

KOUNTZE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2018-2019



John C. Ferguson
Superintendent



August, 2018

Dear KISD Employee:

The purpose of this handbook is to provide KISD employees with a summary and overview of local Board Policy and operational guidelines. There may be future revisions in some sections of the local policy because of pending litigation and interpretations of legislative statutes. Notification of the revisions will be distributed to employees by their campus administrator or supervisor.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of noncontract employees. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their campus principal/supervisor, or call central office. A policy manual is housed at the central office and is available for employee review during normal working hours. Also, District Board policy is available on-line @

<http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/573>

If you have suggestions for improving or extending the scope of this handbook, I would be pleased to receive your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

John C. Ferguson
Superintendent

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DISTRICT INFORMATION

District mission statement, goals and objectives

Kountze ISD is committed to enabling students to be productive and responsible citizens while expediting hopes and dreams through education. Students are given the opportunity to acquire academic skills, physical skills, technology skills, and a knowledge base for life-long learning.

Board of trustees

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

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

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

KISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Don McDonald - President
Susie Wilson – Vice President
Bendy Lee - Secretary

Steve Eppes
Ben House
Steve Martinka
Donna Moody

The board usually meets on the second Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the Kountze Intermediate School library. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the district Web site and at the central office at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice.

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

Board meeting schedule for 2018-2019 (subject to change)

The KISD Board will meet at 6:00 pm on the second Monday of each month.

Helpful contacts

From time to time, employees have questions or concerns. If those questions or concerns cannot be answered by supervisors or at the campus or department level, the employee is encouraged to contact the appropriate department as listed below.

Central Administration and Support Services

Superintendent	John C. Ferguson	246-3352
Superintendent Secretary/Personnel	Jeri Smith	246-3352
Coordinator of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment	Shane Reyenga	246-3352
Chief Financial Officer	Philip Welch	246-3352
Employee Benefits/Payroll	Carla Hall	246-3352
Food Services Director	Liz Jordan	246-3877
Maintenance/Operations Supervisor	John French	246-2777
Technology Director	Spencer Mathews	246-2450

School directory

Kountze Elementary School	Thomas Cooley, Principal	246-3877
Kountze Intermediate School	Connie Joubert, Principal	246-8230
Kountze Middle School	James Stevenson, Principal	246-3551
Kountze High School	Chet Deaver, Principal	246-3474

EMPLOYMENT

Equal employment opportunity

Policies DAA, DIA

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

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment should contact Shane Reyenga, the district Title IX Coordinator, at Kountze ISD, PO Box 460, Kountze, TX 77625, (409) 246-3352. Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination on the basis of a disability should contact Mandy Stevenson, the district ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, Kountze High School, PO Box 460, Kountze, TX 77625, (409) 246-3474. Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent.

Job vacancy announcements

Policy DC

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are distributed on a regular basis and posted at the central administration building, campus offices, and on the district's web site.

Employment after retirement

Policy DC

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

Contract and noncontract employment

Policies DC series

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

Probationary contracts: Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the district and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive probationary contracts during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after at least a two-year lapse in district employment also may be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district may not exceed one school year. For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three school years (i.e., three one-year contracts), with an optional fourth school year if the board determines it is doubtful whether a term or continuing contract should be given.

Term contracts: Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by term contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. Any employee previously employed by the district may be given a term contract. Campus principals and central office administrators are employed under two-year term contracts. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract. Employment policies can be accessed on line or copies will be provided upon request.

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

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

Certification and Licenses

Policy DBA

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

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

Searches and alcohol and drug testing

Policy DHE

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

Employees that operate any vehicle or equipment owned by the district: Any employee the operates equipment or a vehicles owned by KISD will be subjected to drug and alcohol testing.

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

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact the Superintendent, at 246-3352.

Health safety training

Policies DBA, DMA

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED). Certification must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, University Interscholastic League, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification to Sherri Allen by September 2, 2018.

Reassignments and transfers

Policy DK

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

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

Workload and work schedules

Policy DL

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

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

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

Notification to parents regarding qualifications

Policies DK, DBA

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. NCLB also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified. Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under NCLB is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to

take a certification exam) and individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call Jeri Smith.

Outside employment and tutoring

Policy DBD

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

Performance evaluation

Policies DN series

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

The following guidelines were adopted for Kountze ISD:

- New teachers shall have annual evaluations for their first three years at KISD.
- Experienced teachers – but new to KISD – will be evaluated annually for their first two years at KISD. The campus principal, with approval of the superintendent, may waive this requirement after the first annual evaluation.
- The frequency of evaluations for experienced teachers will be established on a three-year cycle.

Teacher Evaluation/Appraisal

Teachers will be appraised according to the state-developed appraisal process T-TESS.

Employee involvement

Policies BQA, BQB

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

Staff development

Policy DMA

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

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

Paraprofessional certification

All paraprofessionals must be certified to be employed by Kountze ISD. Certification can be attained through any of the following avenues:

- Two years or 48 hours at an institution of higher education
- An associate's degree (or higher)
- Meet a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate through a formal assessment the knowledge/ability to assist in instruction of reading, writing, and math

Continuing Professional Education (CPE) hours

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) requires Continuing Professional Education (CPE) hours for individuals who completed certification requirements after September 1, 1999. Principals, superintendents, diagnosticians, counselors, and librarians are required to accumulate 200 hours every five years. Other educators are required to accumulate 150 hours every five years.

All Texas educators who hold a Standard Certificate must renew it every five years. If an educator holds more than one Standard Certificate, all can be renewed concurrently and all are subject to renewal during the certificate holder's birth month five years after the earliest certificate was issued. At the end of the five-year period, each educator will affirm on an affidavit submitted to the Board that all requirements for renewal of the Standard Certificate have been met.

To be eligible for certificate renewal, educators must meet all of the following requirements:

- Hold a valid Standard Certificate that has not been, nor is in the process of being, sanctioned by SBEC;
- Successfully completed a criminal history review;
- Not be in default on a guaranteed student loan or in arrears of child support;
- Complete, document, and submit the required CPE hours. You are responsible for maintaining your documentation and completing your renewal;
- Superintendents, principals, and assistant principals are required to complete an assessment process that is designed to assist them with the development of a professional growth plan once every five years; and
- Pay the renewal fee, which shall be a single fee regardless of the number of certificates being concurrently renewed. (Likely to be \$30 or \$40.)

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Salaries, wages and stipends

Policy DEA, DEAA

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. All employees will receive written notice of their pay and work schedules before the start of each school year. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule.

Employees should contact the business office for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay. During the regular school year, the central administration office is open from 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday – Thursday and from 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Friday.

Annualized compensation

Policy DEA

The district pays all salaried employees over 12 months regardless of the number of months employed during the school year. Salaried employees will be paid in semi-monthly payments, beginning with the first pay period of the school year. Employees that separate after the last day of instruction will continue to receive paychecks through the end of the summer.

Paychecks

All professional and paraprofessional, and auxiliary employees are paid semi- monthly. Paychecks are direct deposited. An employee’s payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions, withholding information.

The schedule of pay dates for the 2018-2019 school year follows:

Beginning Date	Ending Date	Pay Date
8/11/2018	8/31/2018	Monday, September 10, 2018
9/1/2018	9/14/2018	Tuesday, September 25, 2018
9/15/2018	9/28/2018	Wednesday, October 10, 2018
9/29/2018	10/12/2018	Thursday, October 25, 2018
10/13/2018	10/26/2018	Friday, November 9, 2018
10/27/2018	11/9/2018	Friday, November 23, 2018
11/10/2018	11/23/2018	Monday, December 10, 2018
11/24/2018	12/7/2018	Friday, December 21, 2018
12/8/2018	12/21/2018	Thursday, January 10, 2019
12/22/2018	1/4/2019	Friday, January 25, 2019
1/5/2019	1/18/2019	Friday, February 8, 2019
1/19/2019	2/8/2019	Monday, February 25, 2019
2/9/2019	2/22/2019	Friday, March 8, 2019
2/23/2019	3/8/2019	Monday, March 25, 2019
3/9/2019	3/22/2019	Wednesday, April 10, 2019
3/23/2019	4/5/2019	Thursday, April 25, 2019
4/6/2019	4/19/2019	Friday, May 10, 2019

4/20/2019	5/3/2019	Friday, May 24, 2019
5/4/2019	5/17/2019	Monday, June 10, 2019
5/18/2019	5/31/2019	Tuesday, June 25, 2019
6/1/2019	6/21/2019	Wednesday, July 10, 2019
6/22/2019	7/5/2019	Thursday, July 25, 2019
7/6/2019	7/26/2019	Friday, August 9, 2019
7/27/2019	8/9/2019	Friday, August 23, 2019

Payroll deductions

Policy CFEA

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

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired after March 31, 1986)

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

Overtime compensation

Policy DEA

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

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week and is not measured by the day or by the employee’s regular work schedule. Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for a 40-hour workweek and do not

earn additional pay unless they work more than 40 hours. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. Saturday and ends at midnight Friday.

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

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

Travel expense reimbursement

Policy DEE

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor or principal must give approval. For approved travel, employees will be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current rate schedule established by the district. Employees must submit receipts to be reimbursed for expenses other than mileage. **Charge card receipts** do not satisfy this requirement. Itemized receipts or documentation are required and no **MARK OUTS** are accepted. Before any purchases/reimbursements are made contacted the CFO/Superintendent for approval.

Health, dental, and life insurance

Policy CRD

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

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

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

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

Supplemental insurance benefits

Policy CRD

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs. Premiums for these programs can be paid by payroll deduction. Employees should contact the business office for more information.

Cafeteria plan benefits (Section 125)

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

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

Workers' compensation insurance

Policy CRE

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

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the Business Office. Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. See Workers' compensation benefits, page 22 for more information on use of paid leave for such absences.

Unemployment compensation insurance

Policy CRF

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

Teacher retirement

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the business office as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits is available from the business office. Additional inquiries should be addressed to: Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.state.tx.us). See page 4 for information on restrictions of employment of retirees in Texas public schools.

LEAVES AND ABSENCES

Policy DEC, DECA, DECB

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

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

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

- Local sick leave
- State sick leave (accumulated before the 1995–96 school year).
- State personal leave

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate form or certification. Any employee who is absent more than five (5) consecutive days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and in the case of personal illness – the employee's fitness to return to work.

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

Continuation of Health Insurance

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

Personal leave

State law entitles all employees to five days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave is earned at a rate of five days per year. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferable to other Texas school districts and generally transfers to education service centers. There are two types of personal leave; nondiscretionary and discretionary.

Nondiscretionary: Leave taken for personal or family illness, a family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. Reasons for this type of leave allows very little, if any, advance planning. Nondiscretionary leave will be granted to employees in the same manner as state sick leave.

Discretionary: Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be scheduled in advance is considered discretionary leave. An employee wishing to take discretionary personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor five days in advance of the anticipated absence. Discretionary personal leave will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis and will be subject to the following limitations:

- The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.
- A maximum of 10% of campus employees in each job category will be permitted to take discretionary personal leave at the same time.
- Discretionary leave may not last more than three consecutive workdays, except with special approval for extenuating circumstances.
- Discretionary leave may not be taken on the following key days: on the day before a school holiday, the day after a school holiday, days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams, days scheduled for any state testing or professional or staff development days. Any exception must be approved by the Superintendent.

State Sick leave

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. State sick leave can be used only in full and half-day increments except when coordinated with family and medical leave taken on an intermittent or reduced-scheduled basis or when coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

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

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

Local leave

Policy DEC Local

All employees shall earn an additional five equivalent workdays of local sick leave per school year, concurrently with state personal leave.

Local sick leave shall be used first. Local sick leave shall accumulate to a maximum of 25 equivalent workdays for all employees and shall be taken with no loss of pay. Employees will be reimbursed annually for days in excess of 25 at the current Teacher Substitute rate of pay. Days that are reimbursed shall not be available to that employee for use in the District.

The rate established by the Board shall be in effect until a new rate is adopted. Any changes to the rate shall apply beginning with the school year following the adoption of the rate change.

Reimbursement of Leave upon Separation: An employee who separates from employment with the District shall be eligible for reimbursement of local sick leave upon retirement.

Extended sick leave

After all available state and local sick leave days have been exhausted, an employee may be granted in a school year a maximum of 30 workdays of extended sick leave to be used for the employee's personal illness or injury, including pregnancy-related illness or injury, or for absences related to the illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family.

A written request for extended sick leave must be accompanied by medical certification of the illness or injury. Without medical certification, to be eligible for extended sick leave, the employee shall have been absent at least 5 consecutive workdays without pay.

The average daily rate of pay of a substitute for the employee's position shall be deducted for each day of extended sick leave taken, whether or not a substitute is employed.

Sick leave pool

An employee who has exhausted all paid leave and who suffers from a catastrophic illness or injury or is absent due to the catastrophic illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family may request the establishment of a sick leave pool, to which District employees may donate only local sick leave for use by the eligible employee. If the employee is unable to submit the request, a member of the employee's family or the employee's supervisor may submit the request to establish a sick leave pool.

The pool shall cease to exist when the employee no longer needs leave for the purpose requested, uses the maximum number of days allowed under a pool, or exhausts all leave days donated to the sick leave pool.

Family and Medical Leave Act(FMLA)

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

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

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

Military Family Leave Entitlements: Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active military duty and deployed to a foreign country may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

The FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list. It also includes a family

member who is a veteran with an illness or injury that occurs in the line of duty while on active duty and manifests itself before or after the servicemember became a veteran. The veteran must have been on active duty during the five years preceding the need for treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

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

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

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

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

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 5 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unlawful Acts by Employers: The FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right protected under the FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to the FMLA.

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

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

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

For additional information:
1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627
www.wagehour.dol.gov

Local Family and Medical Leave provisions

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period beginning on the first duty day of the school year.

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

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

Intermittent leave: When medically necessary, an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule. The district does permit the use of intermittent or reduced-schedule leave for the care of a newborn child or for adoption or placement of a child with the employee.

District Contact: Employees that require FML or have questions should contact Jeri Smith for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

Temporary disability

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

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. An employee's notification of need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by

a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days.

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

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

Workers' compensation benefits

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

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

Assault leave

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

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At the request of an employee, the district will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be

coordinated with workers' compensation benefits. Upon investigation the district may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

Bereavement leave

An employee shall be granted (3) days of bereavement leave upon the death of a member of the employee's immediate family (see DEC (local) for definition of 'immediate family'. Such leave shall be taken with no loss of pay or other paid leave. Bereavement leave shall not accrue nor accumulate. Use of state leave and/or sick leave for death shall not exceed (5) workdays per occurrence, subject to the approval of the District.

Jury duty

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. Employees must present documentation of the service and may retain any compensation they receive.

Other court appearances

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

Military leave

Policy DEC

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

Reemployment after military leave: Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g., National Guard or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be reemployed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for reemployment, employees must provide notice of their obligation or intent to perform military service, provide evidence of honorable discharge or release, and submit an application for reemployment within

the period of time specified by law to central office. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years. An FAQ on military leave is available on the TASB Legal Services Web Site http://www.tasb.org/services/legal/documents/userra_oct09.pdf.

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

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Employee recognition and appreciation

Continuous efforts are made throughout the year to recognize employees who make an extra effort to contribute to the success of the district. Employees are recognized at board meetings, in the district newsletter, and through special events and activities.

District communications

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

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Policy DGBA

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

The formal grievance process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative grievance procedures are exhausted, employees can bring

concerns or complaints to the board of trustees. For ease of reference, the district's policy concerning the process of bringing concerns and complaints is reprinted as follows:

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DGBA\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DGBA(LOCAL).pdf)

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WELFARE

Standards of conduct

Policy DH

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

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

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day after the superintendent first learns of the incident. See *Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification* for additional information. *The Educators' Code of Ethics*, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all district employees must adhere to, is reprinted below:

Texas Educators' Code of Ethics

Purpose and Scope

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

Enforceable Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Professional Dress Code

Guidelines for campus faculty and staff

Teachers, campus staff and aides should dress in a professional and appropriate manner. A professional standard of dress requires that teachers and staff be readily distinguishable from the students. Teachers and staff are to use good judgment in dress because they serve

as role models for the students. Do not wear any attire that would be in violation of the student dress code. If you dress like a professional, act like a professional, you will be treated like a professional. Remember that you represent Kountze Schools. Each campus principal will be responsible for the appropriateness of employee dress.

- Shirts and blouses will have sleeves. No ‘cold shoulder’ shirts
- Males will tuck their shirts in at all time.
- Belts will be worn if the shirt is tucked in and the pants or skirt have belt loops.
- T-Shirts will be worn only on days approved by Campus Principal.
- T-Shirts will be appropriately sized.
- Jeans will be allowed if they come to the ankle and are free from all frays and slits.
- Wind pants/sweats will only be allowed if transitioning between physical education classes and the remainder of the building/campus.
- No teacher will be allowed to wear shorts or hats in facilities other than athletic/physical education areas.
- No frayed or unhemmed skirts or pants will be allowed.
- No sweat pants or sweat suits will be allowed.
- Dresses and skirts must be of appropriate length.
- Shoes must be styled to a professional level appropriate with dress.
- Facial hair must be neatly groomed. Hair will be neatly groomed, of natural color and of appropriate length.
- No piercing other than ears on females.

Guidelines for campus faculty and staff

Faculty and staff are expected to be in their places of assignment at the times specified by their campus principal. District times are 7:15 to 3:45

Teachers are required to develop lesson plans which reflect and document the TEKS and other campus-related instructional goals. These will be reviewed and monitored by the campus principal.

Teachers should notify the principal as soon as possible if a substitute is needed. It is also the responsibility of the teacher who is absent to keep the principal's office informed from day to day as to whether the substitute is to continue. Each campus principal will define those items and procedures needed by the substitute.

Campus employees shall keep to a minimum the need for leaving campus during the regular school day. If it becomes necessary to leave the campus, the principal or secretary must be notified.

Each teacher is responsible for the furniture and equipment in his/her classroom. Student actions or behaviors which are destructive of school property must not be allowed. Teachers are to report to the principal or designee in writing of all needed repairs to the classroom, furniture or equipment. It is also the responsibility of teachers to take a complete inventory of equipment and teaching aids at the end of the school year (or designated time) and to turn it in to the campus principal.

Reasonable suspicion searches

The District reserves the right to conduct searches when the District has reasonable cause to believe that a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. The District may search the employee, the employee's personal items, work areas, lockers, and private vehicles parked on District premises or worksites or used in District business.

Discrimination, harassment, and retaliation

Policies DH, DIA

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons, including board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action.

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

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating discrimination, harassment, and retaliation is reprinted below:

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DIA\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DIA(LOCAL).pdf)

Harassment of students

Policies DF, DH, FFG, FFH

Sexual or other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment of a student by an employee or adult will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law. See Reporting suspected child abuse, pg. 32 and Bullying, page 63 for additional information.

The district's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is reprinted below:

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DF\(LEGAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DF(LEGAL).pdf)

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=FFH\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=FFH(LOCAL).pdf)

Reporting suspected child abuse

Policies DF DG, DH, FFG, GRA

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

- Mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning or psychological functioning;

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

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to the local office (409) 246-3472 or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800) 252-5400. State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

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

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

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies. In addition, employees must cooperate with child abuse and neglect investigators. Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children

As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental,

emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Employees are required to follow the procedures described above in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*.

Technology Resources

Policy CQ

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

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

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

Employees who are authorized to use the system are required to abide by the provisions of the district's acceptable use policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the campus principal or supervisor.

Employee Internet Acceptable Use Policy – General Guidelines

1. Users are expected to use the Internet for educational purposes.
2. Users must respect copyright laws pertaining to materials obtained.
3. Accessing and printing inappropriate materials or sites are prohibited.
4. Users must properly cite references and not plagiarize any source.
5. Users will be held accountable for all activities including the content of materials sent by electronic mail or any other means using the district's network capabilities. E-mail and q-mail are provided as an educational resource and communication means.
6. The privacy of other users should be respected, especially in respect to disclosing passwords, accessing electronic mail of others, and revealing personal information (e.g., address, phone numbers, etc.)

7. While all due care will be taken by the Kountze ISD to ensure responsible use of the internet connection/network, all users will assume full responsibility for their actions.
8. All employees with internet access must sign and return the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for Internet and Electronic Mail Access.

Cell phone usage by employees

Employees are expected to make or receive personal calls via cell phones only during lunch and before and after school. Limited personal cellular use is allowed during conference/planning times. Personal cell phones for instructional personnel should be on silent during school hours.

Personal use of electronic media

Policy DH

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

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

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

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

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

Use of electronic media with students

Policy DH

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

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

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

- *Electronic media* includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing Web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn). *Electronic media* also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.
- *Communicate* means to convey information and includes a one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee’s personal social network page or a blog) is not a *communication*; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*, above. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a *communication*.
- *Certified or licensed employee* means a person employed in a position requiring SBEC certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students. The term includes classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

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

- The employee may use any form of electronic media **except** text messaging. Only a teacher, or other employee who has an extracurricular duty may use text messaging, and then only to communicate with students who participate in the extracurricular activity over which the employee has responsibility.
- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee must create a separate social network page (“professional page”) for the purpose of communicating with students. The employee must enable administration and parents to access the employee’s professional page.
- The employee shall not communicate directly with any student between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. An employee may, however, make public posts to a social network site, blog, or similar application at any time. Employees are to use Group Me.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, including:

- Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policy CPC and LF]
- Copyright law [Policy CY]
- Prohibitions against soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DF]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with any one or more currently-enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.

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

Criminal history background checks

Policy DBAA

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

Employee arrests and convictions

Policy DH

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

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

Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence
- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor
- Crimes involving any felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance
- Felonies involving driving while intoxicated (DWI)
- Acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code

Alcohol- and drug-abuse prevention

Policies DH, DI

Kountze ISD is committed to maintaining an alcohol and drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities on or off school property. Employees who use or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The district's policy regarding employee drug use follows:

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DH\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DH(LOCAL).pdf)

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DI\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DI(LOCAL).pdf)

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DI\(XHIBIT\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DI(XHIBIT).pdf)

Tobacco Products and E-Cigarette Use

Policies DH, GKA, FNCD

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

Fraud and financial impropriety

Policy CAA

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets, including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

Conflict of interest

Policy DBD

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

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

Gifts and favors

Policy DBD

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

Copyrighted materials

Policy CY

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

Associations and political activities

Policy DGA

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

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

Charitable Contributions

Policy DG

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

Safety

Policy CK series

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the superintendent's office.

Possession of firearms and weapons

Policies FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisor or principal or call the superintendent's office immediately.

Classroom supervision

Students are not to be left in classrooms unattended. Students are not to leave the classroom without teacher permission. The classroom time is for instruction, monitoring student progress, or reteaching. Activities which distract from these purposes are discouraged.

Visitors in the workplace

Policy GKC

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

Instructional resources

Under current School Board Policy (FE-Local), instructional resources refers to textbooks, library acquisitions, supplemental materials for classroom use, and any other material used for formal and informal teaching and learning purposes. The primary objectives of instructional resources are to deliver, support, enrich, and assist in implementing the district's educational program.

Films that are not part of the district's library or Region 5 ESC resources must be approved by the campus administrator. For films rated by the Motion Picture Association, only G-rated films shall be shown at the elementary level and only G-rated or PG-rated films shall be shown at the secondary level.

Asbestos management plan

Policy CKA

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the district's management plan is kept in the superintendent's office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

Pest control treatment

Policies CLB, DI

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

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally posted on the outside door. In addition, individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide application. An employee who request individualized notice will be notified by telephone, written or electric means. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

Valuables in the workplace

Valuables belonging to employees are the responsibility of the employee. Do not leave valuable objects or money unattended in the classroom or building.

Soliciting/fund raising activities

There shall be no distribution of circulars, advertising materials, or solicitations in the classrooms. All salespersons or requests must be approved by the principal's office.

School activities/programs

Proposals for school activities/programs – both on and off campus – must have prior approval of the campus principal.

Field trips

All field trips must be approved by the campus principal. Requests for bus transportation must be submitted one week in advance of the date of the trip. In situations where bus availability is limited, UIL sanctioned activities will be scheduled first. Requests for overnight trips must include documentation for sufficient adult supervision.

Out-of-State Student Trips

***This does not apply to selected trips to Louisiana and may apply to certain long distance trips within Texas.**

***Also, rules do not apply to qualifying competitions to sanctioned organizational activities.**

- ⊕ All organizational, out-of-state student trips will be requested at least 12 months in advance to allow ample time for consent and fund-raising.
- ⊕ Organizational sponsors will fill out a district application form and submit it to the campus principal prior to communicating with students and parents regarding the trip. The form must be approved and signed by the principal and superintendent.
- ⊕ Groups will participate in out-of-state trips only if a parent group/booster club/organization has been established.
- ⊕ The parents will sign commitment forms prior to beginning fund-raising. Commitment forms will include that personal contributions to the fund-raising will only be refunded (in the event that the student has to drop out due to no pass/no play violations or emergencies) less any deposits required by vendors. Medical release forms, parental permission forms, and waivers will also be required. Informational meetings will be held and parents will be required to attend, or they will make other one-on-one arrangements with the teacher/director.
- ⊕ Cost will be kept at a minimum. Students will not be denied the opportunity to attend based solely on the lack of funds.
- ⊕ Trips will be within the continental U. S. unless special permission is granted.
- ⊕ The trip will be of substantial educational value. Workshops/classes/performances will be clearly outlined in written itineraries submitted to parents and administration.
- ⊕ No more than three school days will be missed unless special permission is obtained. Less than three days is encouraged.
- ⊕ Students will be required to complete and submit all school work missed during the trip. In addition, no pass/no play rules will be observed. (See #3)

- ⊕ Students will be assigned to a chaperone and a group for the duration of the trip. Students are to be in the presence of the chaperone at all times. Rules and responsibilities of chaperones along with groups and room arrangements will be clearly outlined and submitted to the administration at least a month in advance.
- ⊕ For every five students attending, there will be at least one chaperone of which some will be school employees.
- ⊕ Any student that breaks the behavior rules of the organization will be severely disciplined. These behavior rules and consequences will be clearly outlined to the students and parents and copies supplied to the administration at least a month in advance.
- ⊕ Parents will understand and agree in writing to consequences of breaking behavioral rules which will be administered by the organization and the campus principal's office.
- ⊕ Organizations may apply other rules and regulations above and beyond those listed in administrative policy.

Student right to pray

A public school student has an absolute right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate at school in a manner that does not disrupt the instructional or other activities of the school. A person may not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

Assigned duties and responsibilities

Campus employees assigned to hall, campus or cafeteria duty should be prompt in reporting to their assignment. Employees assigned to campus duty should be visible and circulate in the area of the assignment. It is the responsibility of assigned personnel to see that students abide by the rules governing each area

GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

Bad weather closing

The district may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, to release

students early, or to cancel school, district officials will post a notice on the district's Web site, notify the following radio and television stations and a district wide callout will be preformed.

Station	Phone #	Fax #	Website
Channel 6 (KFDM-TV)	892-6622	892-7305	http://www.kfdm.com/
Channel 4 (KBTW-TV)	840-4444	899-4639	http://setxhomepage.com/
Channel 12 (KBMT-TV)	838-1212	981-1564	http://www.kbmt12.com/
KLVI 560/KYKR 95.1	896-5555	896-5599	http://www.klvi.com/main.html
KAYD 101.7	833-9421	833-9296	http://www.kayd.com/

Emergencies

Policies CKC, CKD

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

Purchasing procedures

Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted to the business office through the TxEIS software system. A purchase order (PO) is generated with the approval of the request. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without a PO number. The district will not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact your campus principal or supervisor for additional information on purchasing procedures.

FORMS/PROCEDURES

Student Activity Payment (Form B)

This digital form is submitted for payment of meals, entry fees, and/or lodging for students participating in extracurricular activities. This form should be submitted at least **five (5) days prior** to the date of the requested trip. Students will be provided a meal for regular activities and a maximum of \$6.00/meal for post district activities.

Return any money that is left over from the meals along with the receipt to the principal. You will be responsible for every penny from the advance that you received. If a refund was given from a motel/hotel the refund should be returned with the receipt. A list of all students that were participants must be turned in with the receipts. The students shall sign for the money or meal they receive. **This needs to be done no later than three (3) working days after the event.**

Student Activity Travel Request (Bus Requisition) (Form C)

This digital form is to be used to request approval for buses. It must be turned in to the principal for approval. It needs to be sent from the principal to the central office **at least five (5) days prior** to the date of the requested trip. Central office will then forward to transportation for arrangements to be made. Please be specific on dates and times of departure. This form must be filled out by the trip sponsor and sent to the principal. The principal does not fill out the request form.

Request for Approval – Professional Travel (Form D)

This digital form is to be used to request approval and/or money for attending professional meeting and workshops. This form is self-explanatory. Fill out the form and turn it in to the principal **at least five (5) working days prior** to the date of the requested trip. In order to be reimbursed for any expenses, receipts must be attached to the request form. **The district will NOT reimburse any credit card receipts.** Registration fees, and per diem are the only items that are paid in advance. Employees needing a hotel for conferences or meetings will make the reservations on their personal credit card and send the information to the business office. The reservations will then be transferred to the district visa card. No advance payments will be made for mileage. If traveling more than 200 miles

round trip a rental vehicle will be required. State tax will not be paid on hotel expenses. There are hotel tax exemption forms that should be carried when paying for a hotel.

Extra Curricular Activities Form (Form E)

This digital form is turned into the principal's office three days prior to the scheduled event. The student's name and ID numbers must be on the list.

Request for Custodial/Maintenance Service (Form F)

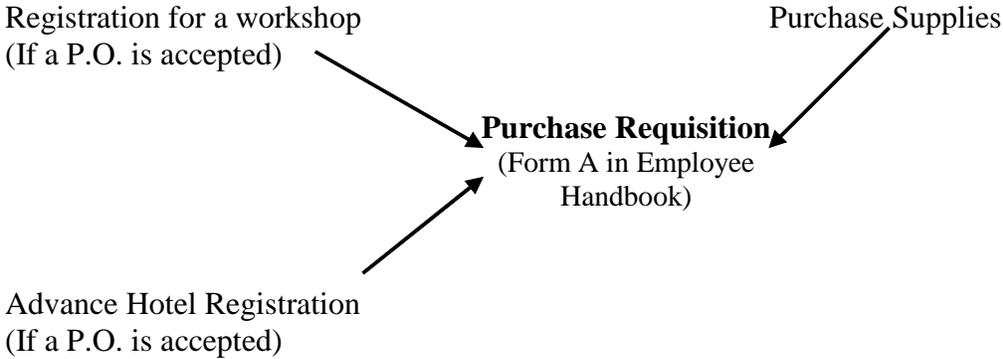
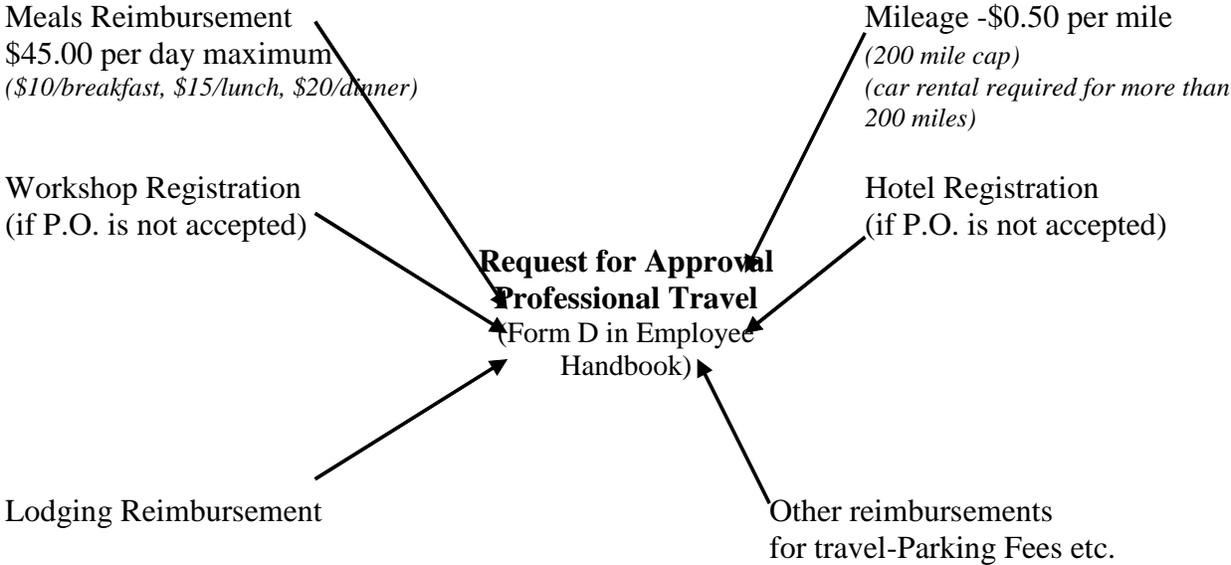
This digital form should be filled out and sent to the principal. Please do not make assumptions that someone knows when something needs to be done. Principals are often told that something is not working and they are expected to remember to get it fixed. Please do not expect them to remember these things. Fill out a request.

Fixed Asset Inventory Transfer Notice (Form G) And Fixed Asset Inventory Deletion (Form H)

Each teacher and custodian on campus should have a copy of these transfer and deletion notices. It is impossible to keep an accurate record of fixed assets when teachers move or trash items without notifying anyone. The notices should be turned in to the office, and the office should send them to the Central Office. Thank you for your help in this matter.

PLEASE PLAN AHEAD

Chart A



Attach bills/receipts/tickets for reimbursement. Similar documentation must be provided for advance payments for lodging and registration fees. Advance payments will can be made for meals and mileage.

Credit card/Charge card tickets are not acceptable as receipts.

State tax will not be paid on hotel expenses. There are hotel tax exemption forms that should be carried when paying for a hotel. These forms will not exempt the district from paying city tax.

Each form must have all required signatures.

Kountze Independent School District (Form B)

Student Activity Payment

This form must be submitted to the Business Office five (5) days prior to the date payment is needed. In Digital forms with all approvals signed and coded appropriately.

Requested by: _____ Date: _____

Purpose and date(s) of the activity: _____

Number of Participants: Students _____ Adults _____

Amount of Payment: \$ _____

Payable to: _____

Comments _____

Campus Approval: _____ Date: _____

Business Office Approval: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by the Business Office

Fund: _____

Comments: _____

Kountze Independent School District (Form C)

Student Activity Travel Request

This form must be submitted to the business office five (5) days prior to the date of the requested trip. In Digital forms with all approvals signed and coded appropriately.

Requested by: _____ Date Submitted: _____

Purpose of trip/activity: _____

Date of trip/activity: _____

Departure time _____ Return time _____

Destination: _____

Teacher(s) in charge, if different from above: _____

Approval: Principal/Director _____ Date _____

Business Office _____ Date _____

Transportation Director _____ Date _____

Number of Participants: Students _____ Adults _____

Vehicles needed: Bus(es) _____ Personal Vehicle _____ Other _____

Estimated Round Trip Mileage: _____ Expenditure Acct: _____

Fund: _____

To be completed by the driver: Amount Paid \$ _____

Departure time _____ Return time _____ Total Hours _____

Vehicle assigned _____ Comments: _____

Odometer reading: _____ Ending miles _____

Beginning Miles _____

Total Miles _____

Fuel/Oil Purchased \$ _____ (attach receipts)

Items needing attention: _____

Driver's signature _____ Date _____

Fund: _____

Kountze Independent School District (Form D)

Request for Approval – Professional Travel
In Digital forms with all approvals signed and coded appropriately.

Date Submitted: _____

Name: _____

Type of Activity: _____
(Trip, meeting, location, etc)

Dates of Activity: _____ Departure Time _____

Return Time _____

Itemized Expenses Requested: *Complete all applicable sections*
(Workshop registration fee requests should be made through a Purchase Requisition)

Mileage: _____ Miles @ \$0.50 (200 cap) \$ _____
(car rental if over 200 miles)

Meals: **\$45.00 per day maximum** # days _____ \$ _____
(\$10 breakfast, \$15 Lunch, \$20 Dinner)

Lodging: _____ # days _____ \$ _____
Name of Hotel – Must provide itemized receipt
_____ Advance Payment for Lodging _____ Reimbursement Payment for Lodging
(If more than \$80 per day, explain in "Comments" section below)

Other _____ \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Comments: _____

Note: Attach bills/receipts/tickets for reimbursement. Similar documentation must be provided for advance payments for lodging and registration fees. Advanced payment will not be made for meals and mileage. These must be submitted for reimbursement. Charge card tickets are not acceptable as receipts.

Signature of Claimant

Campus Approval Date

Printed Name of Claimant

Central Office Approval Date

Fund: _____

TO: Business Office

FROM: _____

RE: FIXED ASSET INVENTORY TRANSFER NOTICE

Please "TRANSFER" the following item from:

_____ to _____
(location and location number) (location and location number)

1. K.I.S.D. identification # _____

2. Serial Number (if applicable) _____

3. Item description: (include name, manufacturer, model #, etc.. if known)

4. Reason _____

Campus principal approval

(Form H)

Kountze I.S.D.
P.O. Box 460
Kountze, TX 77625

_____ Date

TO: Business Office

FROM: _____

RE: FIXED ASSET INVENTORY DELETION

Please "DELETE" the following item from
the _____
Fixed asset inventory.

1. K.I.S.D. identification

2. Serial Number (if
applicable) _____

3. Item description: (include name, manufacturer, model #, etc.. if known)

4. Reason (no longer repairable, lost/missing,
etc.) _____

Campus principal approval

_____ Amount Deleted

Name and address changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees should notify the superintendent's office in writing if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, contact telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary.

Personnel records

Policy GBA

Most district records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

- Address
- Phone Number
- Social Security Number
- Emergency contact information
- Information that reveals whether they have family members

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

Building use

Policies DGA, GKD

Employees who wish to use district facilities after school hours must follow established procedures. The campus principal, in cooperation with the central administration office, is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact your campus principal to request to use school facilities form for a school-sponsored activity. Completed forms must be submitted for approval by Campus and Superintendent.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Resignations

Policy DFE

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

The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in *Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification*.

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

Dismissal or nonrenewal of contract employees

Policies DFAA, DFAB, DFBA, DFBB, DFCA, DFD, DFF

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

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DF\(LEGAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=DF(LEGAL).pdf)

Dismissal of noncontract employees

Policy DCD

Noncontract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See Complaints and Grievances)

Exit interviews and procedures

Policies DC and CY

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the district. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on his or her employment experience.

All district keys, books, property including intellectual property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment.

Reports to State Board for Educator Certification

Policy DF

The dismissal or resignation of a certified employee will be reported to the SBEC when the superintendent first learns about an alleged incident of conduct that involves the following:

- A reported criminal history
- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with a student or a minor
- Soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to a professional position or to receive additional compensation associated with a position
- Committing a crime on school property or at a school-sponsored event

Reports concerning court-ordered withholding

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

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

STUDENT ISSUES

Equal education opportunities

Policies FB, FFH

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

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to the campus principal.

Student records

Policy FL

Student records are confidential and are protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records.

The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights
- The student (if 18 or older or emancipated by a court)

- School officials with legitimate educational interests

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

Parent and student complaints

Policy FNG

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

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

Administering medication to students

Policy FFAC

Only designated employees can administer prescription medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. A student who must take medication during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine, in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the principal or school nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

Dietary supplements

Policies DH, FFAC

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

Psychotropic drugs

Policy FFAC

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

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

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

Student conduct and discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Code of Conduct and Student Handbook. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by the district. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal.

Teachers must file a written report with the principal or another appropriate administrator when they have knowledge that a student has violated the Student Code of Conduct. A copy of this report will be sent by the principal or administrator to the student's parents within 24 hours.

Each teacher is responsible for the discipline in his/her classroom. Many discipline and behavioral problems can be avoided by close supervision, organized planning and the modeling of positive attitudes. State law prohibits the paddling/corporal punishment of students whose parents have requested in writing that their child not be paddled. When corporal punishment is administered, it must be in the presence of another professional employee and out of sight of students.

If additional information is needed, please refer to the campus handbook and the student code of conduct.

Student attendance

Policy FEB

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

Bullying

Policy FFI

All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying to campus administrators. The district's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students may be found at

[http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=FFI\(LOCAL\).pdf](http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Download/573?filename=FFI(LOCAL).pdf)

Hazing

Policies FNCC

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. While most initiation rites are permissible, engaging in or permitting "hazing" is a criminal offense. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, which has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus administrator.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

The Kountze ISD currently participates with other school districts in the following cooperative efforts:

1. Big Thicket Co-Op for Special Education – Sonia Cain is the director of this three district cooperative, which includes Lumberton ISD (fiscal agent), West Hardin CCISD and Kountze ISD
2. Hardin County Alternative Education Program – This six district cooperative – Lumberton ISD, Silsbee ISD, West Hardin CCISD, Warren ISD, Hardin-Jefferson ISD, and Kountze ISD – is jointly managed by the Region 5 ESC (fiscal agent) and the Hardin County Juvenile Probation Department.
3. Adaptive Behavior Center – four district cooperative, which includes Kountze ISD, Silsbee ISD, Lumberton ISD and West Hardin CCISD.

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Acknowledgment of Receipt of Employee Handbook

Name _____

Campus/department _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Kountze ISD Employee Handbook in electronic format and accept responsibility for accessing according to the instructions provided. I agree to read the handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in this document.

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

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

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

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Note: Please print this page. Sign, date and return to your campus principal or supervisor.

KOUNTZE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)
For
INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC MAIL ACCESS

Faculty and Staff
2018-2019

You are being given access to the District's electronic communications system. Through this system, you will be able to communicate with other schools, colleges, organizations, and people from around the world through the Internet and other electronic information systems/networks. You will have access to hundreds of databases, libraries, and computer services all over the world.

With this educational opportunity comes responsibility. It is important that you read the District policy, administrative regulations, and agreement form and ask questions if you need help in understanding them. Inappropriate system use will result in the loss of the privilege to use this educational tool.

Please note that the Internet is a network of many types of communication and information networks. It is possible that you may run across areas of adult content and some material you might find objectionable. While the District will use filtering technology to restrict access to such material, it is not possible to absolutely prevent such access. It will be your responsibility to follow the rules for appropriate use.

RULES FOR APPROPRIATE USE

- You will be assigned an individual account, and you are responsible for not sharing the password for that account with others.
- Your user account is to be used mainly for educational purposes, but some limited personal use is permitted.
- You will be held responsible at all times for the proper use of the District's electronic communication system and the District may suspend or revoke your access if you violate the rules.
- You must provide adequate supervision to students who are accessing the Internet and electronic mail.

INAPPROPRIATE USES

- Using the system for any illegal purposes
- Disabling or attempting to disable any Internet filtering device
- Encrypting communications to avoid security review
- Borrowing someone's account without permission
- Posting personal information about yourself or others (such as addresses and phone numbers)
- Downloading or using copyrighted information without permission from the copyright holder
- Intentionally introducing a virus to the computer system
- Posting messages or accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal
- Wasting school resources through the improper use of the computer system
- Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information or resources
- Trespassing in other people's folders, work or files
- Employing the network for commercial purposes

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE

- Suspension of access to the system
- Revocation of the computer system account
- Other disciplinary or legal action, in accordance with District policies and applicable laws

EMPLOYEE ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

Name _____

School _____

I understand that my computer use is not private and that the District will monitor my activity on the computer system.

I have read the District's electronic communications system policy and administrative regulations and agree to abide by their provisions. I understand that violation of these provisions may result in suspension or revocation of system access.

In consideration for the privilege of using the District's electronic communications system, and in consideration for having access to the public networks, I hereby release the District, its operators, and any institutions with which they are affiliated from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my use of, or inability to use, the system, including, without limitation, the type of damages identified in the District's policy and administrative regulations.

Employee Signature

Date

Print Name

Note: Please print this page. Sign, date and return to your campus principal or supervisor.

KISD Faculty Emergency Information Form

This information is considered confidential and will only be used in the event of an emergency. Any information you feel comfortable in providing, please do so.

Name: _____

Physical Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

Spouse's Place of Employment: _____

Spouse's Work Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Alternate Emergency Contacts:

1. Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

2. Name: _____ Relationship: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Physician / Licensed Health Professional: _____

Phone: _____

Health History

A. Medical Conditions:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

B. Routine Medications:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

C. Medication or Food Allergies (indicate type of reaction experienced):

1. _____

2. _____

In case of an emergency, indicate the hospital of your choice:

_____ Christus St. Elizabeth _____ Herman Baptist _____ Other _____

Note: Please print this page. Fill out and return to your campus principal or supervisor.