviews are conducted annually. These reviews include a written performance appraisal and a discussion between the employee and the supervisor about job performance and expectations for the coming year.

The primary purpose of annual teacher and principal evaluations is to identify and support instruction that will lead to high levels of student achievement.

Evaluations will be used to inform human capital decisions, including, but not limited to individual and group professional development plans, hiring, assignment and promotion, and tenure and dismissal.

Sumner County will use the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) which is the state approved evaluation model to evaluate its teachers and principals.

There are five tiers to the TEAM evaluation system: Tier Five = Significantly Above Expectations; Tier Four = Above Expectations; Tier Three = Meeting Expectations; Tier Two = Below Expectations; and Tier 1 = Significantly Below Expectations.

## **Disciplinary Action**

In order to sustain SCS's high educational standards and community relations, the district tries to address disciplinary problems in an efficient, fair and timely manner. Discipline for performance and behavioral problems may range from verbal warnings to termination, as determined by the Director of Schools, within School Board Policy and Tennessee Rules and Regulations. The objective is, where possible, to correct performance and discipline problems proactively to achieve positive results or coaching for success while protecting students, SCS and its employees.

## **Standards of Conduct**

Listed below are some of SCS's rules and regulations. This list should not be viewed as all-inclusive. Pursuant to Tennessee Rules and Regulations, Tennessee Code Annotated and Sumner County Board Policies, SCS reserves the right to discipline or discharge an employee for conduct not defined in the following list. Examples of performance, behavior and conduct that SCS considers inappropriate, and which could lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment without prior warning at the sole discretion of Director of Schools, include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Falsifying, omitting pertinent information or altering employment or other Sumner County School records, including supplying false or misleading information when applying for employment or at any time during employment.
- B. Violating any policy including Sumner County School's Anti-discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, and Retaliation policy;
- C. Patterns of excessive absenteeism, or tardiness or No Call No Shows;
- D. Discussing confidential Student information with unauthorized Employees or individuals or in any areas where unauthorized Employees or individuals could overhear the conversation;
- E. Disclosing without authorization or misuse of confidential Student, Employee or Sumner County School System information without authorization;
- F. Deliberate destruction of property including intellectual property.
- G. Reporting to work intoxicated, under the influence of non-prescribed or prescribed drugs or otherwise unfit for duty;
- H. Possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons, or firearms on Sumner County School Board property or at any school event.
- I. Using threatening, intimidating, coercing, obscene or abusive, language or gestures;
- J. Engaging in criminal conduct, acts of violence or making threats of violence toward anyone on Sumner County School Board Property or while representing the Sumner County Schools;
- K. Threatening, intimidating or coercing fellow Employees, Students or parents on or off Sumner County School Board Property at any time for any purpose;
- L. Stealing property from, or unauthorized possession of the property of fellow Employees, Students, Visitors or Sumner County Schools;
- M. Fighting, horseplay or provoking a fight on Sumner County Schools property;
- N. Failure or disregard to follow safety or security regulations put in place to protect Staff and Students;
- O. Failing to report any personal injury sustained while on the job;
- P. Refusal to undergo drug screening or complete a fitness for duty when request by authorized designee;

Q. Engaging in an act of sabotage or willfully or with gross negligence causing the destruction or damage of Sumner County School property or the property of Students or fellow Employees.

R. Unauthorized removal, duplication, or transferring possession of Sumner County School Board Property master keys;

S. Altering a check, making unauthorized charges to a Sumner County Schools account, or knowingly overcharging a Student;

T. Failure to follow Sumner County Schools policy regarding handling of cash, deposits or other established accounting procedures;

U. Unauthorized use of Sumner County Schools telephones, or equipment or facilities;

V. Unauthorized social conduct or fraternization with Students, including dating, emailing, text or use of any social media messaging at any time;

W. Unprofessional appearance or conduct;

X. Making or publishing false, vicious, or malicious statements while on school property, school business, or using school equipment concerning any Employee, Student, Principal, Director of Schools, or the Sumner County School System;

Y. Engaging in insubordination;

Z. Sleeping or loitering on the job;

AA. Leaving school premises without permission or failing to remain in your work area until the end of your work day unless released earlier by your Supervisor, Principal, Department Director or Director of Schools.

BB. Improper recording of hours off or hours worked or punching another Employee's time card;

CC. Entering a school or office after normal work hours without prior proper authorization.

DD. Failure to maintain a required license or certification required for your position.

EE. Failure to complete required training through Public School Works and Tennessee Crisis Intervention.

FF. Failure to return Student records after the end of an assignment, this is property of the school system.

If an employee's performance, work habits, overall attitude, conduct or demeanor becomes unsatisfactory in the judgment of SCS, based on violations of either the above or any other of SCS's policies, administrative rules or Tennessee Regulations, the Employee will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## **Outside Employment**

Employees are permitted to work a second job as long as it does not interfere with their job performance with SCS or reflect unfavorably on the school system. You may work no more than 15 hours per week or 400 hours during a 9-month period. Employees with a second job are expected to work their assigned schedules and must notify SCS if they are on FMLA with another job. A second job will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours.

If outside work activity causes or contributes to job-related problems, it must be discontinued, or the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## **Travel Reimbursement**

Travel reimbursement is designed to assist employees in completing their responsibilities in the areas of instructional support services and instructional activities. Employees are encouraged to travel together and use available Board vehicles when possible in order to reduce costs.

Travel reports must reach the Central Office by the fourth (4th) of the month, following the month for which mileage is claimed otherwise payment will be reimbursed the following month. Only mileage for official business may be claimed and must be the most direct route at a rate of \$.50 per mile. A mileage reimbursement grid between each location can be found under finance on [www.sumnerschools.org](http://www.sumnerschools.org). Reports must be legible; details should be accurate and signed by the appropriate personnel.

Official mileage should start and end at the official workstation, which is the primary location where the employee works. Travel claimed from another location (such as a home) is only permitted if it is less mileage than from the official workstation and is only reimbursable in excess of the employee's daily commute.

## **Dress Code and Grooming**

It is important to project a professional image to coworkers, visitors, and students. This means that employees should not wear clothing that is revealing. All employees are expected to dress in a manner consistent with good hygiene, safety, and good taste. Employees should use common sense.

Any questions or complaints regarding the appropriateness of attire should be directed to the supervising principal or Human Resources Department for final decisions.

## **Social Media Acceptable Use**

The district encourages employees to share information with co-workers and with those outside the district for the purposes of gathering information, generating new ideas, and learning from the work of others while being respectful and dignified. Social media provides inexpensive, informal, and timely ways to participate in an exchange of ideas and information. However, information posted on a website is available to the public and, therefore, the district has established the following guidelines for employee participation in social media.

Sumner County Schools respects the right of employees to use social media, networking sites, personal websites and blogs, but it is important that an employee's personal use of these sites not interfere with official duties, violate any district policies or damage the reputation of the school district, individual schools, its employees, its students or their families.

An employee's use and comments made on social media sites are subject to First Amendment protections. However, any personal use must be conducted in such a manner that a reader would not think that the employee is speaking for or on behalf of Sumner County Schools.

Employees should set appropriate boundaries between personal and public online behavior, understanding that what is private in the digital world often has the potential of becoming public, even without knowledge or consent. It is recommended that employees carefully review the privacy settings on any social media accounts and exercise good judgment when posting content and information on such sites.

Employees should adhere to the following guidelines consistent with the district's standards on harassment, student relationships, professional communication and confidentiality of student information.

Employees who have a presence on social networking websites are prohibited from posting photographs or information that will cast the employee in an unprofessional light and that is likely to create a disruption to school.

Employees are prohibited from accessing personal social networking sites, via district or personal devices, during working hours except for legitimate instructional purposes.

Sumner County School employees are privy to confidential education records. Such confidential information, or information reasonably related to confidential records, shall never be shared or posted on the Internet in any forum (i.e., public or personal.) Employees shall not disclose any confidential information obtained during the course of his/her employment about the school district, any school, individuals or organizations, including students and/or their families.

The Board discourages employees from socializing with students on social networking websites. The same relationship, exchange, interaction, information, or behavior that would be unacceptable in a non-technological medium is unacceptable when done through the use of technology. When it is necessary to communicate electronically with individual students,



employees are encouraged to use district-approved means of electronic communication such as school email or a district sponsored secure messaging service/site.

Employees who desire to use social media as an enhancement to their instructional-or school-based responsibilities should establish a dedicated, non-personal social media page or account for such purposes with the permission of the school principal. The district and its administrators retain editorial control over any site or account used as part of official school business, including those accounts or pages used for individual classes, band or athletic teams.

Employees shall immediately remove any Internet postings the district determines are inappropriate or unprofessional. Employees must keep in mind that if they post information on a social media site that is in violation of company policy and/or federal, state, or local law, the disclaimer will not shield them from disciplinary action.

## **Bulletin Boards**

All required governmental postings are posted on the boards typically located in the breakroom. These boards may also contain general announcements.

Employees are able to submit notices of general interest, such as for-sale notices; recreational-type announcements and/or club functions; postcards; expressions of gratitude or sympathy; and notices looking for/offering carpools, tickets, roommates, or pets. Please deliver notices to leadership for approval. The principal and Director of Schools reserves the right to refuse permission or remove any announcement.

## **Gifts and Solicitation**

Employees shall not accept gifts from students or vendors except gifts of nominal value – candy, pens, calendars, flowers, etc. Exceptions to this policy are the acceptance of minor items which are generally distributed to all by the companies through public relations programs. Any gifts outside of this scope should be turned into the principal or supervisor to use in accordance with Board Policy.

Employees should be able to work in an environment that is free from unnecessary annoyances and interference with their work. In order to protect employees and visitors, solicitation by employees is strictly prohibited while either the employee being solicited or the employee doing the soliciting is on “working time.” “Working time” is defined as time during which an employee is not at a meal or on the premises immediately before or after his or her shift.

Employees are also prohibited from distributing written materials, handbills, or any other type of literature on working time and, at all times, in “working areas,” which includes all office areas. “Working areas” do not include break rooms, parking lots, or common areas shared by employees during nonworking time.

The Board limits system-wide solicitation of funds for charitable organizations during school hours and in the school buildings with the exception of those organizations approved by the

Director of Schools. From time to time, collections to help fellow school personnel in need will be permitted.

Individual school principals should use their discretion in approving fund-raising collections from school personnel in their buildings, and no collection should be conducted in the buildings without prior approval of the principal. GoFundMe accounts may be approved by the principal and Central office for final review so long as the fundraising and online guideline are followed.

Non-employees may not trespass or solicit or distribute materials anywhere on school or district property at any time.

## **Purchases for SCS**

Purchases should only be made by approved purchasers. Any purchase less than \$1000 should be submitted for payment with the Finance Department with proper documentation and the original invoice, no alterations. Anything over \$1000 must have an approved purchase order (PO) or formal contract. Any credits, gifts or discounts received for purchases made by the district are deemed district property and not for personal use.

## **Computers, Internet, Email Usage, and Other Resources**

The district provides a wide variety of communication tools and resources to employees for use in running day-to-day business activities. Whether it is the telephone, voice mail, fax, scanner, Internet, intranet, e-mail, text messaging, or any other district-provided technology, use should be reserved for school-related matters during working hours. All communication using these tools should be handled in a professional and respectful manner.

E-mail, internet access, and network resources are provided for authorized employees to perform school-related tasks and communicate with others. This access is given to employees who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Computer access and e-mail accounts are issued only after approval by SCS Information Services Departments. Access can be revoked at any time if network security or protocol is compromised or for violation of Acceptable Usage Policy guidelines.

Having access to the internet, school technology, and network resources requires employees to maintain consistently high levels of personal responsibility.

Employees are allowed to conduct activities that are workplace related. Personal activities will be limited to and will in no way interfere with computer time and use for which the resources are intended or with employee's work activities and schedule.

Employees should not have any expectation of privacy in their use of district-provided computer, phone, or other communication tools. All communications made using district-provided equipment or services including email and internet activity, are subject to inspection

by the district. Employees should keep in mind that even if they delete an email, voicemail or other communication, a copy may be archived on the company's systems.

The electronic communication systems are not secure and may allow inadvertent disclosure, accidental transmission to third parties, etc. Sensitive information should not be sent via unsecured electronic means.

Telephones are for business purposes. While the company recognizes that some personal calls are necessary, these should be kept as brief as possible and to a minimum. Personal use of the district cell phones, long-distance account, or toll-free numbers is strictly prohibited and are the responsibility of the employee as well as any lost equipment.

Abuse of these privileges is subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

## **Badge**

Each employee is provided a picture badge upon hire. When employees are on any property of SCS, it is expected that the badge be worn in a visible location. If an employee loses a badge they should contact Human Resources for immediate replacement. Anyone without a badge will need to check in at the front desk for safety purposes.

## **Change of Information**

All employees must update any of the following changes through ESS: name, address, telephone number, personal e-mail, marital status, as well as birth or adoption of a child.

In order to change a name in the system, a social security card will need to be provided to the Human Resources Department, and if the employee is a licensed teacher, he/she must also change the full name with the Tennessee Department of Education licensing board through TNCompass first.

This is applicable to resigning or retiring employees for the purposes of W-2.

## **Bus Duty**

Employees in schools requiring bus duty may work bus duty and be compensated at the prevailing rate for all hours worked above and beyond the normal workday schedule. Arrangements for bus duty must be made with the responsible school office personnel.

## **Restraint and Corporal Punishment**

Employees must complete a 28 hour behavior intervention training program and pass a certification test to be permitted to restrain a special education student. Once certified, a nine-hour update training and skill assessment should be completed annually. The training is mandatory for classes where restraint may be authorized. In an emergency situation, any

employee may restrain a student if the child's behavior poses a threat to the physical safety of the student or others nearby.

Please note that corporal punishment is not allowed under the SCS policy.

## **Nursing Mothers**

This applies to female employees who have requested a time and location to express breast milk for a child, up to a year after the child's birth. Upon request, an employee shall be granted time, and an appropriate place at work, to express breast milk. This time is not for a set period of time, and it must be long enough to ensure the employee has sufficient time to express the necessary milk. When possible, the time request shall be scheduled so as to coincide with the employee's regular meal period. However, the time to express milk does not have to coincide with the employee's regular meal period, and it is not limited to the length of the regular meal period. Any time expression or nursing shall take place at a workplace location, the employee must be allowed privacy and someplace other than a restroom.

## **Arrested Employees**

Employees arrested or convicted of any criminal statute, must inform SCS within five (5) days.

## **Building Guidelines**

No students or unauthorized personnel shall be on roofs. Please report any visible damage or trash on roofs.

Employees should keep all vehicles off the sidewalks and grassed areas. All grass clippings from sport fields need to be disposed of properly and not discarded on any school property or campus. Employees should notify Support Services, for approval, before any landscaping project is undertaken. All gardens and animal pens should be cleaned and removed/stored each year. Employees should not plug electric cars in school outlets. Employees should call or create a work order to pick up large items around dumpsters.

For purposes of the Fire Marshall and safety of students and staff, all doors with auto closers should not be propped open. Employees should maintain a clutter free foot path approximately three (3) foot for all egress doors and escape windows. Items are not to be stored in electrical closets, mechanical closets, or mezzanines. Stored items must be kept 24" below the ceiling. No items are to be hung from the ceiling.

All painting needs to be approved by Support Services. All construction projects and alterations must be approved by Support Services.

Employees should not reset the fire alarm system when it engages, this may silence it. Employees should wait for the Fire Department or Support Services to reset the system.

Employees should only flush school-issued toilet tissue. Baby wipes, flushable wipes, paper towels, etc. should not be flushed. Employees should use the appropriate receptacles to dispose of any feminine care products; these should never be flushed. Employees should limit items being stored under the sinks due to potential leaks at drain traps. Water fountains should not be used to dispose of any liquids or as a means to clean any appliances, equipment, aquariums, etc.

Only authorized personnel are allowed to diagnose and repair any and all electric related issues. Classrooms need to remain free of all appliances, employees should use designated breakrooms and lounges. Employees should report any issues or concerns to the appropriate administration immediately.

Influencing and controlling sensors or thermostats by any means is prohibited. All mechanical rooms should be clear and free of debris and items that block access to the replacement and service of any equipment. All supply and return air vents are to be free and clear of any obstructions.

## **Certified Specifications**

### **Tenure**

Teachers are eligible to receive tenure when they have met the following requirements: Served five (5) school years or not less than forty-five (45) months within a seven-year period as a probationary teacher; and received evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “above expectations” or “significantly above expectations” provided by the evaluation guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education during the last two (2) years of the teacher’s probationary period. The decision as to whether or not to grant tenure is solely within the discretion of the Board of Education. Once a teacher is eligible for tenure, the teacher must be granted tenure or they cannot continue employment. A teacher who does not meet the state’s eligibility requirements for tenure may continue teaching on a year-to-year contract as a probationary teacher until the teacher is eligible for tenure.

Any teacher who, after acquiring tenure status later than July 1, 2012, receives two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “below expectations” or “significantly below expectations” as provided by the evaluation guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education shall be returned to probationary status by the Director of Schools until the teacher has received two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “above expectations” or “significantly above expectations.” At that time the teacher is again eligible for tenure and shall either be recommended by the Director of Schools for tenure or non-renewed.

## **Non-Tenure**

The Director of Schools may dismiss any non-tenured teacher at any time when deemed necessary for incompetence, inefficiency, insubordination, neglect of duty; or unprofessional conduct.

The Director of Schools is under no obligation to re-employ non-tenured teachers at the end of their contract period. If the Director of Schools determines not to renew the employment agreement of a non-tenured teacher, the following action shall be taken: written notice of non-renewal shall be hand delivered, sent electronically via SCBOE email or sent to the employee by U.S. registered mail so that it will be received by the employee within five business days following the last instructional day for the school year. No reason will be given other than non-tenure, non-renewal on the written notice.

Non-renewal is not considered a dismissal/suspension; as such, those procedures do not apply.

## **Mandatory Orientation**

All new teachers or teachers returning to the SCS after a break in employment are required to attend mandatory orientation before the start of each new school year or each January.

## **Teacher Effect Data**

A statistical system for educational outcome assessment that uses measures of student learning to enable the estimation of teacher, school, and school district statistical distributions, and the statistical system will use available and appropriate data as input to account for differences in student attainment, such that the impact that the teacher, school, and school district have on the educational progress of students may be estimated on a student attainment constant basis. The impact that a teacher, school, or school district has on the progress, or lack of progress, in educational advancement or learning of a student is referred to hereafter as the "effect" of the teacher, school, or school district on the educational progress of students.

Annually, data from the Tennessee comprehensive assessment program (TCAP) tests (including the end of courses (EOC) exams at the high school level) will be used to provide an estimate of the statistical distribution of teacher effects on the educational progress of students within school districts for grades 3-8 and within high school subjects that are required to implement EOC exams. Teacher effect data shall not be retained for use in evaluations for more than the most recent five (5) years. A student must have been present for one hundred fifty (150) days of classroom instruction per year or seventy-five (75) days of classroom instruction in a block schedule before that student's record is attributable to a specific teacher.

The estimates of specific teacher effects on the educational progress of students will not be a public record and will be made available only to the specific teacher, the teacher's appropriate

administrators as designated by the local board of education and school board members. Building principals and assistant principals, the director of schools, the assistant directors of schools for instruction, for pupil services, and for human resources, the school system testing coordinator, and instructional coordinators are designated as appropriate administrators to distribute, review, and keep secure and confidential teacher effect data.

## **Paid Time**

Certified instructors are paid for 180 instruction days, ten (10) days of scheduled holidays, five (5) in-service days, one (1) day for parent-teacher conference, and four (4) days designated by the local board. Copies of employee calendars can be found on our district website at <https://www.sumnerschools.org/index.php/staff-calendars>.

## **Certification Verification**

It is the responsibility of each professional employee to ensure that they possess a valid, up-to-date teaching license for their assigned area(s).

## **Experience**

Certified employees earn experience for salary rating purposes for each paid day. Any days unpaid or absent without pay, do not count toward experience for salary, tenure or retirement.

## **Degree Change**

The individual educator must file notification of a degree change with the Human Resources Department via email prior to completion of coursework for a degree change. Evidence of training is required for verification and approval. Degree change, pay increases take effect twice a year per TCA.

## **Licensure Renewal**

Licensure renewal is the sole responsibility of the teacher and should be completed prior to the expiration. Law does not allow for teacher pay without an active license.

A practitioner license is issued to a teacher who completes an approved teacher preparation program. It is valid for three (3) years. Licensure is subject to changes by the Tennessee Department of Education.

A practitioner license is issued to an applicant who meets Tennessee licensure requirements and has at least one year of acceptable teaching experience in another state. It is valid for three (3) years. Upon completion of a minimum of three years of teaching (a combination of

in-state/out-of-state experience, with at least one year in Tennessee) and receipt of 30 professional development points can apply to advance to the professional license.

A professional teacher license is issued to a teacher who has completed a minimum of three years' of experience in an approved school and has received 60 professional development points. The professional license is valid for six (6) years and is renewable by meeting renewal requirements.

## **Professional Learning and Tennessee Academy of School Leaders (TASL)**

The Tennessee State Department of Education requires that all instructional leaders in TASL mandated positions must earn TASL credits. All principals and assistant principals are TASL mandated. Other instructional leaders are required to earn TASL credits if they spend 50 percent or more of their time in direct delivery of instructional services to the following: teachers, principals, and/or other educators in administrative or supervisory positions. For more information, please refer to the Tennessee State Department of Education Website.

The Tennessee State Department of Education requires that all certified teachers in Tennessee schools complete thirty hours (or five days in a 200-day contract) of professional learning (PL) each year. Tennessee Code Annotated, Appendix C., Section 49-6-3004, states that a teacher's 200-day contract must include five (5) days of professional learning. This applies to any person who holds a full-time teaching position and is employed by the Sumner County Board of Education. Part-time teachers' PL requirements are adjusted accordingly. It is the responsibility of the educator to fulfill this five (5) day requirement based on a principal-approved plan of activities that best meets the needs of the teacher and the overall goals of the school. Teachers hired as an interim for less than a full year are not required to complete professional learning activities.

## **Teaching and Learning Resources at the Teacher Center**

The Teacher Center supplies a workspace where various equipment and consumables are available as resources for educators to enhance their classrooms and their personal professional growth. Resources available for teacher use include die-cuts, laminators, a poster maker, a large volume hole punch, an online catalog to the educators' professional library, and subscriptions to recent educational journals and magazines. Materials available for purchase include construction paper, poster board, color paper, bulletin board paper, a limited number of reproducibles, as well as black and white copies.

In addition to the online catalogue to books on pedagogy and teaching strategies, teachers have access to an online system for registration and tracking of professional learning within the district. Many of those professional learning sessions are held at the Teacher Center, located at 675 East Main Street, Gallatin, Tennessee.



## **Emergency Lesson Plans and Crisis Response Plans**

Personal and school emergencies arise. It is the expectation that all teachers, prior to the first day of school, prepare and have readily available/accessible emergency lesson plans. Each teacher should also have crisis response plans in clear view for a substitute's easy access.

When a teacher knows in advance that he/she will be absent, he/she should develop detailed lesson plans and activities that more align with the current learning, along with the daily schedule.

It is the expectation that school administrators make emergency lesson plans a part of each teacher's back-to-school accountability checklist.

## **Requests to Conduct Research**

Research proposals for educational papers and degrees must be submitted for examination prior to being attempted. Each proposal must be analyzed for the degree of which students' instructional time and/or educators' professional time are affected, the nature of data needed, the available source of data, and the degree to which the results would yield productive relevance for SCS population. Submissions are made to the Special Programs Coordinator for recommendations to the Deputy Director and Director of Schools with ultimate decision for approval/disapproval. The final disposition of this process is then communicated to the researcher.

## **Requests to Apply for Grants**

Sumner County Schools values educators who go above and beyond their normal responsibilities in an effort to improve learning and/or enhance instruction. Applying for and receiving grants is an exceptional way to do this. Educators wishing to apply for grants that will benefit classroom instruction, learning, and/or impact student performance shall first obtain permission from his/her principal to apply for the grant. The grant application along with the "Request for Board Approval of Grant" form will then be completed and signed by the educator and principal before being submitted to the Assistant Director of Schools for Instruction (AD for Instruction). Once the request to apply has been approved by the AD for Instruction, he/she will forward the form and grant application to the Assistant Director of Schools for Finance (AD for Finance) for approval. Once the CFO has approved the request to apply, he/she will ensure that the grant application request is added to the next voting session of the Sumner County School Board.

No grants shall be submitted without the prior approval of the AD for Instruction, the AD for Finance, and the Sumner County School Board. All educators should take into consideration the time needed for the approval process to occur before applying for a grant.

## **Procedure to Request Field Trips**

Any teacher desiring to take a group of students on an educational field trip must obtain advance approval of the principal. The trip must have a definite purpose and reflect careful planning. Students should be prepared by general class discussion and/or research. Any school-sponsored trip not meeting the "educationally beneficial" requirements must have prior approval of the Director of Schools or his/her designee. If bus transportation is required, the principal or his designee shall make the necessary arrangements. A fee will be charged to the school for mileage when school system buses are used. Signed parental permission forms must be obtained for every student making an off-campus trip beyond the immediate vicinity of the school. It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that these forms are kept on file for the remainder of the school year. The form for parental permission must include: purpose, date, time of departure and return, travel plans, destination, number of chaperones, personal expense involved, rules of conduct and penalties for violation, and other facts necessary for parents to be fully informed. This information is to be completed by the school before the form is signed by the parent.

Overnight educational trips, field trips taken outside regular school hours, and chaperones must be approved by the principal and the Director of Schools or his/her designee in advance. Any school-sponsored trip which is out-of-state or overnight must have prior approval by the Director of Schools or his/her designee. These groups must be accompanied by at least one regular staff member and others from the school who are appropriate for adequate supervision and shall be responsible for student conduct. There must be at least one female and one male chaperone if the trip is for a mixed group. Male and female students must stay in separate accommodations. Students will not be allowed in rooms designated for members of the opposite sex. The ratio of chaperones to students shall be at least 1:10. Students shall not be penalized for participating in approved school-sponsored trips and activities. Teachers shall permit students to make up class assignments missed because of a trip or activity.

All accidents that occur on a school-sponsored trip must be reported by the teacher to the principal immediately upon returning to school. Serious accidents involving personal injury must be reported immediately to the principal and/or director. An emergency shall be dealt with promptly by the teacher or other members of the school staff by taking appropriate action, including sending the student to the hospital or summoning medical aid or ambulance. In cases where it is necessary to send the student to the hospital, reasonable effort must be made to notify the parent/guardian.

Board policies and school rules concerning conduct will be enforced on all trips.

## **Security Protocol for Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP)**

In compliance with State Board of Education regulations, all mandated testing beginning with the 1992-93 school year is done under security guidelines authorized under the 1992 EIA legislation. The basic premise of these guidelines is to ensure that all test materials are to be in a secured setting AT ALL TIMES from the time they are received at each school, during the time they are in use, and until the time they are shipped for scoring. There is a secondary premise of both accountability of and protection for the classroom teacher, so that no inference may be made that materials are inappropriately used. These security and administration procedures are outlined to pertinent staff prior to each test window. As the testing process advances to computer/online-based administrations, further guides for appropriate preparation for the testing and for interaction with students during testing will be available. There is a definitive procedure for handling a breach of security, and anyone who is shown to have broken security regulations will come under scrutiny for possible licensure revocation per the following:

Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) 49-1-607 states: Any person found to have not followed security guidelines for administration of the TCAP test, or successor test, including making or distributing unauthorized copies of the test, altering a grade or answer sheet, providing copies of answers or test questions, or otherwise compromising the integrity of the testing process, shall be placed on immediate suspension, and such actions will be grounds for dismissal, including dismissal of tenured employees. Such actions shall be grounds for revocation of state license.

## **Expectation for Implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEP) and 504 Plans**

Certified personnel shall implement the accommodations, modifications and services outlined in any Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan agreed upon by the principal or local education association representative. A special education case manager or 504 building designee will review the plan with staff not in attendance at a meeting.

## **State Standards of Teaching**

It is the expectation of the state of Tennessee and SCS that all teachers will adhere to and teach the standards approved and adopted by Tennessee's State Board of Education. The Tennessee Academic Standards provide a common set of expectations for what students will know and be able to do at the end of each grade and at the end of each course. State standards are rooted in the knowledge and skills students need to succeed in postsecondary studies and careers. Principals and other school administrators are responsible for ensuring that all students are prepared and ready for the following year's or next course's standards, and one way they can ensure this is by holding educators accountable to the state standards.

Academic standards establish desired learning outcomes. The curriculum used to teach standards provides instructional programming designed to help students reach these learning outcomes. SCS establishes curricular programs that support student mastery of the Tennessee Academic Standards while reflecting the district’s unique community values. It is the belief of SCS that instructional practices should be research-based and should provide each student with the best opportunity to meet learning outcomes set by the standards by supporting the learning needs of each student (Tennessee Department of Education).

## **Time Off and Leaves of Absence**

### **Holidays**

Copies of employee calendars can be found on our district website at <https://www.sumnerschools.org/index.php/staff-calendars> outlining time for each group of individuals based on number of days worked in a calendar year. These calendars will outline start and end dates based on the number of days worked for each group of employees.

Holiday pay shall be at the employee’s regular straight-time rate, not to exceed the number of hours scheduled.

All employees are eligible for holiday pay; however eligibility shall further depend upon the employee being in a paid status on their scheduled workday before and after the holiday.

Any employee on leave of absence will not receive holiday pay for any holiday during their scheduled leave unless they are in a paid status their scheduled day before and after the holiday.

### **Annual Leave**

Sumner County School recognizes the importance of time off from work to relax and encourages employees to take time to spend with family and enjoy leisure activities. For this purpose, the district provides paid annual leave to full-time employees (working 240 days or more). The maximum accumulation for annual leave is 36 days. Absent without pay 11 or more days within a pay period results in loss of annual leave for that month.

<b><u>Continuous Service Period</u></b>	<b><u>Monthly Annual Leave Accrual</u></b>
Less than 5 Years	1.50 Days
5 to 10 Years	1.75 Days
11 to 25 Years	2.00 Days
26 years or more	2.25 Days

Employees whose employment ends will be paid for any accrued unused annual leave.

## Personal Leave

All full-time employees earn one (1) personal day for each full semester employed. A third bonus personal day is earned beginning on the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) year of service with SCS. Six (6) or more days absent without pay in a pay period (11 or more days without pay for calendar year employees) will result in loss of a personal day. All unused personal leave days will be converted to sick leave at the end of each fiscal year (July-June).

## Sick Leave

Sick leave is earned by all full-time employees at the rate of one (1) day per month worked with no limit on accumulation. Six (6) or more days absent without pay in a pay period (11 or more days without pay for calendar year employees) will result in the loss of one (1) sick leave day. Employees may not use sick leave which has not been allocated. Absences are to be reported as absent-without-pay if sick leave days are not available at the time of use. If an employee misses three (3) or more consecutive days because of illness, SCS may require the employee to provide a physician's written permission to return to work. This note should include days of absences as well as any restrictions.

Sick days are not intended to be used as a substitute for annual leave days; however sick days may be used if an employee needs to provide care for selfcare as well as family members who are ill. Sick days may also be used if an employee needs time off for scheduled medical procedures. Certified personnel must only use sick in whole and half day increments only.

Upon termination of employment or unpaid leave of absence, any such days that are unearned shall be deducted from the final salary. If salary is insufficient, the employee will be liable for reimbursement.

**Upon retirement, if vested, accumulated sick leave days can be transferred to TCRS as service credit. 20 unused sick days = 1 month of time added to employment history for retirement (TCRS) purposes.**

## Family and Medical Leave

Sumner County Schools complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and Tennessee and Medical Leave Act (TMLA), which requires employers to grant 12 weeks (16 weeks for birth/adoption) of unpaid, protected leaves of absence to qualified workers for certain medical and family-related reasons.

Leave should be applied for after more than 3 consecutive days absent or intermittent/reduced schedule is required by a medical care provider. Please note there are many requirements, qualifications, and exceptions under these laws, and each employee's situation is different. Employees may not take leave and work another job as employment with SCS will be terminated. Employees with a second job must notify SCS if they are on FMLA with another job. Contact the Human Resources Department to discuss options for leave.

**Reasons for Taking Leave.** Under federal law, unpaid leave may be requested for pregnancy and prenatal care; preplacement activities, birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child; or the serious health condition of a child, spouse, parent, domestic partner, or the employee.

**Military Family Leave Entitlements.** Under federal law, unpaid leave may also be requested by eligible employees who have any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the spouse or a son, daughter, parent, domestic partner, or next of kin of the employee is on covered active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty) in the armed forces; employees may use their 12-week entitlement to address certain qualifying circumstances. Qualifying circumstances may include deploying on short-notice, attending certain military events, arranging for alternative child care and school activities, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, engaging in rest and recuperation, and attending post deployment reintegration briefings.

The federal FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. This leave applies if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, domestic partner, or next of kin caring for a covered military service member or veteran recovering from an injury or illness suffered while on active duty in the armed forces or that existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by service or that manifested itself before or after the member became a veteran.

**Leave Designation.** If an employee does not expressly request FMLA leave, the district reserves the right to designate a qualifying absence as FMLA leave and will give notice of the FMLA designation to the employee. If an absence is a qualifying event under FMLA, the leave will run concurrent with short-term disability, long-term disability, annual leave, personal leave, sick or workers' compensation.

**Benefits.** Under federal law, employers must continue healthcare benefits during protected FMLA leave as though the employees were still at work and must pay the employer's part of the premium. The employee will continue to be responsible for the employee's portion of the premium as well.

**Interaction with Accrued Paid Time Off.** FMLA leave may be paid with the use of annual leave, personal leave or sick time as allowed.

**Job Protection.** An employee's job, or an equivalent job, is protected while the employee is on leave, and the employee will be returned to their positions or to another job of like pay and status at the end of FMLA leave. If the employee does not return within the FMLA leave time the same job is not guaranteed, but the employee will be guaranteed a position if they return within 12 months.

**Return-to-Work Policy.** All employees must have a medical note that includes any restrictions, if any, stating that they may return to work.

## **Military Leave**

Sumner County Schools supports the military obligations of all employees and grants leaves for uniformed service in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Any employee who needs time off for uniformed service should immediately notify the Human Resources Department and his/her supervisor, who will provide details regarding the leave. If an employee is unable to provide notice before leaving for uniformed service, a family member should notify the supervisor as soon as possible.

Upon return from military leave, employees will be granted the same seniority, pay, and benefits as if they had worked continuously. Failure to report for work within the prescribed time after completion of military service will be considered a voluntary termination.

All employees who enter military service may accumulate a total absence of five (5) years and still retain employment rights.

## **Bereavement Leave**

Two (2) days leave per year may be taken for bereavement purposes. The deceased must be identified on the leave form submitted by the full-time employee. If the deceased is a spouse, child, grandchild, parent, parent-in-law, sibling, sibling-in-law or grandparent of the employee, the employee may take an additional three (3) days.

Sumner County Schools may require verification of the need for the leave. The employee's supervisor and Human Resources Department will consider this time off on a case-by-case basis.

Time off granted in accordance with this policy shall not be credited as time worked for the purpose of computing overtime.

## **Jury Duty/Court Appearance**

The district supports employees in their civic duty to serve on a jury. Employees must present any summons to jury duty to their supervisor as soon as possible after receiving the notice to allow advance planning for an employee's absence.

Any employee called for jury duty during work hours shall be provided such time with no loss in pay or benefits; however, any fees or remuneration the employee receives during such leave shall be turned over to SCS. A copy of the summons should be submitted with the leave sheet. Employees are expected to report for duty at school on all days when they are not actually serving.

If an employee is released from jury duty after four (4) hours or less of service, he or she must report to work for the remainder of that workday.

Time for appearance in court for personal business will be the individual employee's responsibility. Normally, personal days or annual leave days will be used for this purpose.

## **Time Off for Voting**

Sumner County Schools recognizes that voting is an integral part of being in a community. In most cases, employees will have reasonable time outside working hours to vote. However, if for any reason the employee thinks this won't be the case, he/she should contact his/her supervisor to discuss scheduling accommodations no later than noon on the day before the election. Early voting is also recommended.

## **Employee Benefits**

Sumner County Schools recognizes the value of benefits to employees and their families. The district supports employees by offering a comprehensive and competitive benefits program. For more information regarding benefit programs, please refer to the district's Summary Plan Descriptions (SPD), which can be provided by the Benefits department. To the extent of the information provided here conflicts with the SPD or full plan document, the full plan document will control.

### **Medical, Dental, and Vision Insurance**

Sumner County Board of Education offers a choice of medical plans to all full-time employees on the first of the month following 30 days of service. SCS pays the negotiated amount of the medical insurance premiums.

Employees on leave of absence may continue their insurance by paying the premium each month no later than the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) as due.

Under the requirements of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget & Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA), as amended, an employer must offer to continue group health benefits to employees and dependents in certain instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end. If an employee should have questions about his/her COBRA rights and obligations concerning continuation coverage, they should contact the Board's Employee Benefits Office at (615) 451-5214.

### **Company Paid - Life Insurance and Long-Term Disability**

Sumner County Schools provides Basic Term Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) at one (1) times the employee's annual salary and Long-Term Disability coverage at no cost to all eligible employees after 3 years of continuous service.

### **Additional Miscellaneous Benefits**

In addition to Medical, Dental and Vision insurance, employees have the option to enroll in several other voluntary benefits to include: Short-Term Disability, Long-Term Disability, Term Life Insurance with AD&D for you and your dependents, Critical Illness Insurance for you and your dependents, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - Medical and Dependent Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) – Health Savings Account (HSA). These benefits are voluntary and are



funded solely by the employee. For a complete list of benefits offered please reach out to the Benefits Department or visit [sumnerschools.org/benefits](http://sumnerschools.org/benefits) for additional information.

## **Sick Leave Bank**

The purpose of the sick leave bank (SLB) is to provide sick leave to members in the event of an illness or injury. Employees who wish to participate must enroll by earning fifteen (15) days of sick leave and provide a one-time voluntarily donation of five (5) sick leave days to the SLB during open enrollment. Sick leave bank days may be granted only where all paid leave has been exhausted and are limited to twenty (20) days at one time with lifetime and annual limitations. The SLB is administered through the Human Resources Department. Please reach out for the application and process.

## **401(k), 403(b), and 457(b) Plan**

Sumner County Schools recognizes the importance of saving for retirement and offers eligible employees a 401(k), 403(b), & 457(b) plan. Eligibility, vesting, and all other matters relating to these plans are explained in the SPD that can be obtained from the Benefits Department.

## **Retirement**

Full time employees are enrolled in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS) upon employment. A mandatory five percent (5%) pre-taxed deduction will be taken from each payroll. The Board of Education contributes the required percentage to TCRS. An employee is vested after five (5) years of TCRS service and eligible for benefits upon retirement eligibility. Annual statements are provided by TCRS detailing salary, service credit, beneficiary, and employee contributions. Details are available on your individual TCRS Employee Portal or by contacting TCRS at (800) 922-7772.

## **Worker's Compensation**

The Sumner County Board of Education provides worker's compensation for work-related injuries/illness through Key Risk - Berkley Casualty Company at **(866) 687-0710**.

When an injury or accident occurs on the job, an employee must promptly notify their principal or immediate supervisor. **This must be done even if the employee does not feel the need for medical attention.** It is important the incident be reported immediately or within 24 hours. The employee is also responsible for completing the worker's compensation documentation. The principal or immediate supervisor of the employee is responsible for seeing that the Worker Injury Report is completed and faxed to (615) 442-8262.

**All employees seeking medical attention must complete a post-accident drug test at time of medical treatment.** If the injury is life threatening seek immediate medical attention.

FAILURE TO HAVE ALL MEDICAL TREATMENT AUTHORIZED BY KEY RISK MAY RESULT IN DENIAL OF PAYMENT.

## **Employee Assistance Program**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides highly confidential and experienced counseling service, legal and financial consultation, work-life balance assistance and crisis intervention. It assists employees and their dependents in dealing with issues that affect their quality of life and job performance. SCS wants employees to be able to maintain a healthy balance of work and family that allows them to enjoy life. The EAP is a confidential counseling and referral service that can help employees successfully deal with life's challenges.

This free, comprehensive counseling service offers employees and their dependents three visits per issue each year and a 24-hour hotline answered by professional, degreed counselors. Employees will have access to an attorney for state specific legal information and service. If the employee decides to retain the attorney, he/she may receive a 25% discount on services that might be needed.

The district encourages employees and their dependents to use this valuable service whenever they have such a need. Employees who choose to use these counseling services are assured the information disclosed in their sessions is confidential and not available to the district, nor is the company given any information on who chooses to use the services. For questions or additional information about this program, please contact Guidance Resources at (800) 697-0353 or (855) 387-9727 or online at [www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com) (Company web ID – ONEAMERICA3).



## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the employee handbook of SCS. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies in the handbook.

I understand that the handbook and all other written and oral materials provided to me are intended for informational purposes only. Neither it, district practices, nor other communications create an employment contract or term. I understand that the policies and benefits, both in the handbook and those communicated to me in any other fashion, are subject to interpretation, review, and change by management at any time without notice.

I further agree that neither this document nor any other communication shall bind the district to employ me. I understand that no representative of the district has any authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to assure any other personnel action or to assure any benefits or terms or conditions of employment or make any agreement contrary to the foregoing.

I also understand and agree that this agreement may not be modified orally and that only the Director of Schools or his/her designee may make a commitment for employment. I also understand that if such an agreement is made, it must be in writing and signed by the Director of Schools.

From time to time, this handbook will be revised to reflect changes. The handbook cannot be republished each time a change occurs; therefore, some material may become obsolete without prior notice to you. If any information contained in this handbook conflicts with information published at a higher level of authority within the district, state or federal level, the information in those policies, laws, etc., will prevail.

Sumner County Schools reserves the right to modify, change, disregard, suspend or cancel at any time, without written or verbal notice, all or any part of the handbook's contents as circumstances may require. You are solely responsible for regularly updating your handbook or viewing the updated handbook at [www.sumnerschools.org](http://www.sumnerschools.org).

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Employee's Name in Print

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Signature of Employee

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Date Signed by Employee