

CHOCTAW COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK 2023 - 2024

The Choctaw County School District does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs or activities. Glen C. Blaine, Choctaw County Central office has been designated as the Title IX Coordinator and Title VI Coordinator. Maureen Power has been designated as the Section 504/ADA Coordinator. Inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies may be sent to P. O. Box 398, 19 East Main Street, Ackerman, MS 39735. 662.285.4022, or Email to glenblaine@choctawsd.ms or maureenpower@choctawsd.ms

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Please check the five (5) acknowledgements on page 26 if applicable, sign, date, and return to your administrator. Also, read AUP on 24-25 and sign page 25 if you consent to policy and return sheet to you administrator.

INTRODUCTION

EMPLOYEE'S HANDBOOK

This handbook has been prepared for the purpose of providing information concerning the operation of the school so that all employees will know what procedures and policies are to be followed in practically all situations. It is expected that employees will become thoroughly acquainted with the provisions contained in the Student and Employee Handbooks, and that a common practice will result. **Every faculty member is responsible for enforcing school rules in school and at all school functions.**

EMPLOYEE'S ROLE

An employee's attitude and demeanor affects the way the students behave. Students sense the way you feel about your work and about the people who work with you. They reflect these feelings in their own attitudes and behavior.

Setting a good example in action, dress, and attitude is important to your success as a teacher/support staff and our success as a school system. All staff should dress professionally and appropriately for school (as determined by the school administrator) in order to set the right atmosphere for learning. Support your school! Be enthusiastic and positive about school policies, whether you agree with them or not. Let your students know by your talk and actions that the welfare of the entire school depends upon good spirit, unity, and cooperation. You have the opportunity to touch the future one child at a time. Embrace that opportunity and commit to excellence daily. Yours may be the only smile or words of encouragement that a child receives most days.

Students will be expected to follow the rules of the Student Handbook at any school event on campus or away. **Teachers/support staff will be expected to enforce policy. Staff should be familiar with all of the school rules and have access to a student handbook in each classroom for reference.**

Teachers should establish rules and routines in the first week of school. Consistency, clarity, and fairness are all very important in day to day activities as well as when administering discipline. **The procedures and actions that happen within the first week or two of school will set the tone for the entire year.**

DUTY FOR EMPLOYEES

From the time students are present on campus in the morning until they leave the building in the afternoon, each teacher is responsible for maintaining order in the corridor near his/her room. **ALL EMPLOYEES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL STUDENTS AT ALL TIMES INCLUDING SCHOOL SPONSORED FUNCTIONS.** Students are to be instructed to move up the hall on the right side to ensure safety and expedite flow. It is the principal's responsibility to see that all areas of campus are covered with staff duty posts, that all staff report to duty on time, and that they remain for the entire time of duty.



Vision: Preparing every Charger for a positive and productive future

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Choctaw County School District is to prepare ALL students to exit each grade level meeting or exceeding requirements to be prepared for college or careers and to be positive, productive members of society.

Educational Goals

Choctaw County Schools will continue to improve instructional delivery over the next 5 years in order to lead to a top 5 ranking in the state of MS in all areas.

Facility Goals

Choctaw County Schools will not compromise the safety of its students. Based on that belief, educational buildings and athletic facilities shall remain up to standard and code established by state and federal authorities.

Operational/Organizational Goals

Choctaw County Schools believes that quality instruction begins with well-trained, fairly compensated faculty and support staff. Choctaw County Schools will continue to invest in its human capital through study of plans and actions that lead to improved teaching and learning.

ABSENCES AND LEAVE

EMPLOYEE ABSENCES

State law will be followed regarding staff who have excessive absences and their receiving credit for a year's experience. In the event a staff member finds it necessary to be absent, he or she should notify the principal as far in advance as possible. **If the employee does not know about the need to be out the day before, it is the employee's responsibility to follow the procedures outlined by his or her site administrator.** Whenever it is necessary to have a substitute, the teacher should make sure the daily schedule, class record book, lesson plan book, and other necessary information are available for the substitute teacher. Direction for duty, going to the cafeteria, and all regular routine matters should be so definite and clear that little class time is lost in carrying out the regular teacher's schedule. It should not be necessary for a substitute teacher to have to depend on a student to furnish the needed information. If the staff member is to miss a half day or less, notification should be made at least one day prior to the absence. If a staff member wishes to use his or her personal/professional leave day, he/she should notify the principal at least three days and preferable five days before he/she plans to be absent. Leave days three (3) weeks prior to state testing and exams shall be limited. Staff shall not schedule appointments for themselves or their children or ask for personal leave days during examinations, state testing, and staff work days.

Revision of language in current State Board Policy GBDA to reflect the increased number of days from 25 to 45 consecutive school days during which a teacher may not be under contract of employment during any school year and still be considered to have been in full-time employment for a regular scholastic term. This provision is effective with the 2003-2004 school year.

SICK LEAVE

Sick leave shall be granted by the Board according to the following minimum standards as authorized by Section 37-7-307 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended in 1986 by Section 13, SB 2117.

- a. Each certified professional employee shall be credited at the beginning of the school year with nine (9) days sick leave or emergency leave with pay. Non-certified will be credited with seven (7) days sick leave or emergency leave with pay.
- b. Any unused leave shall be carried over to the next year and subsequent years as all school districts shall allow unlimited accumulation of unused sick leave. Accumulated sick leave can be used as credit toward retirement.
- c. No deductions shall be made from the pay of a teacher who is sick or disabled until all unused sick leave has been exhausted.
- d. After all sick leave has been used and exhausted by the employee, the said employee shall be allotted an additional ten (10) days with employee's pay deducted by the established daily substitute rate.
- e. Following the use and exhaustion of all earned sick leave as outlined above, the employee shall have a day's pay deducted from his or her salary for each day's absence thereafter.
- f. Employees shall be eligible for leave as outlined in the Family Medical Leave Act, common reasons for leave can be:
 1. Personal illness or disability sick leave due to illness will be limited to employee and immediate family members.
 2. Death of immediate family, any deviations will be at the discretion of the principal and approval of the Superintendent.

3. Illness of employee's spouse or child.
- g. **An employee's fraudulent misrepresentation of the cause of his or her absence shall result in full deduction of his or her pay, proportionate to the number of days of work missed by the said employee, entry on the employee work record of this determination, and the forfeiture of all other additional sick leave by the said employee to which they might otherwise have been entitled.**
 - h. Accumulation of future sick leave shall be forfeited if any employee's absence is caused by optional dental or medical treatment, which could have been provided without medical risk at a time when school was not in session.

PERSONAL LEAVE

- a. Two (2) days personal leave will be provided each school year for certified employees. One (1) day personal leave will be provided each school year for noncertified employees.
- b. **Principals must be notified at least three (3) days and preferable five (5) days prior to the personal leave day.**
- c. Lesson plans must be approved by the principal prior to taking a personal leave day.
- d. Personal leave will not be granted the day before or after a school holiday or on the first or last day of the school term unless the employee has either 10 years of experience as an employee or has a minimum of 30 days of unused accumulated leave.
- e. Personal leave will be granted on the day before or after a holiday or on the first or last day of a school term if the employee has jury duty or if the employee has an immediate family member who is being deployed for military service.
- f. All unused personal leave up to five (5) days will be carried over to the next year.
- g. Leave will be granted if substitutes are available.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Teachers are encouraged to be active members of professional organizations and to take advantage of this opportunity for professional growth. Title II funds and Staff Development funds may be used with the approval of the administration for professional growth activities. However, limits must be set on the number of days a teacher may be absent from his/her class in order to allow optimum teaching time and student growth.

- a. Three (3) days will be allowed for professional leave. The two (2) personal days may be used as professional leave.
- b. All professional leave must be approved by the principal at least three (3) days prior to the professional leave.
- c. The district will pay for a substitute for one (1) of the regular three professional leave days. The employee must pay for a substitute for the remaining two (2) days.
- d. Professional leave **not** initiated by the district will be at the employee's own expense unless special permission is obtained from the principal.
- e. If personal leave is used for professional leave, initiated by the district, a substitute will be provided by the district.
- f. Leave will be granted if substitutes are available.

EXCESSIVE EMPLOYEE ABSENCES

Employees are encouraged to attend work regularly. Poor attendance has a negative impact on the school and classroom settings. Employees who are absent greater than nine (9) days for certified staff members or seven (7) days for non-certified staff members may be placed on an improvement plan unless an extenuating circumstance is documented by the principal and approved by the Superintendent. During the improvement plan period, the employee will be required to obtain prior approval from their school administrator or produce a doctor's excuse for each subsequent absence. If the employee meets or exceeds ten (10) additional absences during the improvement plan period even with prior approval or a doctor's excuse, the employee will be considered for termination or non-renewal. Absences that are part of FMLA are not counted against the employee in regard to this policy.

TARDIES (STAFF)

All school employees are expected to report to work on time every day. Employees are expected to arrive at the time specified by their administrator and to remain for at least the time specified by their administrator. Staff members need to notify the principal if an emergency is going to detain them and make them late for work. **Continued tardies may result in loss of pay and /or termination. District staff responsible for supervising employees subject to this approved policy who willfully violate the terms of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action by the District.**

ACCOUNTING

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE RULES

- All orders to be paid for by **district funds** shall be put on a **Choctaw County School District Requisition**. The complete vendor address must be on the requisition along with a fax number if you want the purchase order to be faxed. All orders must be totaled and shipping put on the purchase requisition.
 - If **activity funds** are to be used for the purchase, please use a **requisition/purchase order from your school office/administrative assistant**.
- All travel shall be signed by the principal **before** sending to the superintendent.
- Travel, bills, etc. shall be turned in for payment on the last working day of each month. If they are not submitted by this date, they will be paid in the following month.

ACTIVITY FUNDS

The Choctaw County School District authorizes the charge of reasonable fees in accordance with Senate Bill 2446, provided that proceeds are treated as activity funds and accounted for, and that fund raising activities which contain a fee shall also contain a disclosure statement advising that a portion of the sale will be contributed to the activity fund. All fees authorized to be charged under this policy, except those fees authorized under subsection (1) (c) of the Student Handbook, shall be charged only upon the condition that a financial hardship waiver be granted upon request pursuant to state law.

All funds collected by classes, clubs, and other organizations shall be turned into the school office for deposit. The principal shall act as the treasurer of such funds, and shall be responsible for receipt and handling of such funds.

Any purchase made from such activity funds, for any purpose, must be approved by the principal and adhere to all purchasing laws. All checks will be signed by the principal. (Descriptor Code: DK-Policy and Procedure Manual)

CAFETERIA

We are planning for the cost of faculty meals to be: Breakfast **\$3.00** and Lunch **\$4.00** with items still being purchased individually but should the price of food fluctuate it may become necessary to raise or lower the price of the meal in keeping with food costs. **ALL** teachers are on duty during lunch, unless it's their planning period, and will supervise **all** students' conduct on the way to and from the cafeteria as well as in the cafeteria whether the teacher eats or not. **No teacher shall send their class unsupervised!**

COMMUNICATION

CELL PHONE POLICY/TELEPHONE USAGE

Although it is necessary for you to receive telephone calls from home occasionally, if it is not an emergency, please inform your family of your planning period and ask that they call you at this time so you will not leave your class unattended. The secretary has been instructed, except in emergencies, to take a call-back which will allow you to make the return call at your leisure.

Staff should not use their cell phones in the presence of students. If an employee has an emergency and is expecting an important phone call, they must request permission from the principal to have their cell phones on during class time. **An employee should not walk around campus using their cell phones.** It is understood that an administrator must keep their phone on their person to communicate with the office in case of an emergency.

STAFF/STUDENT NON-FRATERNIZATION

Adults who have contact with children and adolescents through school activities have the responsibility not to betray or misuse their privileged position and shall never take advantage of students' vulnerability or of their confidence.

It is the policy of the Board of Education to prohibit any sexual relationship, contact or sexually nuanced behavior or communication between a staff member and a student, while the student is enrolled in the school system. The prohibition extends to students of the opposite sex or the same sex as the staff member, and applies regardless of whether the student or the staff member is the initiator of the behavior and whether or not the student welcomes or reciprocates the attention.

See **Appendix A, Board Policy GABB** for additional information.

SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

Access of social networking websites for individual use during school hours is prohibited. Employees, faculty and staff should not give social networking website passwords to students.

All employees, faculty and staff of this school district who participate in social networking websites (including, but not limited to Facebook, SnapChat, Instagram, online games with chatrooms or chat

boards, etc.) shall not post any data, documents, photos or inappropriate information on any website that might result in a disruption of classroom activity. This determination will be made by the Superintendent.

Fraternization via the internet and social networking sites between employees, faculty or staff and students is prohibited and violation of any of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

See **Appendix B, Board Policy GABBA** for more information.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

The purpose of the staff complaint and grievances procedure is to secure at the first possible administrative level, an equitable solution to any grievance. The procedure can be found in the School Board Policy Manual under descriptor code GAE-R.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Teachers should encourage and be available for conferences with parents/legal guardians. Parents/legal guardians should feel free to keep in touch with teachers and ask for conferences. A minimum of one conference with each child's parent/legal guardian per semester is encouraged. Conferences may be scheduled during a teacher's non-instructional time or after school Monday through Thursday. A school official may request a parent/legal guardian conference. If the parent/legal guardian does not attend a discipline conference that has been requested by a school official for his/her child, such parent/legal guardian shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not to exceed \$250.00 (Two-hundred fifty dollars) as provided by Senate Bill No. 3031 of the Mississippi Legislature, 1994, Section 37-11-53

CUMULATIVE RECORDS

Only certified/office personnel shall have access to the cumulative records. Only school counselors or school administrators are permitted to write or correct anything on the cumulative folder and will use **black** ink only when working in cumulative folders. The order of the subjects to be marked in the folder shall follow the order on the report card unless otherwise designated by the principal.

DISCIPLINE

Student behavior is the responsibility of all faculty at all times inside and outside the classroom. Staff members are responsible for enforcing School Board Policies and Student Handbook rules.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

The Board of Education encourages the teacher to use corporal punishment only when it is considered to be an effective and suitable means of discipline and/or when other measures used to promote good conduct have been tried and failed to produce positive results. (Students with IEPs are not allowed to receive corporal punishment according to state law.) If an offense is serious enough to warrant corporal punishment, **IT MUST BE ADMINISTERED IN A PRIVATE PLACE IN THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER CERTIFIED STAFF MEMBER.** There should be no doubt in the mind of the student neither as to the seriousness of the offense for which he/she is to be punished nor as to the punishment deserved. The

teacher or principal, when administering corporal punishment, should use an instrument approved by the principal which will produce no physical injury to the child, and it must not be applied on any part of the body above the waist or below the knees. Three (3) licks on the buttocks shall be the maximum numbered applied. Striking the hands, knuckles, and palms with rulers or slapping about the face and head with hand (either open or closed) or with any instrument is expressly forbidden. **Such punishment shall not be administered in the presence of other students or in anger.** It must be remembered that all punishment is to be administered at a time and under conditions when it is not calculated to produce a rebellious or vengeful spirit in the student. If a student refuses to take corporal punishment as directed by the teacher/coach and/or the principal, he/she may be subject to suspension from school. Instances of corporal punishment shall be reported to the parent(s) by the principal or teacher who administered the punishment via a discipline slip that is sent home for a parent/guardian signature. With the adoption of the Assertive Discipline Plan a written record shall be made by the teacher, signed by the witness and given to the administrator in charge of discipline each time a teacher administers corporal punishment. This policy includes P.E. and other athletic classes and practices.

This written record must contain all pertinent facts relating to the misconduct and shall become part of the disciplinary file of the student involved. **Parents shall have the right to deny corporal punishment to their child by marking and signing the appropriate area in the enrollment packet.**

Principals will answer any questions you may have regarding the corporal punishment policy.

FACULTY MEETINGS

In order for teachers to plan in advance, administrators will set one day of the school week for regular faculty meetings that may continue after regular dismissal time. This extra time is compensated on Fridays when teachers may leave school immediately after students have left the campus. Special circumstances could require that the teacher attend additional meetings or parent conferences, but every effort shall be made to provide a uniform work day for employees. **All** certified staff will be expected to attend the faculty meetings. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to make arrangements to be present. *Do not make appointments on the faculty meeting day that has been designated by the administrator.*

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. They are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent of the eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. A fee of \$.25 per page (8.5" x 11"), or \$.50 per page (8.5" x 14") for a copy of an education record will be charged, unless the fee effectively prevents a parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student's education records.

- The right to request amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist). A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, the district discloses educational records without consent.

The District discloses directory information regarding its students. Directory information means information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is not limited to the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

The parent or eligible student has the right to refuse to let the District designate any or all types of information about the student as directory information. The parent or eligible student must notify the principal (or designee) in writing within 14 days of receipt of this notice that he or she does not want any or all of those types of information about the student designated as directory information.

The District may disclose directory information about former students without meeting these conditions.

FIELD TRIPS

The Board recognizes that the learning experiences provided by field trips are a most effective and worthwhile means of learning therefore field trips are encouraged. Each teacher planning a field trip must obtain permission from the principal and superintendent. A bus Permit Request Form will be presented to the principal for approval when applicable. All trips will be at the expense of the group or school using the bus. No trips will be made during State Testing and should be spread out throughout the year. **All trip tickets will go through the Transportation Director.**

JANITORIAL & MAINTENANCE SERVICE

Except in cases of emergency, an email should be sent to the principal's office for maintenance, repair, and installation work. Do not contact janitors personally unless in an emergency. If there is a problem that the district maintenance department would need to correct, the teacher should email the principal with a description of the problem along with the location. The principal will forward the email to maintenance.

LICENSE RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS & HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF REQUIREMENTS

It is the responsibility of all certified staff to keep their license up to date. Upon acquiring enough CEUs and/or college credit to renew license, the staff member will log into the online licensure system and input their CEU information. The staff member will then log into their ELMS account with MDE and adhere to the renewal process put in place by the MDE Licensure Office. If you have any questions concerning your license or the renewal process, you may contact the Central Office.

If an individual has completed a masters, specialist, or doctoral program; the individual should have the official transcript sent to MDE. The individual would then go online and complete a request for their license to be upgraded. The individual must notify the Human Resources Dept. at the Central Office when this has occurred.

PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER MEDICINE

Before any prescription medicine may be administered at school, the school must have a copy of the Permission to Administer Medicine signed and completed by the child's parent/legal guardian and physician. Forms may be picked up at the school office.

PARENT SIGNATURE FORMS

Each homeroom teacher is responsible for collecting parent signature forms from students' handbooks, alphabetizing them and filing them in the principal's or counselor's office. Homeroom teachers should thoroughly review and explain the handbook policies with their students. Each new student must bring a completed residency form with a minimum of two documents of proof of residency.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS

Certified Teachers are expected to attend all parent/teacher meetings (PTO). Staff must have prior approval from their administrator before missing a planned meeting. Non-certified staff members are not required to attend. Non-certified staff may attend if they so desire, but they will not receive overtime wage compensation for attendance.

DRESS AND APPEARANCE

Teachers should be conservative in dress and appearance. Teachers are expected to set examples consistent with dress and appearance regulations of a higher standard than required of students. No earrings (body rings) shall be worn except in the ear.

PERSONNEL APPRAISAL

1. All certified staff shall be evaluated according to MDE guidelines.
2. The district shall maintain evidence that the competencies are observed in a systematic way and that each employee regularly exhibits these competencies. This goes beyond

indicating that the employee, on a given day, can perform a competent manner. This system should be designed to assure that the certified employee does perform in a competent manner on a regular basis. It is not essential that all competencies be observed during a single visit. Evidence of demonstrated competencies should be accumulated through multiple observations and improvement processes.

3. Procedures for Teachers

I. Lesson plans which are normally and regularly prepared by the teacher shall be used in the assessment process (if deemed necessary by the principal).

- a. A minimum of 3 informal evaluations and 1 formal evaluation must occur annually. Evidence of demonstrated competence should be accumulated through multiple observations and improvement processes.
- b. Since Accreditation Standards require principals to make classroom observations to assure learning goals are being achieved and daily lesson plans are being used; the classroom visits for personnel appraisal may be unannounced.
- c. A post-evaluation conference with the teacher shall be conducted after the formal evaluation.
- d. The teacher shall receive a notification of the evaluation from the principal following the post-evaluation conference.

II. Opportunities for professional development and/or remediation of deficiencies shall be provided. After a reasonable period of time, if improvement does not occur the teacher will **not** be offered a contract for the following year.

PLANNING PERIODS

Teachers are expected to be on campus from the beginning of the school day until the end of the school day. They shouldn't be off campus unless they **have permission from their principal** to leave campus because of some necessity they have discussed with her/him. Teachers are expected to use school time for related work, classroom preparation, planning with assistants or co-workers, or conferences with students or parents. Planning periods during or after school, elementary music, library, breaks, etc., are **NOT** to be used for hobbies, crafts, or teacher social activities.

SALESMEN AND SOLICITORS-STAFF MEMBER SOLICITATIONS

Salesmen who call on schools shall secure the permission of the principal before contacting a teacher while on duty.

Staff members will not sell, solicit for sale, or advertise for sale merchandise or service or organize students for such purposes without the approval of the building principal. **School fund raisers require prior Board approval.** Refer to Descriptor Code GALA/B in the School Board Policy Manual.

SCHOOL VISITATION POLICY

Parents, former students, and other citizens of the community are cordially invited to attend school programs and functions. **HOWEVER UNAUTHORIZED VISITORS MAY BE SUBJECT TO PROSECUTION.** Visits from an employee's family should be limited to emergency only. All visitors are to report to the office of the principal upon arrival on campus at which time they will receive a visitor identification badge. All exterior doors shall be clearly marked with instructions for visitors to report to the principal's office. Any teacher or faculty member who notices a person on campus without a visitor's

pass should immediately ask the person to return to the office for a visitor's pass and report the incident to the office.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972 PROHIBITING SEX DISCRIMINATION, TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964, SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AND AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT OF 1992

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has published regulations pertaining to Title IX, Title VI, Section 504, and American Disabilities Act of 1992. The Choctaw County Schools hereby declares it intent to comply; therefore, it has established the following procedures and regulations in regard to its enforcement:

Glen C. Blaine/Title IX Coordinator and Maureen Power/Section 504/ADA Coordinator can be contacted for any issues which pertain to any that follow their various titles. In addition, complaints or concerns under these conditions may be addressed to the school principals, or the Superintendent of Education. Addresses and telephone numbers of such persons are carried in the school directory and local telephone directory.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT (Title IX)

The policy of the Board of Education forbids discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. The Board of Education will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by employees, students or school officials. This policy similarly applies to non-employed volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

1. General Prohibitions
 - a. Conduct of a sexual nature including verbal or physical sexual advances that occur between students, co-workers, employees, supervisors, etc.
 - b. Using position or authority to obtain sexual favors from those whom they employ or have authority over.
 - c. Students are also subject to charges of sexual harassment if they verbally or physically make unwanted advances toward other students or school personnel.
2. Reporting
 - a. It is the express policy of the Board of Education to encourage victims of sexual harassment to come forward with such claims. Employees may do so by following Employee Grievance Resolution Procedures and students should report the incident to school administration. If the direct supervisor or administrator is the offending person, the incident shall be made to the next higher level of administrator or supervisor.
 - b. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstance, the nature of the conduct and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. The superintendent and board have the final responsibility of investigating and resolving complaints of sexual harassment.
 - c. Any employee or student found to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to sanctions including but not limited to warning, suspension, termination, or expulsion subject to applicable procedural requirements.

(For complete policy on sexual harassment see School Board Policy and Procedure manual, Section GBR-Sexual Harassment.)

STAFF MEETINGS AND STAFF TRAINING

All certified staff **MUST** attend staff meetings and training as deemed necessary by administrators and remain for the entire time of the training.

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

Teachers who must leave the classroom or other assigned duties during a class period shall notify the school office or teacher in the closest room to watch for their class in their absence. Teachers who fail to notify the office or a nearby teacher are leaving themselves open to charge of negligence. Student behavior is the responsibility of **ALL FACULTY** at all times inside and outside the classroom. Teachers are responsible for enforcing School Board Policies and Student Handbook rules.

Students will not be allowed to enter the school building for any school activity until the person responsible for the student has arrived. Teachers are responsible for their students until they leave campus in the afternoon.

SUPPORT FOR NEW STAFF MEMBERS

You may volunteer or be assigned to mentor a new staff member hired in your grade or area of assignment. This is not a position that projects you as an evaluator. This is the opportunity to assist and share past experiences and expertise in order to guide and help make sure the new staff member is aware of all rules, regulations and situations particular to your school. You may make suggestions in a positive manner and serve as someone to come to in times of need that do not require administrative help. Your help will be greatly appreciated by the school district.

TEXTBOOKS

Teachers should: (1) Be sure that every student has a textbook which has been properly issued, (2) make appropriate notation on the book card even for a short issuance, (3) enforce good care of books, always looking for abuse and misuse of books. Students should understand the reason for care of books and penalties for those who don't comply. Students who have lost textbooks should be directed to the principal's office. All textbooks must be returned to the school upon withdrawal before records will be forwarded to another school.

TOBACCO, DRUGS, & ALCOHOL

ALL staff members, certified and non-certified, will not use, possess, be under the influence of, nor transfer tobacco, drugs, nor alcohol in the classroom, on any school campus, nor on the bus. Use, possession, under influence of, or transfer of tobacco, drugs or alcohol shall result in immediate action and ***may result in termination***.

TITLE IX

The employee shall immediately notify the Superintendent or Glen C. Blaine, Title IX/VI Coordinator of any allegations of discrimination. The employee will note the Grievance Policy (GAER) for a time line of action after the oral notification has been made to the Title IX Coordinator or Superintendent.

CHOCTAW COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2023 - 2024 CALENDAR

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Activity</u>
July 19 – Aug. 2	Staff chosen - 2 days	Staff Professional Development
Aug. 3 - 8	Thursday-Tuesday	Staff Professional Development
August 9	Wednesday	Students' First Day
<i>September 4</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Labor Day HOLIDAY</i>
September 20	Wednesday	Progress Reports (T1)
October 9-10	Monday-Tuesday	Fall Break
October 18	Wednesday	1st Nine Weeks Report Cards (T1)
<i>Nov. 20 – 24</i>	<i>Monday – Friday</i>	<i>Thanksgiving Holidays</i>
Nov. 29	Wednesday	Progress Reports (T2)
Dec. 19 – 22	Tuesday-Friday	Exams
December 22	Friday	60% Day
<i>Dec. 23 – Jan. 7</i>	<i>Saturday-Sunday</i>	<i>Christmas HOLIDAYS</i>
January 8	Monday	Staff Professional Development
January 9	Tuesday	Students' First Day
January 10	Wednesday	1st Semester Report Cards
<i>January 15</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Martin Luther King HOLIDAY</i>
February 14	Wednesday	Progress Reports (T3)
<i>February 19</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>President's Day (SNOW DAY)</i>
<i>March 11 - 15</i>	<i>Monday – Friday</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>
March 20	Wednesday	3rd Nine Weeks Report Cards (T3)
<i>March 29</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Good Friday HOLIDAY</i>
<i>April 1</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Easter Monday (SNOW DAY)</i>
April 24	Wednesday	Progress Reports (T4)
May 13 - 16	Monday-Thursday	Senior Exams
May 16	Thursday	Last Day for Seniors
May 17	Friday	CCHS Graduation
May 21 – 24	Tuesday-Friday	Exams
May 24	Friday	Make Up/60% Day/Faculty Last Day

Staff Days—187 Days

Students—180 Days

APPENDIX A

STAFF/STUDENT NON-FRATERNIZATION

Board Policy GABB

STAFF/STUDENT NON-FRATERNIZATION

Adults who have contact with children and adolescents through school activities have the responsibility not to betray or misuse their privileged position and shall never take advantage of students' vulnerability or of their confidence.

It is the policy of the Board of Education to prohibit any sexual relationship, contact or sexually nuanced behavior or communication between a staff member and a student, while the student is enrolled in the school system. The prohibition extends to students of the opposite sex or the same sex as the staff member, and applies regardless of whether the student or the staff member is the initiator of the behavior and whether or not the student welcomes or reciprocates the attention.

Staff Guidelines for Non-Fraternization

Staff members are expected to use good judgment in their relationships with students both inside and outside of the school context including, but not limited to, the following guidelines:

1. Staff members shall not make derogatory comments to students regarding the school and/or staff.
2. Staff members shall not exchange gifts with students.
3. Staff-sponsored parties, at which students are in attendance, unless they are a part of the school's extracurricular program and are properly supervised, are prohibited.
4. Staff members shall not fraternize, written or verbally, with students except on matters that pertain to school-related issues.
5. Staff members shall not text students nor participate in any student blogs.
6. Staff members shall not associate with students at any time in any situation or activity which could be considered sexually suggestive or involve the presence or use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.
7. Staff members shall not date students. Sexual relations with students, regardless of age and/or consent, are prohibited and will result in dismissal and criminal prosecution.
8. Staff members shall not use insults or sarcasm against students as a method of forcing compliance with requirements or expectations.
9. Staff members shall maintain a reasonable standard of care for the supervision, control, and protection of students commensurate with their assigned duties and responsibilities.
10. Staff members shall not send students on personal errands.
11. Staff members shall, pursuant to law and Board policy, immediately report any suspected signs of child abuse or neglect.
12. Staff members shall not attempt to counsel, assess, diagnose or treat a student's personal problem relating to sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental or physical health and/or family relationships but instead, should refer the student to appropriate school personnel or agency for assistance, pursuant to law and Board policy.
13. Staff members shall not disclose information concerning a student, other than directory information, to any person not authorized to receive such information. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning assessments, ability scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health and/or family background.

Social Networking

All employees, faculty and staff of this school district who participate in social networking websites such as, but not limited to, Twitter, Facebook, etc. shall not post any data, documents, photos or inappropriate information on any website that might result in a disruption of classroom activity. The determination of appropriateness will be made by the Superintendent.

Employees, faculty and staff shall not give social networking website passwords to students. Fraternization via the internet between employees, faculty or staff and students is prohibited and violation of any of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Access of social networking websites for individual use during school hours is prohibited.

Nothing in this policy prohibits employees, faculty, staff or students from the use of educational websites.

Annual Reminder to Staff

The Superintendent and the school principals will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

1. Improper fraternization with students using Facebook and similar internet sites or social networks
2. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content
3. Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol
4. Examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as behavior to avoid
5. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
6. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

Occasional Searches

The Superintendent or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and/or websites is discovered, the school principal and/or Superintendent will download the offensive material and promptly take proper administrative action.

APPENDIX B
SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Board Policy GABBA
SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

Access of social networking websites for individual use during school hours is prohibited. Employees, faculty and staff should not give social networking website passwords to students.

All employees, faculty and staff of this school district who participate in social networking websites (like Twitter, FaceBook, etc.) shall not post any data, documents, photos or inappropriate information on any website that might result in a disruption of classroom activity. This determination will be made by the Superintendent.

Fraternization via the internet between employees, faculty or staff and students is prohibited and violation of any of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Nothing in this policy prohibits employees, faculty, staff or students from the use of educational websites, like www.schoolnotes.com, since educational sites are used solely for educational purposes.

Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct

Each educator, upon entering the teaching profession, assumes a number of obligations, one of which is to adhere to a set of principles which defines professional conduct. These principles are reflected in the following code of ethics which sets forth to the education profession and the public it serves standards of professional conduct and procedures for implementation.

This code shall apply to all persons licensed according to the rules established by the Mississippi State Board of Education and protects the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators.

Ethical conduct is any conduct which promotes the health, safety, welfare, discipline and morals of students and colleagues.

Unethical conduct is any conduct that impairs the license holder's ability to function in his/her employment position or a pattern of behavior that is detrimental to the health, safety, welfare, discipline, or morals of students and colleagues.

Any educator or administrator license may be revoked or suspended for engaging in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4). Superintendents shall report to the Mississippi Department of Education license holders who engage in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4)

Code of Ethics Standards

Standard 1: Professional Conduct

An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.

- 1.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Encouraging and supporting colleagues in developing and maintaining high standards
 2. Respecting fellow educators and participating in the development of a professional teaching environment
 3. Engaging in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to professional development designed to promote student learning
 4. Providing professional education services in a nondiscriminatory manner
 5. Maintaining competence regarding skills, knowledge, and dispositions relating to his/her organizational position, subject matter and pedagogical practices
 6. Maintaining a professional relationship with parents of students and establish appropriate communication related to the welfare of their children
- 1.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Harassment of colleagues
 2. Misuse or mismanagement of tests or test materials
 3. Inappropriate language on school grounds or any school-related activity
 4. Physical altercations
 5. Failure to provide appropriate supervision of students and reasonable disciplinary actions

Standard 2. Trustworthiness

An educator should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice and does not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or 24 educational institution.

- 2.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Properly representing facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression

2. Advocating for fair and equitable opportunities for all children
3. Embodying for students the characteristics of honesty, diplomacy, tact, and fairness.
- 2.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting any of the following:
 1. employment history, professional qualifications, criminal history, certification/recertification
 2. information submitted to local, state, federal, and/or other governmental agencies
 3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel
 4. reasons for absences or leave
 5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation
 2. Falsifying records or directing or coercing others to do so

Standard 3. Unlawful Acts

An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes and local school board policies.

3. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the commission or conviction of a felony or sexual offense. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought or situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted.

Standard 4. Educator/Student Relationship

An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.

- 4.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Fulfilling the roles of mentor and advocate for students in a professional relationship. A professional relationship is one where the educator maintains a position of teacher/student authority while expressing concern, empathy, and encouragement for students
 2. Nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social and civic potential of all students
 3. Providing an environment that does not needlessly expose students to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement
 4. Creating, supporting, and maintaining a challenging learning environment for all students
- 4.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:
 1. Committing any act of child abuse
 2. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment
 3. Committing or soliciting any unlawful sexual act
 4. Engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion or disability
 5. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs
 6. Soliciting, encouraging, participating or initiating inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, physical or romantic relationship with a student.

Examples of these acts may include but not be limited to:

1. sexual jokes
2. sexual remarks
3. sexual kidding or teasing
4. sexual innuendo
5. pressure for dates or sexual favors
6. inappropriate touching, fondling, kissing or grabbing

7. rape
8. threats of physical harm
9. sexual assault
10. electronic communication such as texting
11. invitation to social networking
12. remarks about a student's body
13. consensual sex

Standard 5. Educator Collegial Relationships

An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with colleagues, both in and outside the classroom

5. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the following:
 1. Revealing confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law
 2. Harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system
 3. Interfering with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities
 4. Discriminating against or coercing a colleague on the basis of race, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability or family status
 5. Using coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions of colleagues

Standard 6. Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use or Possession

An educator should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or tobacco during the course of professional practice and should never use illegal or unauthorized drugs

- 6.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Factually representing the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drug use and abuse to students during the course of professional practice
- 6.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Being under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs
 2. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages. A school related activity includes but is not limited to, any activity that is sponsored by a school or a school system or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum such as club trips, etc. which involve students.
 3. Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented using tobacco.

Standard 7. Public Funds and Property

An educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use funds, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

- 7.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Maximizing the positive effect of school funds through judicious use of said funds
 2. Modeling for students and colleagues the responsible use of public property
- 7.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Knowingly misappropriating, diverting or using funds, personnel, property or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain

2. Failing to account for funds collected from students, parents or any school-related function
3. Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay
4. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts
5. Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing body

Standard 8. Remunerative Conduct

An educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.

- 8.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Insuring that institutional privileges are not used for personal gain
 2. Insuring that school policies or procedures are not impacted by gifts or gratuities from any person or organization
- 8.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local governing body.
 2. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local school board
 3. 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, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service)

Standard 9. Maintenance of Confidentiality

An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements.

- 9.1. Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Keeping in confidence information about students that has been obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves a legitimate purpose or is required by law
 2. Maintaining diligently the security of standardized test supplies and resources
- 9.2. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Sharing confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information family status/income and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law.
 2. Violating confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, and violating local school board or state directions for the use of tests
 3. Violating other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy

Standard 10. Breach of Contract or Abandonment of Employment

An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local school board or educational agency for the duration of the contract.

10. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the school board
 2. Refusing to perform services required by the contract.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY
Employee/Staff
Choctaw County School District
Acceptable Use Policy

The Choctaw County School District is CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act) and COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) compliant. Employees may use the network to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards. While our intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, employees may find ways to access other materials as well. There can be no assurances that employees will not be exposed to unacceptable materials using on-line and telecommunication services. Choctaw County School District has implemented Internet filtering to minimize unacceptable material. Recognizing that no filtering solution can be 100% effective, it is understood that all technology protection measures do not and will not work perfectly. In complying with CIPA, schools are expected to engage in a "good faith effort" to abide by the requirements of CIPA. CIPA does not create a private right to action, meaning that the discovery of objectionable material on a computer cannot result in a lawsuit complaining that a school violated CIPA.

This policy sets forth the privileges and restrictions of users that wish to use the computing and telecommunication equipment owned by Choctaw County School District. This policy attempts to define and give examples of computer usage that are problematic and therefore are prohibited. This policy's focus is to protect Choctaw County School District and its users from illegal or damaging actions by individuals, either knowingly or unknowingly; to educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms; and to address cyberbullying awareness, reporting and response. All policies and procedures are intended for the current school year; however, the District reserves the right to make modifications as necessary. If changes are made, users will be notified through email or a posting on the district website.

Access to network resources and the Internet enables Choctaw County School District users to explore many resources for intellectual gain. These resources are intended for appropriate educational use. All users are held responsible for the behavior exhibited on District owned computers and the Internet.

Prohibited actions on Choctaw County School District Network:

- Installation of unlicensed software. (Request must be made to technology department)
- District computers, printers, or network equipment must not be moved without prior permission from the Technology Coordinator.
- Personal computing equipment must not be added to network. (Laptops, printers, network storage devices, etc...)
- Users must not try to repair District owned equipment.
- Users must not use District network resources for online gaming, chatting, or music.
- Users must not conduct personal business or vendor services (selling products or web developing, etc.)

- Users must not install instant messaging services or weather tracking software.
- Users must not install peer to peer applications (Kazaa, Gnutella, LimeWire, Blubster, etc.) These applications provide the ability to violate copyright laws, steal intellectual property, download pornography, etc...
- Users must not hack or try to hack other users information or confidential information in possession of the Choctaw County School District.
- Users must not practice unsafe behavior on the Internet
- Users must not practice inappropriate behavior while online, on social networking websites, and in chat rooms
- Users must not participate in cyberbullying and must report such behavior if they are aware of it

Users that violate any of these prohibited actions are subject to the following:

- **Revocation of computer use in the district.**
- **Litigation depending on offense.**
- **Disciplinary consequences which could be termination, depending on extent of prohibited action.**

As a user of Choctaw County School District technology, I have read and agree to comply with the technology acceptable use policy. I agree that inappropriate use or behavior may result in loss of use, disciplinary and/or legal action. I agree that Choctaw County School District is not responsible for any damages that may result from my misuse of technology throughout the school.

Employee Signature

Date

Please sign and return to your administrator.

**Employee Acknowledgement Sheet for Choctaw County School
District Employee Handbook
2023 – 2024**

EMPLOYEE NAME (Please Print)

Employee's School/Department

Initial I acknowledge receipt of the 2023-2024 employee handbook.

Initial I acknowledge that my school administrator has reviewed the employee
information with me.

Initial I acknowledge that my school administrator has provided me with
training/info concerning Choctaw County School District's Corporal
Punishment Policy.

Initial I acknowledge that my school administrator has provided me with
training/info concerning Choctaw County School District's Staff/Student Non
Fraternization Policy.

Initial I acknowledge that my school administrator has provided me with
training/info concerning Choctaw County School District's Social Networking
Policy.

Initial I acknowledge that my school administrator has gone over the Mississippi
Educator Code of Ethics.

Employee Signature

Please sign and return to your administrator.

Date