

# **Lumpkin County School System**



## **Employee Handbook**

**2023-2024**

## **Lumpkin County School System Mission**

Educating and Empowering Life-Long Learners

## **Lumpkin County School System Vision**

To prepare all students for successful and productive lives in an ever-changing world

## **Lumpkin County School System Core Values**

- We value a culture and climate for learning that fosters high expectations for all students.
- We value a supportive learning environment for all students through effective practices, policies, and procedures.
- We value caring, competent, motivated, and accountable professionals focused on student success.
- We value the academic and personal growth of our students through partnerships with our families and community which impact student success.

# Table of Contents

<b>Mission, Vision, and Core Values .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Welcome Message.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>General Information.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Board of Education.....	6
Central Office Administration and Staff.....	6-7
Lumpkin County School Directories.....	7-10
<b>Key Personnel Policies and Procedures.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Administrative Discretion.....	11
Assessment of Performance.....	11
Board Policies.....	11
Building Security.....	11-12
CDL.....	12
Centegix Crisis Alert.....	12
Certification.....	12-13
Child Abuse/Neglect – Mandated Reporting.....	13-14
Code of Ethics.....	14
Communication .....	14
Confidentiality .....	14-15
Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing for Bus Drivers.....	15-16
Criminal History Check.....	16
Distribution of Teacher or Students Names.....	16
Dress Code.....	16-17
Drug-Free Work Force.....	17-18
Emergency Closing of Schools.....	18
Employee Complaints and Grievances .....	18-19
Employee Recruitment & Selection Procedures .....	19-20
Equal Access.....	20-21
Facilities – Administrative Procedure .....	22-23
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232G) FERPA.....	23
Field Trips .....	23-24
Fund-Raisers.....	24
Gifted Services Information .....	24
Guest Speakers.....	25
Interacting with Students .....	25
Internet Acceptable Use .....	26

Inventory .....	26
Keys & ID Badges.....	26
Non-Discrimination.....	26-27
Public Records .....	27
Reporting of Fraudulent or Criminal Acts.....	27
Resignations.....	27
Retirement.....	28
School Day .....	28
School Meals.....	28-29
School Year.....	29
Section 504 Plans for Students.....	29
Self-Reporting.....	29-30
Social Media Guidelines for Employees.....	30-35
Solicitation of Funds.....	35
Student Sexual Harassment.....	36
Student Teachers.....	36-37
Substitute Teachers.....	37
Suspension .....	37
Teacher of the Year.....	38
Tobacco Products.....	38
Transfers to Other Locations.....	38
Transfer of Experience.....	38
Travel Guidelines .....	38-40
Volunteer Guidelines.....	40-41
<b>Benefits .....</b>	<b>41</b>
Insurance .....	41
Social Security .....	41
Workers Compensation .....	41-42
<b>Leave .....</b>	<b>42</b>
Leaves & Absences .....	42-43
Observance of Religious Holidays .....	43
Personal Leave .....	43
Personal Leave Without Pay.....	43
Bereavement Leave.....	44
Disability Leave.....	44
Disability- Returning from Leave.....	44

Family and Medical Leave Act.....	44-45
Paid Parental Leave.....	45-46
Jury Duty, Subpoena, and Other Court Order.....	46
Military Leave .....	46-47
Professional Leave.....	47
<b>Employee Work Calendars .....</b>	<b>47</b>
Work Day Calendars.....	47-49
Non-certified Employees & Sick Leave Reimbursement.....	49

## Welcome Message

### WELCOME TO LUMPKIN COUNTY!

The Lumpkin County School System is committed to “Quality Public Education”, and this handbook is issued to assist you in performing your duties more efficiently as we strive for “Excellence in Education”. The materials in this handbook are supported by the Lumpkin County Board of Education, the state Board of Education, and Georgia law.

This Handbook is subject to annual revision. The Administrative Staff welcomes your constructive criticism, comments, and suggestions at any time.

It is the responsibility of all staff members to familiarize themselves with the Employee Handbook and all system policies.

See the system website at [www.lumpkinschools.com](http://www.lumpkinschools.com) under Employee Portal (go to the Menu on the homepage and then Employee Portal under Human Resources) for more employee information.

# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **Board of Education**

Mr. Bobby Self	Chairman
Mr. Jim McClure	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Craig Poore	Board Member
Mrs. Lynn Sylvester	Board Member
Ms. Mera Turner	Board Member

## **Central Office Administration and Staff**

Dr. Rob Brown, Superintendent  
Sharon Head, Deputy Superintendent  
Greg Trammell, Assistant Superintendent for Operations  
Marisa Pierce, BOE Administrative Assistant  
Sara Beth Rose, Human Resources Administrative Assistant  
Jennifer Moss, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment  
Kerri Whitmire, Director of Student Services  
Jane Mullinax, Director of Accountability  
Nicki Chester, Curriculum & Instruction Administrative Assistant  
Sean Mullins, Director of Technology & Digital Learning  
Phil Heaton, Technology Coordinator  
Tammy Brooksher, Technology Specialist  
Patrick Jones, Technology Specialist  
Jamie Moss, Technology Specialist  
Lynn White, Transportation Director  
Jacob Tinsley, Maintenance Director  
Rhonda Hansard, Administrative Assistant for Operations  
Whittney McPherson, Director of Finance  
Loretta Sexton, Accounts Payable

Christy Jenkins, Staff Accountant–Payroll  
 Autumn Garrett, Staff Accountant  
 Katie Lowry, Director of Special Education  
 Vikki Abercrombie, Special Education Coordinator  
 Stephen Palmer, School Psychologist  
 Melissa Estenson, Behavioral Specialist  
 Beth Hawk, Special Education Elementary Program Specialist  
 Christie Castleberry, Special Education Administrative Assistant  
 Julie Knight-Brown, Director of School Nutrition  
 Mary Grizzle, School Nutrition Administrative Assistant  
 Jason Lemley, Director of Community Engagement & College & Career Academy CEO  
 Bobby Mayfield, Coordinator of Safety & Facilities  
 Makayla Caldwell, Receptionist

**LUMPKIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION - DIRECTORY**

56 Indian Drive; Dahlonga, GA 30533

Telephone: 706-864-3611; Fax: 706-864-3755; 706-864-5965; Special Ed: 706-864-0468

**SCHOOL DIRECTORIES**

**BLACKBURN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

45 Blackburn Road

Dawsonville, GA 30534

Phone: 706-864-8180

Fax: 706-864-8176

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>EXT</u>
Principal	Green, Betsy	50128
Asst. Principal	Froggatt, Chris	50028
Receptionist	Anderson, Jennifer	50011
Bookkeeper	Bryan, Virginia	50026
Counselor	Beck, Kim	50027
SIS	Scott, Rachel	50315
Registrar	Mills, Megan	50129
Family Connection		50031
Nurse	Roberts, Anna	50023
Secretary	Helms, Joy	50012
SNP Manager	Foster, Andi	50422

**LONG BRANCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

4518 Highway 52 East  
Dahlonega, GA 30533  
Phone: 706-864-5361  
Fax: 706-864-5477

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>EXT</u>
Principal	Fain, Sara	60002
Asst. Principal	Beckworth, Kendra	60004
Receptionist	Bennett, Amanda	60000
Bookkeeper	Lingerfelt, Faye	60008
Counselor	Ferrell, Erin	60003
SIS	Woody, Karen	60302
Registrar	Scott, Sherry	60001
Family Connection	Jarvis, Patricia	60304
Nurse	Gilleland, Amber	60005
SNP Manager	Shubert, Judy	60310

**COTTRELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

220 Pinetree Way  
Dahlonega, GA 30533  
Phone: 706-864-3254  
Fax: 706-864-2103

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>EXT</u>
Principal	Gerrells, Stacie	32102
Asst. Principal	Hunsinger, Cindy	32103
Receptionist	Head, Amber	32101
Bookkeeper	Butler, Deana	33105
Counselor	Cole, Matt	32107
SIS	Tinney, Joy	71207
Registrar	Birk, Larissa	32106
Family Connection	Anderson, Taylor	72223
Nurse	Grizzle, Rosa	32109
SNP Manager	Christy, Brenda	71404



**LUMPKIN COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

44 School Drive  
Dahlonega, GA 30533  
Phone: 706-864-6189  
Fax: 706-864-0199

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>EXT</u>
Principal	Gerrells, Nathan	41105
Assoc. Principal	Matthews, Brian	41153
Asst. Principal	Overmyer, Lori	41145
Asst. Principal	Flakes, Brooke	42001
Receptionist	Jarrard, Amy	41000
Receptionist	Jarrard, Rebecca	41001
Bookkeeper	Bartils, Marilyn	41113
Counselor	Ervin, Rhonda	41117
Counselor	Fugate, LaGala	41136
Mental Health Counselor	Maloney, Beverly	42311
Mental Health Counselor	Murray, Cara	41300
SIS	Caine, Jammie	41203
Registrar	Scott, Michelle	41116
Family Connection	Horne, Makenzy	41128
Nurse	Mildenhall, Scott	41213
SPED Lead	Phillips, Brandy	42312
SNP Manager	Barrett, Janice	42407

**LUMPKIN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

2001 Indian Drive  
Dahlonega, GA 30533  
Phone: 706-864-6186  
Fax: 706-864-4929

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>EXT</u>
Principal	Kirk, Billy	20003
Asst. Principal	Powell, Katie	20215
Asst. Principal	Wade, Jennifer	20027
Asst. Principal/A.D.	Horton, Steve	20876
Receptionist	Pendley, Cheryl	20002
Bookkeeper	Free, Mindy	20008
Counselor	Jarrard, Kathleen	20006
Counselor	Diedrich, Jessica	20026
Counselor	Zaideman, Roxanne	20005
Mental Health Counselor	Maloney, Beverly	42311
Social Worker	McElwaney, Joni	20309

Counselor Secretary	Self, Julie	20018
Graduation Coach	Jones, Joseph	20201
Registrar	Gooch, Kim	20009
Nurse	McCarty, Cami	20223
SNP Manager	Stevenson, Betty	20022
Secretary	Gilreath, Frances	20021

**SUMMIT ACADEMY**

153 School Drive  
Dahlonega, GA 30533

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>EXT</u>
Administrator	Bicknell, Libby	10104

**STUDENT OUTREACH**

Family Connection	Barker, Brigette	41126
Parent Involvement	Brashier, Sabine	41256
K-8 Social Worker	Pisarik, Michelle	41257
9-12 Social Worker	McElwaney, Joni	20309
K-5 Mental Health Counselor	Murray, Cara	41300
6-12 Mental Health Counselor	Maloney, Beverly	42311

**TRANSPORTATION**

Main office: 706-864-2416  
Fax: 706-864-7201

**TITLE IX**

Kerri Whitmire, Title IX Sexual Harassment Coordinator	10119
Steve Horton, Title IX Gender Equity in Sports Coordinator	20876

# **Key Personnel Policies and Procedures**

## **Administrative Discretion**

It is at the discretion of the administration to revise any rule, regulation, or consequence in this handbook without prior written notification. Every possible instance requiring administrative action cannot be covered in this handbook. However, employees will be held accountable for any unwritten rule or regulation that might impede the educational process of Lumpkin County School System.

## **Assessment of Performance**

Assessment of performance will be completed for every staff member during the school year. Evaluation procedures will follow mandates as outlined in state law. In-service will be provided early in the school year concerning procedures to be followed in the professional evaluation process.

## **Board Policies**

Policies adopted by the State Board of Education and the Lumpkin County Board of Education specify the rules and regulations that our schools operate under. A copy of the Board policies may be found on the system website at [www.lumpkinschools.com](http://www.lumpkinschools.com) under Board of Education. All employees should familiarize themselves with all policies and make sure they are complying with them. Questions regarding the policies are to be addressed to your principal, assistant principal, or mentor. Employees who violate Board policy may be subject to reprimand and/or dismissal.

## **Building Security**

The safety of our students and staff members is always important. Each school has specific procedures for making sure their building is secure during the day and after hours. Make sure that you are familiar with these procedures and follow them at all times. It is your responsibility to keep track of any keys and badges that are issued to you. Notify your principal immediately if you discover a key or badge is missing. Each employee is issued an ID badge upon employment. It is a requirement that the ID badge be worn at all times while on campus. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the badge is not lost or stolen. Replacement badges may be obtained by contacting your principal.

## **SHUT DOWN/HOLIDAYS**

Teachers are advised to lock their classrooms whenever the room is vacant and unattended. Non-teaching school days and student holidays are listed on the school calendar. Remember that as you leave for holidays, you must do the following in your classroom:

- Remove valuables from your desk.

- Lock file cabinets and windows.
- Secure your grade book.
- Secure your laptops or take them home with you. Secure any personal items.
- Return appropriate materials to the media center.
- Turn off all computers, printers, etc.

## **CDL**

All vehicle operators covered by the commercial driver's licensing laws must have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and must successfully complete the training course prescribed by the Lumpkin County School System. Certain other specialized positions may require licensing.

## **Centegix Crisis Alert**

Each employee is issued a Centegix Crisis Alert card upon employment. This card should be worn at all times along with the ID badge. The card should be activated by the employee to call for help when a crisis occurs. The following 2 notifications can be used:

- By pressing the button on the card **3 times**, a notification will be sent to the school administrators, nurse and SRO in the school building. This would be the notification that is appropriate if someone needs medical attention, a student is unruly and an administrator is needed, etc.
- By pressing the button **continuously**, a notification of a school lockdown is initiated. School administrators, SRO's, Central Office staff and local law enforcement all receive this notification and the school is immediately placed into lockdown. This would be an appropriate emergency notification for an active shooter, intruder, etc.

It is the employee's responsibility to keep the Centegix Crisis Alert card with him/her at all times. The card should not be left unattended and students should not have access to the card. If the card is misplaced, notify your administrator immediately.

## **Certification**

It is the responsibility of the employee to obtain and maintain certification in the field in which he/she is working unless waiver of certification has been pre-approved by the superintendent. For questions regarding certification, please visit [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) or contact the Georgia Professional Standards Commission at 1-800-869-7775. Georgia Professional Standards

Commission does not print and mail hard copies of certificates and certificate-related correspondence. “MyPSC” web portal provides educators access to their certificates and correspondence.

The MyPSC Account portal is accessible from Georgia Professional Standards Commission website <http://www.gapsc.com>. If you have not done so, please take a few minutes and create your account. You can find more detailed information on creating an account at: [http://www.gapsc.com/MessageCenter/msgc\\_mypscregistration.asp](http://www.gapsc.com/MessageCenter/msgc_mypscregistration.asp). It is the responsibility of all certified employees to obtain and maintain Georgia Certification. All paraprofessionals must hold a Paraprofessional Certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Certification requirements may be found at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission website, [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com). Questions regarding certification should be directed to the Lumpkin County Schools HR Department.

## **Child Abuse/Neglect – Mandated Reporting**

The Lumpkin County School System supports the legal mandate O.C.G.A 19-7-5 for professionals to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. As a mandated reporter, you must notify the school counselor or administrator of any suspected child abuse/neglect immediately upon learning about the suspected abuse/neglect. The school counselor/administrator is then responsible to report the abuse to the local Department of Family and Children Services and/or local Law Enforcement. School staff who make the report to the school counselor/administrator is deemed to have fully complied with the law. Any person or official required by law to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willingly fails to do so will be guilty of a misdemeanor.

### **LEGAL DEFINITIONS**

- “Abused” means subjected to child abuse.
- “Child” means any person under 18 years of age.
- “Child abuse” means:
  - o Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker thereof by other than accidental means; provided, however, physical forms of discipline may be used as long as there is no physical injury to the child;
  - o Neglect or exploitation of a child by parent or caretaker thereof;
  - o Sexual abuse of a child; or
  - o Sexual exploitation of a child.
- “Sexual Exploitation” means conduct by a child’s parent or caretaker who allows, permits, encourages, or requires that child to engage in:
  - o Prostitution, as defined in Code Section 16-6-9
  - o Sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium depicting such conduct, as defined in Code Section 16-12-100

Each year the Lumpkin County School System will provide child abuse/mandated reporter training that includes: Georgia law regarding mandated reporting, school protocol for reporting suspected child abuse/neglect, indicators of abuse, and types of disclosures. Additional training will be provided as needed upon request from the school administrator.

## **Code of Ethics**

All personnel who hold a certificate by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission are held to a high standard of conduct as delineated in the code of ethics. It is the responsibility of every employee to become familiar with the code of ethics and to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. For additional information, please refer to the Georgia Professional Standards website, [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) under ethics. All holders of credentials issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) must abide by this code. Violations of the code of ethics will be referred to the GaPSC Ethics Division for investigation and possible action.

## **Communication**

All communication should be conducted in a professional manner. Any written messages, including notes home to parents, should be proofread for errors and objectivity. Communications should be positive, brief, and to the point. Avoid the use of educational jargon whenever possible. Employees should be conscientious of the reading level of all written communications and use clear, understandable language.

Email has increased our ability to communicate more quickly and with more individuals and groups; however, even your email is subject to Georgia's Open Records Law and can be requested at any time. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance. E-mail communication must not include specific student information. Refer to FERPA for additional details. Do not write anything you don't want to be read by the general public. School time and computers should not be used to send personal emails.

All communication with parents and students should be done through SchoolStatus. Employees should not send texts to students through personal cell phones.

## **Confidentiality**

As a school employee, you will have access to a significant amount of information about your students and their families. Most of this information is and should be considered confidential. By law, you are required to maintain confidentiality of student records and should be cautious when sharing any information. Unless a colleague is working with a student and has a specific need to know, it is best to refrain from casual sharing of student information. Under no circumstances should you share student information with parents of other students. Confidentiality also extends to conversations in the community. All records are to be maintained in a safe, secure location.

Your principal will notify you where specific types of records are to be kept in your school. Copies may not be made without the explicit permission of your principal.

## **Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing for Bus Drivers**

The Lumpkin County Board of Education places a high priority on ensuring safe transportation for its students transported on school buses. The Board of Education recognizes that unimpaired judgment on the part of its drivers is essential to providing safe transportation and that alcohol misuse and controlled substance use may impair the judgment of drivers. All individuals who drive or may drive a bus for the Board of Education at any time, including, but not limited to, full-time drivers, part-time drivers, substitute drivers, coaches, mechanics, teachers, administrators and others, must participate in the controlled substance and alcohol testing program as more fully described in federal and state regulations. Individuals who have positive controlled substance test results shall be terminated as an eligible bus driver for the Lumpkin County School System, as shall individuals whose test results reveal blood alcohol concentrations of 0.04 and above and individuals who refuse to submit to a required alcohol or controlled substance test. Individuals whose tests results reveal measurable blood alcohol concentrations of less than 0.04, and individuals who engage in other conduct prohibited by the regulations may, in the Board of Education's discretion, be terminated. Drivers must inform their immediate supervisor of any therapeutic drug use, whether by prescription or "over the counter," and must provide a statement from their treating physician that the substance does not adversely affect the driver's ability to operate the bus or vehicle.

### **PROCEDURES**

1. Not less than 50 percent of drivers shall be tested annually in one or more random tests for controlled substances. Not less than 25 percent of drivers will be tested annually in one or more random tests for alcohol. Testing will be conducted at least quarterly.
2. Random selection of drivers to be tested shall be made by a neutral third party. The third party shall maintain a data base of drivers' names and dates of when testing is to be conducted. The names of individuals to be tested shall be randomly generated by the third party's computer. The neutral third party may be a provider located in state or out of state.
3. Methods for assuring privacy during testing are the responsibility of the collection agency. The collection agency shall be a health care provider in the local area.
4. Methods for assuring proper storage, transportation and handling of specimens are the responsibility of the collection agency.
5. Random alcohol sobriety tests (breath tests) shall be conducted by a local health care provider. In the event of an accident, a breath test and/or blood test shall be administered at the nearest institution equipped to administer such tests.
6. Persons who are entitled to test results are the superintendent, HR director, the transportation director and the tested individual.
7. Laboratories to conduct alcohol testing include the Neighborhood Health Care Center of Dahlonega, 215 West By-Pass, Dahlonega, Georgia, 706-864-3323, and/or other such facilities which may be established.
8. The Lumpkin County Board of Education shall pay the costs of controlled substance and alcohol abuse testing.

Reference: Georgia Public School Standards; O.C.G.A. 20-2-1121

## **Criminal History Check**

It is the policy of the Lumpkin County Board of Education to comply with O.C.G.A. §20-2-211, as amended by the 1994 General Assembly by Senate Bill 526, and the implementing regulations as promulgated by the State Board of Education, if any. Every person who is employed by Lumpkin County Board of Education for the first time and upon rehiring after a break in continuous service to fill a certificated position with this school district shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal records check prior to working with students. The method of obtaining fingerprints and of submission to the Georgia Crime Information Center and National Crime Information Center shall be as prescribed by O.C.G.A. §20-2-211, as amended, and by the State Board of Education's policies, rules and regulations. The acceptability of the criminal record check will be at the discretion of the superintendent or designee. In the event the criminal records check reflects the employee has been charged with, plead to, or been convicted of an offense other than a minor traffic violation, the superintendent shall bring the matter to the Board at its next meeting or sooner, if warranted, for a decision. If the superintendent elects, the employee may continue in the employment of the school district pending final Board decision.

**Certificated personnel** whose employment is continued shall have a criminal record check made as required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-211 (e) (1) upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission. Following the initial fingerprinting, the GCIC and NCIC only will be required during each five year period of employment.

**Classified personnel** of the Lumpkin County Board of Education shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal record check as required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-211 (e) (1) upon initial employment. Following the initial fingerprinting, only the GCIC and NCIC will be required during each five year period of employment.

Legal Reference: O.C.G.A. 20-2-211 (e) (1)

## **Distribution of Teacher or Students Names**

Lists of pupils and teachers may not be distributed to persons or organizations outside of the school district without the approval of the superintendent.

## **Dress Code**

Employees should dress in appropriate professional attire on all regular school days and at any time during a teacher work day when that staff member is involved in a system-wide meeting or a meeting with parents. Such attire as jeans, tennis shoes, mini skirts, shorts, etc., would be considered casual attire not appropriate for professional wear. On teacher work days when the teaching staff is involved in cleaning or room preparation, the principal may approve more casual attire. Teachers in Physical Education, CTAE labs, etc. may wear appropriate clothing for their



particular activities. Adaptation to the dress code may be made at the discretion of the principal for special circumstances. **Fridays are Lumpkin County spirit-wear days.**

## **Drug-Free Work Force**

Lumpkin County Schools reserve the right to drug test employees that exhibit a reasonable suspicion and any employees randomly. The Lumpkin County Board of Education declares that the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of controlled substances, marijuana and other dangerous drugs in an unlawful manner or being at work under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, marijuana or other dangerous drugs is a serious threat to the public health, safety and welfare. With this in mind, the Board declares that its work force must be absolutely free of any person who would knowingly manufacture, distribute, sell or possess a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug in an unlawful manner. This prohibition specifically includes, but is not limited to, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol in the employee's workplace. This prohibition also includes, but is not limited to, an employee being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while on duty.

Any employee who is convicted for the first time, under the laws of this state, the United States or any other state of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be subject to disciplinary action. At a minimum, such an employee shall be suspended for a period of not less than two (2) months and shall be required to complete, at his or her own expense, a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the Board. At a maximum, such an employee may be terminated from his or her employment with the school system. Any employee who is convicted for a second or subsequent time under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be terminated from his or her employment and shall be ineligible for employment for a period of five (5) years from the most recent date of conviction.

If prior to an arrest for an offense involving a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug, an employee notifies the superintendent or the superintendent's designee that the employee illegally uses a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug and is receiving or agrees to receive treatment under a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of the Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the Board, the employee shall be entitled to maintain his or her employment for up to one year as long as the employee follows the treatment plan. During this period, the employee shall not be separated from employment solely on the basis of the employee's drug dependence, but the employee's work activities may be restructured if practicable to protect persons or property. No statement made by an employee to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee in order to comply with this code section shall be admissible in any civil, administrative or criminal proceeding as evidence against the public employee. The rights granted by this policy shall be available to an employee only once during a five (5) year period and are intended to be and shall be interpreted as being the same as

those minimum rights granted pursuant to the Georgia Drug-Free Work Force Act and any subsequent amendments hereof.

As a condition of employment, each employee must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify the Board within five (5) days after any arrest on any drug-related criminal charge and further notify the Board within five (5) days of any conviction of a drug-related offense.

A copy of this policy shall be disseminated to all employees either directly or through employee handbooks.

The Board of Education shall not consider for employment any applicant who has been convicted for the first time of any drug offense as described above for a three-month period from the date of conviction nor shall the Board of Education consider any applicant for employment who has been convicted for the second time of any drug offense as described above for a five-year period from the most recent date of conviction.

For purposes of this policy, “conviction” refers to any final conviction in a court of competent jurisdiction, specifically including acceptance of a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or any plea entered under the First Offenders Act of Georgia or any comparable state or federal legislation.

This policy is not intended and shall not be interpreted as prohibiting the school system from taking appropriate disciplinary action against any employee where there exists evidence that an employee uses, distributes or sells illegal drugs even though the employee has not been convicted of any criminal offense or where there exists evidence that an employee is under the influence of alcohol while on duty, except that the school system may not use the statement of any employee to the superintendent requesting treatment as described in this policy.

The school system shall provide such staff development as required by state or federal law to inform employees of the dangers of drug abuse, the availability of employee assistance and drug counseling and treatment and the terms of this policy.

### **Emergency Closing of Schools**

Under emergency conditions created by snow storms, severe weather, or other conditions, it sometimes becomes necessary to close the schools. The decision to cancel classes is made by the superintendent or an official designated to act for him. The decision will be made by 6 a.m. if at all possible. When schools must be closed, a system-wide phone call will be made. Local radio stations and television stations will also be notified.

### **Employee Complaints and Grievances**

Policy GAE of the local Lumpkin County Board of Education is adopted to implement the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of 1992, OCGA 20-2-989.5 et seq. In accordance

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

## **Employee Recruitment & Selection Procedures**

### **EMPLOYMENT AND RECRUITMENT:**

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent or designee to determine the personnel needs of the school system and to locate suitable candidates for consideration for employment.

All personnel shall be hired only upon the recommendation of the superintendent. The Board shall approve the employment of all personnel.

Every reasonable effort will be made to recruit a diverse pool of qualified applicants through, but not limited to, recruiting and advertising.

No inquiry in regard to gender, age, race, color, disability, religion, or national origin shall be made except for lawfully required data gathering purposes. Such data shall be kept in a manner prescribed or authorized by law.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSIGNMENT:**

Assignment of administrative personnel shall be done by the Board upon the recommendation of the superintendent.

### **CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL:**

The employment of all classified personnel shall be based on identified needs. Candidates for employment will be selected from the approved applicant pool developed by the Human Resources Department. Paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002 must meet the NCLB definition of highly qualified at the time of employment.

### **CERTIFIED PERSONNEL:**

The school system requires the following information before an application is considered complete:

- Appropriate state-mandated test score;
- Undergraduate grade point average;
- Three professional references;
- Transcript of course work at all colleges and universities; and

- Teaching certificate.

All new employees will be fingerprinted and a criminal background check will be initiated. Fingerprints shall be in the form acceptable to submission to the National Crime Information Center under standards adopted by the FBI, GBI, and U.S. Department of Justice. The results of the background check will be used in determining whether the initial temporary employment is extended to regular employment.

Placement on the salary schedule is the responsibility of the HR Department only. Credit for comparable experience and/or education will be granted according to prevailing approved schedule upon receipt of job verification forms or transcripts.

## **Equal Access**

20 USCS §§ 4071-74 (2005)

### § 4071. Denial of equal access prohibited

(a) Restriction of limited open forum on basis of religious, political, philosophical, or other speech context prohibited. It shall be unlawful for any public secondary school which receives Federal financial assistance and which has a limited open forum to deny equal access or a fair opportunity to, or discriminate against, any students who wish to conduct a meeting within that limited open forum on the basis of the religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings.

(b) "Limited open forum" defined. A public secondary school has a limited open forum whenever such school grants an offering to or opportunity for one or more non-curriculum related student groups to meet on school premises during non-instructional time.

(c) Fair opportunity criteria. Schools shall be deemed to offer a fair opportunity to students who wish to conduct a meeting within its limited open forum if such school uniformly provides that--

- (1) the meeting is voluntary and student-initiated;
- (2) there is no sponsorship of the meeting by the school, the government, or its agents or employees;
- (3) employees or agents of the school or government are present at religious meetings only in a non-participatory capacity;
- (4) the meeting does not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of educational activities within the school; and
- (5) nonschool persons may not direct, conduct, control, or regularly attend activities of student groups.

(d) Construction of title [20 USCS § § 4071 et seq.] with respect to certain rights. Nothing in this title [20 USCS § § 4071 et seq.] shall be construed to authorize the United States or any State or political subdivision thereof--

- (1) to influence the form or content of any prayer or other religious activity;

- (2) to require any person to participate in prayer or other religious activity;
  - (3) to expend public funds beyond the incidental cost of providing the space for student-initiated meetings;
  - (4) to compel any school agent or employee to attend a school meeting if the content of the speech at the meeting is contrary to the beliefs of the agent or employee;
  - (5) to sanction meetings that are otherwise unlawful;
  - (6) to limit the rights of groups of students which are not of a specified numerical size; or
  - (7) to abridge the constitutional rights of any person.
- (e) Federal financial assistance to schools unaffected. Notwithstanding the availability of any other remedy under the Constitution or the laws of the United States, nothing in this title [20 USCS § § 4071 et seq.] shall be construed to authorize the United States to deny or withhold Federal financial assistance to any school.
- (f) Authority of schools with respect to order, discipline, well-being, and attendance concerns. Nothing in this title [20 USCS § § 4071 et seq.] shall be construed to limit the authority of the school, its agents or employees, to maintain order and discipline on school premises, to protect the well-being of students and faculty, and to assure that attendance of students at meetings is voluntary.

#### § 4072. Definitions

As used in this title [20 USCS § § 4071 et seq.]—

- (1) The term "secondary school" means a public school which provides secondary education as determined by State law.
- (2) The term "sponsorship" includes the act of promoting, leading, or participating in a meeting. The assignment of a teacher, administrator, or other school employee to a meeting for custodial purposes does not constitute sponsorship of the meeting.
- (3) The term "meeting" includes those activities of student groups which are permitted under a school's limited open forum and are not directly related to the school curriculum.
- (4) The term "non-instructional time" means time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins or after actual classroom instruction ends.

#### § 4073. Severability

If any provision of this title [20 USCS § § 4071 et seq.] or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is judicially determined to be invalid, the provisions of the remainder of the title [20 USCS § § 4071 et seq.] and the application to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

#### § 4074. Construction

The provisions of this title [20 USCS § § 4071 et seq.] shall supersede all other provisions of Federal law that are inconsistent with the provisions of this title [20 USCS § § 4071 et seq.].

## **Facilities – Administrative Procedure**

### COMMUNITY USE OF FACILITIES- Board Policies KG

#### **GENERAL PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS**

1. School-sponsored activities will have first priority in the use of school facilities. Further, those groups or organizations which exist solely to support the school or a school program, such as parent/teacher organizations and booster clubs, shall have second priority with regard to the use of school facilities. Such groups shall be allowed to use school facilities without charge.
2. Scheduling of any event must be approved by the local building principal. The principal must keep on file a copy of approval and denials for use of facilities.
3. Students shall not at any time do custodial type duties connected to these events.
4. Use of the school facilities for non-school related activities cost will be determined.
  - Anyone scheduling the facilities should complete the reservation form a minimum of two (2) weeks in advance of the event. A trained person will be required to be in attendance and oversee any scheduled event.
  - No food or drinks are allowed in the buildings.

Custodial fees, when required, will be paid by the sponsoring organization.

A School Nutrition Program employee must be present any time the kitchen is used. The sponsor of the activity will pay the School Nutrition Program employee at one and one-half times his/her hourly rate if the activity is school related. If the activity is non –school related, the employee will be paid at double the hourly rate. The lunchroom employee will be paid for a minimum of two hours.

Facility use fees may apply. See the principal of each facility for a fee schedule.

Use of school equipment must be at the discretion of the school principal as well as fees for the same. Exception: Chairs may not be removed from the cafeteria for non-school related activities.

Alcoholic beverages will not be permitted in school facilities or on school property at any time.

Smoking is prohibited in school facilities.

Any sign posted advertising the presence of the activity or organization must be placed on school property just prior to the activity or meeting and be removed as soon as the activity or meeting concludes.

All applicants for use of school facilities shall hold the Board free and without harm from any loss or damage liability or expense that may arise during or be caused in any way by use of occupancy of district facilities. Before the principal gives final approval for the use of the school facility or athletic fields, the user of the facilities and/or athletic fields shall obtain liability insurance coverage of no less than \$1,000,000.00. The coverage shall be in effect at all times during the time the user of facilities or athletic fields occupy the same.

The user of facilities or athletic fields shall present to the principal a copy of either a Certificate of Insurance for a least \$1,000,000.00 from their general liability policy or a copy of a Special Event Policy from an insurance company of at least \$1,000,000.00 liability coverage.

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Board of Education.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232G)**

### **FERPA**

Parents have the right to:

1. Inspect and review the education records of a student who is your child, or in the case of a student who is eighteen years of age (18) or older your own education records.
2. Request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or their rights.
3. Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act authorized disclosure without consent:
4. File with the United States Department of Education a complaint under 20 C.F.R. 99.64 concerning the alleged failures by the Lumpkin County Board of Education to comply with the requirements of the Act or the regulations promulgated thereunder: and
5. Obtain a copy of the policy which the board of education has adopted regarding access to students records. Copies of this policy may be obtained by contacting the Central Office of the Board of Education at 56 Indian Drive, Dahlonega, Georgia 30533, phone number (706) 864-3611.

### **Field Trips**

All field trips should be carefully planned to ensure beneficial learning experiences and adequate supervision of students. Approval of the school principal and Local School Governance Team is required for any field trip.

Each student is required to secure parental permission on a form supplied by the school before he/she may participate in a field trip.

The Board designates the superintendent as the Board's representative for approval of field trips except the following:

- A. Those trips which are outside the boundaries of this state.
- B. Those trips which are of a duration of more than three days.

The superintendent shall develop administrative procedures to implement this policy.

## **Fundraisers**

The principal and Local School Governance Team must approve all fund raising activities. Such requests for fund raising must be presented to the principal at least one month in advance of the activity. Any funds collected must be turned in to the principal's bookkeeper within 24 hours of said collection. No money should be left in teachers' classrooms, filing cabinets, etc. Sponsors should count the collections and fill out a deposit ticket prior to turning in the collected money.

## **Gifted Services Information**

In accordance with the Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38, Lumpkin County Schools defines a gifted student as:

A student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.

Lumpkin County Schools gifted program is - EXCEL - Exceptional Class of Eager Learners.

### **GIFTED SERVICES ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION:**

Eligibility criteria has been established under Rule 160-4-2-.38. Based upon the data collected, which will result in either the student being eligible or not eligible under the rule criteria.

### **GIFTED REFERRAL, TRANSFER IN, OR APPLICATION PROCESS**

Referral Procedures -

1. nomination or request
2. review of nomination and available data
3. collection of data and assessments
4. examination by the Eligibility Team of assessment data
5. ineligible for or placement in the gifted program

“To be eligible for gifted education services, a student must either:

- (a) score at the 99th percentile (K-2) or the 96th percentile (3-12) on the composite score of a standardized test on mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria.

OR

- (b) qualify through a multiple-criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity and motivation.”



## **Guest Speakers**

Guest speakers are encouraged as a continuing effort to bring the community into the classroom. Approval for all guest speakers must be obtained from the principal prior to any resource person being invited to speak to the staff or students. The teacher should provide the resource speaker with a general outline of the content to be covered. Students should be prepared for the speaker's presentation prior to the scheduled visit. Teachers must be present at all times during the presentation. Administrators may be present if the presentation deals with controversial topics such as drugs, sex, or values education. Follow up discussions are expected as part of the lesson.

Resource speakers are not allowed to promote or sell commercial products to students, faculty, or staff.

Inviting students to attend from other classes is discouraged. The principal, prior to an invitation being extended, must approve speakers or other resource people invited for assemblies or other presentations such as clubs. Any printed literature distributed by speakers or presenters, must be approved by the principal in advance.

## **Interacting with Students**

As a school employee, you play an important role in our students' lives. You also have a lot of influence and power, but with that comes a critical responsibility and vulnerability. It is your responsibility to ensure the safety and well being of your students when they are in your care. Students will often trust you before they trust anyone else and they need to know you care about them. There is a fine line at times between appropriate and inappropriate interaction with students.

You should guard against discussing inappropriate topics, including aspects of your personal life, with students. Middle and high school students may want to know everything about you, but you are better off setting boundaries. Students often misinterpret what you say and it can interfere with your ability to teach them.

Inappropriate touching of students is one of the easiest ways to endanger your teaching certificate and career. Don't do it! Avoid situations that place you alone with a student without another adult present. This will protect you from potential accusations.

Employees should avoid calling or texting students on the student's personal cell phone whenever possible to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

Seek the advice of your principal if you are unsure about a situation with a student.

One on one contact with students should be avoided.

## **Internet Acceptable Use**

It is the belief of the Lumpkin County School District that the use of telecommunications, including the Internet, in instructional programs is an educational strategy which facilitates communication, innovation, resource sharing, and access to information. Use of the Internet must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational mission, goals, and objectives of the school system.

Student information is protected under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and no information protected under FERPA should be posted by any Lumpkin County employee on any networking site. Prior to posting pictures, etc. on our website, a signed Internet use permission form should be on file. See the section on Social Guidelines for Employees for more information.

Remember, system-issued laptops are the property of the Lumpkin County School System and should be used for school business only. School-system laptops and other electronic devices may be confiscated and/or monitored for appropriate use at any time.

Reference: Policy IFBG

Any violation may result in revocation of access privileges, school system disciplinary action/or appropriate legal action may be taken, up to and including employment termination.

## **Inventory**

A continuous electronic inventory should be kept on all furniture, textbooks, and equipment in all classrooms, labs, etc. throughout the school. Each teacher is responsible for the proper care and security of these items in their area. Textbook inventory will be the responsibility of each principal or designee.

## **Keys and ID Badges**

Classroom keys and ID badges containing exterior door access will be issued to teachers at the beginning of each school year and returned at the end of the school year. Teachers are responsible for the security of keys and badges issued to them. If a key or badge is lost, it should be reported to your principal immediately. Students should not be given use of school keys or employee badges.

## **Non-Discrimination**

The Lumpkin County Board of Education does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, disability, age, or national origin in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies.

The Lumpkin County Board of Education, recognizing that certain inherent rights, privileges, and immunities accompany the educational process, declares its abhorrence of discrimination in any and all forms including race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability. The Board, in fulfilling its responsibilities to the educational process, obligates itself to and guarantees that:

1. It shall make every reasonable effort to protect its students, teachers, and employees from exposure to conditions, which are embarrassing or disparaging;
2. It shall make every effort to ensure that no student, teacher, or employee be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of any course, program, or activity because of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age, or disability; and,
3. It shall prohibit its students, teachers, and employees from appearing in, accepting invitations to, or participating in contests between an institution which practices discrimination.

## **Public Records**

Parents and the community maintain the right to view and inspect many of the documents that are produced by educators. Documents that must be made available upon request by a community member, agency, or the media are considered public records. While there are certain restrictions on what the general public has access to, parents have the right to inspect any of their child's educational records. If such a request is made, your principal or the Central Office will make the records available as specified in the law. Employees who receive requests for records are to notify their principal and are not to release information without the principal's guidance.

That being said, it is important for employees to be aware that others may potentially view anything that is written. Employees have the responsibility to ensure that anything they write is objective and is not inflammatory or based on rumor.

Personal business should not be conducted at school or through the system's email as such emails may be subject to disclosure. At the very least such email may be interpreted as misuse of time and public equipment.

## **Reporting of Fraudulent or Criminal Acts**

No employee acting in good faith shall be subject to retaliation or any other manner of discrimination against the terms and conditions of employment for reporting acts to include sexual harassment, waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption committed by any Lumpkin County Employee. Should the employee be a party to an unlawful act under the direction of his employer, or have firsthand knowledge of the commitment of an unlawful act, the employee is responsible for reporting the incident to the Human Resource department prior to any investigation in order to qualify for protection under the non-retaliation guidelines.

## **Resignations**

All resignations should be made in writing to the employee's immediate supervisor. A two-week written notice is requested for classified personnel. Certificated personnel are employed annually and expected to complete contractual obligations. A copy of the resignation must be sent to the Human Resource office.

## **Retirement**

All professional staff members participate in the Georgia Teachers' Retirement System. TRS sets the amount of 19.98% for system contribution of TRS funds for FY24. Six (6) Percent of the total annual salary is deducted in monthly increments and deposited with the retirement system. The school district enrolls the employee in the retirement system at the time of employment. Questions concerning the retirement system should be directed to the Human Resources Department. Other support personnel participate in Public School Employees Retirement System. \$4.00 or \$10.00 (depending on hire date) per month will be deducted from payroll for nine (9) months beginning in September and ending in May. Additional retirement benefits include voluntary participation in 403b, 457 or 403b match (for non-TRS employees).

## **School Day**

Certified staff is expected to work an 8-hour minimum day. The duty schedule for each individual school will be posted by the principal. The official starting time for the school day is the time at which teachers should be signed in and ready to assume their designated duty stations.

Non-certified staff & paraprofessionals are limited to a 40 hour work week, unless prior approval is obtained from the principal or program director.

## **School Meals**

Lumpkin County Schools offer free, reduced-price, and full-pay meals for students through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. The government reimburses the School Nutrition Program for a portion of the cost of every student meal. Every student has a meal account automatically set up in our School Nutrition Program system.

School meals and Cafe food/beverage items are also available for purchase by all employees, other adults and non-student children at the established non-student (adult) meal price.

Meals and all food/beverage items should be paid for at the time of purchase. LCSS employees can also set up a meal account to deposit funds in advance. To create an adult meal account, please call Mary Grizzle with Central Office SNP at 706-864-3611. In addition, online pre-payments can be made via your Infinite Campus (IC) portal.

LCSS employees, adults and non-student children are not allowed to charge (or owe funds) for Cafe food/beverages or meals.

All Lumpkin County Schools have a student "no charge" policy. It is the intent of Lumpkin County Schools that no student should go all day without meals however, so an alternate breakfast and/or lunch will be provided at no charge to students.

Per federal guidelines the School Nutrition Program cannot allow uncollected charges. Cafe managers and assistants remind students if meal funds are getting low, send home notices, and call parents if there is a concern about meals or a negative meal account balance.

Principals are responsible for enforcing the no charge policy in their school as set forth in Board Policy EEC and for collection and payment of any unpaid charges.

School Nutrition Program employees are eligible for earned meals (however not extra sale food/beverage items) as are custodians that work to assist the SNP by removing kitchen and dining trash, cleaning dining area tables, etc. Lastly, School Resource Officers are eligible for earned meals.

## **School Year**

The school year is determined according to the requirements and guidelines of the State Board of Education. All teachers are to work as specified by the school calendar. In order for teachers to gain one year's work experience, they must be certified and work for 120 days on contract during the school year.

## **Section 504 Plans for Students**

### **IMPARTIAL HEARING PROCESS**

Any student or parent or guardian ("grievant") may request an impartial hearing due to the school system's actions or inactions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement under Section 504. Requests for an impartial hearing must be in writing to the school system's Section 504 Coordinator; however, a grievant's failure to request a hearing in writing does not alleviate the school system's obligation to provide an impartial hearing if the grievant orally requests an impartial hearing through the school system's Section 504 Coordinator. The school system's Section 504 Coordinator will assist the grievant in completing the written Request for Hearing. The Section 504 Coordinator may be contacted through the school system's central office. Copies of the 504 Procedural Safeguards and Notice of Rights of Students and Parents Under Section 504 may be found at the system website or may be picked up at the central office or at any of the school offices.

## **Self-Reporting**

Any employee of the Lumpkin County Board of Education who is arrested, charged, indicted, bound over by or to a grand jury, convicted or enters a plea or who is nolle prosecuted for any crime in the State of Georgia or elsewhere, whether the crime or criminal offense is a felony or misdemeanor, shall report each and all of these events, occasions, or developments to his/her immediate supervisor within 24 hours after the arrest or legal action or immediately upon the employee's return to work, whichever comes first. In making this report, the employee shall:

1. Provide a verbal report of the circumstances surrounding the arrest;
2. Provide a copy of the arrest citation, motor vehicle accident report or any other narrative explanation of the arrest generated by the arresting officials/jurisdiction;

3. Disclose all subsequent facts relating to the charges, court dates and the disposition of the matter within 24 hours after that information becomes available to the employee;
4. Fully cooperate with any school system investigation of the matter.

Failure to adhere to these directions may result in a determination that the employee has committed an act of insubordination and will be subject to disciplinary action. Minor traffic violations (such as speeding and parking tickets) are exempt from this reporting requirement. Driving Under the Influence (DUI) is not exempt from the requirement and must be reported.

## **Social Media Guidelines for Employees**

Lumpkin County School System recognizes that many of our staff, students, parents and community members are active social media users. As a school district, we are also incorporating social media as part of our communications strategy.

The purpose of these guidelines is to help you participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects your reputation and the reputation of Lumpkin County School System, and that respects the relationship among employees, students, parents and community members.

For the purposes of this document, social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking and media sharing sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Flickr, Tumblr, and YouTube. It also includes blogs, comments on websites, discussion forums, responses to media stories and any other activity involving connecting or communicating with others.

These guidelines complement, but do not replace, any existing policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet that are in place at Lumpkin County School System.

### **Your Personal Responsibility:**

We encourage responsible participation in social networking sites, subject to existing policies, including, but not limited to, those concerning non-discrimination, anti-harassment, anti-bullying, and copyright/fair use. All employees are expected to serve as positive ambassadors for our schools and to remember they are role models to students in this community. We ask that you carefully consider the public forum you are participating in and act in a way that properly represents both your professional reputation and Lumpkin County School System.

Express your ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Seek to build trust and responsibility in your relationships. Avoid insulting others, including students, staff, parents, our extended school community, or other school districts. Do not use racial slurs, innuendos, obscenity or

other inappropriate content. Avoid posting, sharing, commenting, or otherwise engaging in rumors or unsupported information.

Represent the District and the students and parents you serve in the best light. Your posts and comments should build and support the school community. You are responsible for what you post and communications that would be deemed inappropriate or actionable in they occurred inside or outside the classroom do not become acceptable merely because they are made online. Always bear in mind that once posted, you cannot take it back.

**Specific Guidelines to Consider:**

Use common sense when posting online. While these guidelines are in no way intended to limit or infringe upon your rights to free speech, it remains good practice to never post anything that would embarrass you or Lumpkin County School System, or would call your professional reputation into question.

You are personally responsible for the content you publish online. “Content” includes personal comments, links, photographs, audio or video, and content created by other users that you choose to share or re-post.

Any content you publish will be public for a long time. Not only can your content show up in Google and other search engines, but the FTC allows private corporations to store publicly accessible Facebook posts for a period of some seven years to be used in employee background checks made by current or potential employers. Moreover, even posts that are “private” may be subject to discovery in legal actions.

Once something is posted, you cannot take it back. In most instances, deleting content will not make it disappear. Deleted content can still show up in online searches. Or, with the click of a button, other users can take a screen shot, re-post, or share your content with others. Even if you share your content with a very limited number of people, nothing prohibits your contacts from sharing the information you post.

Ask yourself if you would want your post in the media. Would you feel comfortable if your content was read by colleagues, your students, parents, or the School Board? If the answer is “no”, then the content is best not shared.

Special care should be taken when posting personal photographs. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality and professional reputation. All photographs should be posted with the assumption that they could end up in the public realm.

Content should not include provocative photographs, sexually explicit messages, content showing or promoting the excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol or use of drugs, or any activity students are legally prohibited from doing. Remember, even with privacy settings in place, your content could be seen by students or parents or find its way into the public realm.

The lines between personal and professional are blurred in the online world. When you are online, you may be connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. Sometimes those connections may be direct and obvious. Other times the connections may be indirect or via mutual connections. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at Lumpkin County School System.

Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration you apply offline.

Protect your privacy. You are responsible for understanding and controlling privacy settings on each social network you use. Always assume default settings will make your profile and any content you share publicly accessible. You should also understand that even with maximum privacy settings in place, content can still find its way in to the public domain.

Use your personal email addresses on personal social sites and while engaging in off-duty social media activities or sites that are not connected with or approved by the district. Never use your district email address on personal sites.

At no time should you claim to be speaking or issuing opinions on behalf of Lumpkin County School System, except with prior consent from the appropriate supervisor. In instances where there could be confusion, you must add a disclaimer stating that views and content are exclusively your own and not representative of Lumpkin County School System.

Employees should not make any derogatory statements about colleagues or students or other comments that would reflect badly on your professional reputation or the reputation of Lumpkin County School System. You are ultimately responsible for your comments and Lumpkin County School System recommends that you thoughtfully consider your rights and responsibilities prior to posting.

Do not post photos or videos that contain identifying information concerning any students on personal sites. Do not post identifying information of co-workers without their permission. For district-sanctioned sites, such as school Facebook pages, do not post items of students who have opted out, as per district media policy, but you may post items of public events of students and staff who have not opted out, as long as it's not derogatory in nature.

Respect the privacy and rights of both colleagues and students. Confidential student or personnel information should not be posted online. Be sure not to violate any provision of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.



Show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including but not limited to images found on Google and the like. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it, thus reducing the risk of being accused of plagiarism.

Do not use any school logo or image without permission on personal sites. You may use them on district-sanctioned sites.

Do not create any social media account, blog or website intended to represent Lumpkin County School System without express prior consent from the superintendent or designee. It is important for the district to protect its brand, ensure certain brand standards and content guidelines are maintained, and ensure any new accounts fit overall communications and education standards established by the district.

Any content posted by an employee will be subject to all District policies, rules, regulations, and guidelines. The District is free to view and monitor an employee's website or web log at any time without consent or previous approval. Where applicable, employees may be asked to disclose to the District the existence of and to provide the District with access to an employee's website, web log or other personal social media network as part of an employment selection, review, promotion, or disciplinary process.

### **Employee-Student Relations**

The district recognizes the role that communication and collaboration between employees and students play in the educational process and experience. The district further recognizes that the advancement of electronic communication and social media technologies creates greater opportunity for interactions between employees and students, and provides these additional guidelines for your own and students' protection.

Employees are never under any obligation to accept friend or follower requests from any student, or to use personal social media accounts to engage with students or participate in district projects. In addition, you should bear in mind that unless your account has privacy settings correctly configured, everything you post may be publicly accessible to your students whether you are connected to them or not.

Employees must exercise great care in connecting with students on any social media channels. Do not send permission-based friend or follower requests to students, such as a Facebook friend request. Use discretion and carefully consider the guidelines provided by the district before accepting any permission-based friend or follower requests received from students. It is Lumpkin County School System's recommendation that if an employee decides to accept friend or follower requests received from students that they should accept all such requests, and not selectively limit their interactions to what could be perceived as a few preferred individuals.

The district recognizes there may be certain limited exceptions to these guidelines, such as a student being a family member or relative, or in those instances where an employee's interaction with a student is as a result of certain extra-curricular activities, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, religious organizations or other similar relationships.

Any employee-student communications or relationship via social media should be of an appropriate professional nature, have content that is appropriate for both the communications medium and the audience addressed, and must not violate any provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Employees who are connected to or communicate with students via social media must understand they may be granting those students access to all content in their personal social media profiles and should consider the guidelines the district has provided to ensure students are protected from exposure to inappropriate content or content that might compromise the employee's professional reputation.

Employees are also responsible for immediately reporting to the district any inappropriate communication received from a student. This is as much for the employee's protection as the student's. Any content or communication generated either by you, or by a student, which would be inappropriate in the classroom should also be considered inappropriate when shared via social media.

### **Expressing Your Ideas and Thoughts**

Always express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Make sure your communications are in good taste. Do not denigrate or insult others. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. Remember that our communities reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view.

Be sensitive about linking to content. Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its content. Just by identifying yourself as a district employee, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about the district by community members, parents, students, and the general public; and you are creating perceptions about yourself with your colleagues and managers.

Are you adding value? Communication associated with our District should help fellow educators, parents, students, and co-workers. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community and engagement. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, do their jobs,

solve problems, or understand education better--then it's adding value. Keep the conversation informative and educational for all. Be sure that all content is consistent with your work and with the district's beliefs and professional standards.

Keep your cool. One of the aims of social media is to create dialogue, and people will not always agree on an issue. When confronted with a difference of opinion, stay cool. Express your points in a clear, logical way. Be accurate. Don't pick fights or look for an argument. Sometimes, it's best to ignore a comment and not give it credibility by acknowledging it with a response.

If you make an error, correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper, deal with it quickly, and/or ask for additional assistance.

Be honest and transparent. Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty--or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out.

### **Help Students Leverage Social Media**

Students should learn how to use social media to empower, not just connect. With more and more employers and educational institutions looking at prospective candidates online, it is important that we help educate and instruct on best practices for our students using the various social media channels. Connecting with a purpose requires thought and discipline--as connecting with the wrong people could lead to improper associations.

Teachers and administrators should be teaching students how to leverage their connections, associations and level of engagement as a way to strengthen their individual brands online. This increases their chances of being seen in a positive light for potential employers, colleges or universities--as more and more character becomes a consideration for enrollment or hiring in today's workforce. Having our students and teachers ready and adaptable to 21st Century communications is a must.

### **Solicitation of Funds**

Solicitation of funds by or from students without the consent of the superintendent is prohibited except in the cases outlined in the Policy Manual. No funds are to be solicited from employees or students by outside agencies (Heart Funds, etc.) without permission from the superintendent.

## **Student Sexual Harassment**

All school employees have the responsibility of assuring that the school environment is safe and secure for all students. Based on this belief, student reports of sexual harassment by other students or adults should be taken seriously and dealt with in a firm and sensitive manner. Such incidents cannot be tolerated since they clearly lead to the existence of a hostile environment. When employees have information or knowledge of such situations, prompt remedial and corrective action must take place to eliminate the potential for future liability. Student reports of sexual harassment should be referred promptly to an administrator or the appropriate coordinator designated in policy JAA. Based on the circumstances, administrators will determine the course of action and consequences, including the advisability of making reports to appropriate legal authorities. It is also very likely that school counselors will need to become involved in providing services for the victim in such cases. It is essential that clear, accurate, and thorough documentation be maintained by all employees dealing with accusations and incidents of sexual harassment. Employees who accompany students on overnight field trips or other activities are to abide by system and school policies and rules of the Georgia Code of Ethics for educators and the Lumpkin County School System's code of conduct for employees at all times. Employees are expected to model appropriate professional behavior and to be available to assist and/or supervise students as needed.

Reference: Policy JAA & Policy JCAC

## **Student Teachers**

Lumpkin County Schools authorizes contractual arrangements to be made for the acceptance for training of student teachers and interns from accredited colleges and universities to the extent that the training of these student teachers and interns will both enhance educational opportunities of the classroom students as well as provide a training opportunity for the student teacher and intern.

### **Placement of Student Teachers**

Placement requests shall be made directly to the Director of Human Resources. They must be received in writing on official letterhead from the appropriate college representative along with a copy of a Criminal Background Check before an individual is placed in a school or other site in the district.

The Director of Human Resources will notify the principal when a student teacher/intern has been approved, and the principal will assign the student to the appropriate teacher.

Supervising teachers will be assigned only one (1) student teacher per year.

Requests from college coordinators of student teachers will be honored as far as is possible. The school system does, however, reserve the right to assign student teachers only to those teachers on its approved list. Whenever possible, teachers possessing the Teacher Support Specialist (TSS or STS) endorsement will be given priority to receive a student teacher.

Requests for observers and tutors shall be made through the Director of Human Resources. When it is agreed that the students may observe or work in the schools, the college coordinator shall submit in writing the names of the students, the date and time as well as the types of activities they will be engaged in to the Director of Human Resources.

A student teacher shall never be asked to do non-professional tasks or to “take-over” the class except as he/she reaches that stage of his/her student teacher experience when he/she is expected to work with pupils alone.

Teachers who meet all required criteria are encouraged to take the full sequence of “Teacher Support Specialist” or “Coaching” courses to prepare themselves to coach and supervise student teachers.

If a student is unable to carry through with his/her commitment, the coordinator shall notify the teacher in writing. Copies of the letter shall be sent to the principal and the Director of Human Resources.

If a teacher is unable to meet his/her commitment, he/she shall notify his/her principal and the Director of Human Resources. The principal will notify the college coordinator in writing.

The school system has the authority to terminate the placement of any student teacher or intern whose professional or ethical behavior has a negative effect on the instructional program or the welfare of the students.

## **Substitute Teachers**

When a teacher must be away from work for any reason, he/she should report that absence in Absence Management (formerly known as Aesop) as soon as possible. It is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that a substitute has been secured for the absence. If the absence can be scheduled in advance, Absence Management is more likely to be able to secure a substitute for the planned absence. If an absence cannot be reported before the actual day of the absence, please notify your principal (or designee) to ensure that a substitute teacher has been secured for the day. The teacher must leave detailed plans of instruction for the substitute teacher.

## **Suspension**

The superintendent has the authority to suspend an employee charged with a felony or misconduct for a period of time to permit an investigation of the charges. This suspension may be with or without pay and other duties.

## **Teacher of the Year**

Schools should select their Teacher of the Year during May for the following school year. Classroom teachers in kindergarten through grade 12 may be nominated. Any certified teacher, including special education, physical education, art, and music teachers, as well as, media specialists, may be nominated. Since counselors are not eligible at the state or national level, they will not be eligible at the school or system level. Selected teachers should spend the majority of their time teaching students in a classroom setting. Supervisory and administrative responsibilities should be of secondary consideration.

School winners will compete for the system level Teacher of the Year through an evaluation process. This usually occurs in August or September, and the system winner is announced at the September or October Board meeting.

## **Tobacco Products**

To promote a safe, healthy environment for students and employees of the Lumpkin County School System, the use, possession or distribution of tobacco products of any kind is prohibited on all Board property and at all system and/or school sponsored activities at other locations.

## **Transfers to other Locations**

Employees may request a transfer to another school by sending a letter of interest and resume to the HR Department. A transfer will not be granted without the approval of both principals or supervisors and the superintendent. The HR Department will provide all schools and divisions with a notice of available positions. The school district reserves the prerogative of transferring any employees within the district.

## **Transfer of Experience**

A non-certified employee may receive payroll experience for prior related service if such service was earned through a teacher retirement system, under Public School Employees Retirement System or comparable employment. This experience must be verified by the prior employer through the use of the Verification of Previous Experience form. Sick leave days from TRS will be accepted on transfer.

## **Travel Guidelines**

### **MEAL REIMBURSEMENT**

Meals are reimbursed on a per diem basis. If meals are provided in the registration fee, they cannot be reimbursed on your travel request.

**In-State per diem rates:**

<b><u>Eligible Meals</u></b>	<b><u>Per Diem Amount</u></b>
Breakfast	\$13.00
Lunch	\$14.00
Dinner	\$23.00

**The \$50 per diem rate applies to all cities in Georgia.**

Employees traveling overnight are eligible for (75%) of the total per diem rate on the first and last day of travel. For example, if the per diem rate allows a \$50 total reimbursement, \$37.50 would be allowable on a travel departure or return day ( $\$50 \times .75 = \$37.50$ ). When meals are provided to an employee in conjunction with travel events on a travel departure or return day, the full meals per diem reimbursement rate is reduced by the amount of the provided meals before the 75% proration.

Employees on a day trip can only be reimbursed lunch if they are away for 13 hours or more.

**LODGING**

State guidelines allow us to reimburse lodging only if the employee has traveled 50+ miles to the destination.

Please remember to take a sales tax exemption form with you and present to clerk upon arrival. Georgia Statute 48-13-51 provides that no county or municipal excise tax shall be levied on the fees or charges for any meeting rooms or for any rooms, lodging, or accommodations furnished to government officials or employees when traveling on official business. You will not be reimbursed occupancy/room tax because you fail to provide an exemption form upon arrival. Some hotels offer government employee rates. Please do your part in booking a hotel to get the best rate possible.

Lodging rentals obtained through vacation rental marketplaces such as Airbnb, HomeAway and Vrbo are not considered commercial lodging facilities and should not be used while in travel status.

**MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT**

State guidelines require that you must subtract normal commuting miles when traveling. For example, you are traveling to Pioneer RESA and live near Hwy 400 and Hwy 60. Your normal commute is 8 miles to LCES everyday. You must subtract those normal commuting miles to and from Pioneer RESA, regardless of where you live. If your starting point is your school location, there are no commuting miles that need to be subtracted. Check with your school bookkeeper for current mileage rate.

There are numerous examples at <http://sao.georgia.gov>, under Statewide Travel Regulations.

## **REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT**

In order to be reimbursed, be sure departure times, arrival times, mileage and destination are completely filled out. This will enable the Finance Office to issue your reimbursement as quickly as possible. Incomplete forms will be returned to you and payment will be delayed. After you have completed your expense statement, please give the request to your school bookkeeper. They will attach the purchase order documentation and obtain the principal's signature. The request will then be forwarded to the central office. Once the information is verified by the Finance Office and signed by the superintendent, payment will be issued to you.

\*\*\*\*\*Remember to turn in your reimbursement request within 30 days from the date you return. Expense statements OVER 30 days will not be reimbursed. \*\*\*\*\*

Please refer to this notice and the SAO Statewide Travel Regulations when traveling on behalf of the Lumpkin County School System. If you have any questions when completing a reimbursement form, check with the bookkeeper at your school or call the Director of Finance at 706-864-3611. Blank expense forms can be found on our website at [www.lumpkinschools.com](http://www.lumpkinschools.com) under the Finance Department section.

## **Volunteer Guidelines**

Volunteers are an integral part of the school system, and we welcome them into the Tribe. The term volunteer can refer to anyone spending time working with students and includes, but is not limited to, mentors, classroom volunteers, tutors, community coaches, and college interns. Before a volunteer is allowed to work with students, the following procedures should be followed:

1. All volunteers must complete the following Compliance Director modules:
  - a. Mandated Reporting
  - b. Suicide Awareness and Prevention
2. A background check should be completed and the results reviewed by the Human Resources department. Not every volunteer will require a GCIC/FBI criminal background check. The level of background check will depend on the level of access a volunteer has in working with students. Below are general guidelines to follow:
  - a. **Mentors**--These individuals are trained and managed through Family Connection and require a full GICI/FBI Criminal Background check. Once approved, they have access to work one-on-one with students.
  - b. **Classroom Volunteers/Tutors**--These individuals are trained by designated individuals at the school level. They only serve in schools and classrooms under direct supervision and are not allowed to be alone with students. They do not require a background check.



- c. **Booster Club/PTA Volunteers**--These individuals have very limited interaction with students individually and do not require a background check.
- d. **Overnight field trip Volunteers/Chaperones**--If an individual is going to supervise or chaperone an overnight field trip, a GCIC Criminal Background check is required. This can be completed at the Lumpkin County Sheriff's Department for a \$10.00 fee. The results are reviewed by the principal of the school before the individual is given permission to chaperone the trip.
- e. **Community Coaches**--These individuals must complete GHSA training and be approved through Human Resources before working with students. They require a GCIC/FBI Criminal Background check.
- f. **College Interns**--These individuals should always be under the direct supervision of a certified teacher. They must complete a background check through the university and obtain a pre-service certificate through GaPSC before working in schools. The Human Resources department will work with the university to ensure that background checks have been completed.

## **Benefits**

### **Insurance**

The Board of Education makes available group insurance for all eligible employees. Insurance information is available from the Central Office. Specific inquiries should be referred to the Human Resources Department.

### **Social Security**

Employees of the Lumpkin County School System are covered by Social Security, which will be deducted in the monthly payroll.

### **Workers Compensation**

The Lumpkin County School System provides worker's compensation for all employees which provides you with certain rights and responsibilities should you be injured on the job. Any employee who is injured while at work should report immediately to his or her supervisor and also to the Central Office. Medical attention will then be furnished in accordance with provisions of the Worker's Compensation Law. If professional medical care or treatment is required, you must select one of the physicians or medical facilities listed on the Worker's Compensation posting at your facility. Treatment by a physician who is not from the posted panel of physicians will result in you being responsible for your own bills.

Procedures for reporting an accident or injury occurring on the job:

1. An employee injured on the job must immediately report the injury to the principal and supervisor.
2. The principal/supervisor will record all information related to the injury or accident. The employee will be provided additional information if medical attention is necessary.
3. The employee must use a doctor from a posted panel of physicians selected by the Lumpkin County Board of Education. We will only pay for emergency treatment when it is a life-threatening situation. Follow-up visits should be scheduled before/after work hours whenever possible.
4. The principal/supervisor must immediately complete and submit the Supervisor's First Report of Injury to Lumpkin County School System's Central Office.
5. Questions regarding Workers Compensation may be addressed to:
  - a. Your principal and/or supervisor
  - b. Administrative Assistant for Operations, 706-864-3611, ext. 10113

## **Leave**

### **Leaves & Absences**

For the purposes of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, sisters, brothers, grandparents, grandchildren, in-law equivalents or other relatives living in the household.

Prompt and regular attendance at work is a requirement of all personnel. Leave requests should be made in advance whenever possible. Leave requests should be submitted through Absence Management (formerly known as Aesop) online at [www.aesoponline.com](http://www.aesoponline.com). If you need help with your username or password for Aesop, contact Sara Beth Rose at the Central Office.

### **Reference: Policy GARH Employee Leaves and Absences**

This policy shall apply to all employees of the Lumpkin County Board of Education. All employees are required to follow the work calendar established by the Board of Education and may take leave from work only in accordance with this policy or other leave policies enacted by the Board of Education. Unless otherwise provided by the Board of Education, principals and other supervisors are not authorized to rearrange the work calendars of employees.

### **ACCRUAL OF SICK LEAVE AND ABSENCE FOR MEDICAL AND RELATED REASONS**

In accordance with Georgia law, employees shall be entitled to annual sick leave with pay to be accrued at the rate of one and one quarter days for each completed contract month. All unused

sick leave shall be accumulated from one fiscal year to the next up to a maximum of sixty (60) days. If an employee needs to utilize unearned sick leave, advance leave may be granted. The advance leave shall not exceed the number of days the employee would accumulate through the end of the fiscal year. If an employee fails for any reason to complete a fiscal year, sick leave used, but not yet earned, shall be deducted from the employee's future checks. The leave provided for under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness in the employee's immediate family.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the superintendent or his/her designee shall have the right to require a physician's certificate that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. In the event that sick leave is used for a member of the immediate family, the superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member.

### **Observance of Religious Holidays**

Employees may use personal leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. If an employee desires to take leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays in excess of the days allowed for personal leave, the employee may take unpaid leave (with supervisor's prior approval) for such purposes provided that such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

### **Personal Leave**

Employees may take up to a maximum of three (3) days of personal leave if the employee has accrued the necessary leave and prior approval of the absence has been given by the employee's immediate supervisor and if the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for effective school operation. Personal leave must be requested and approved by the principal one (1) week prior to leave. Unless otherwise approved by the superintendent, personal leave shall not be granted during pre-planning, post-planning, in-service days or on the day before or day after holidays. In addition, personal leave shall not be granted during the first week of the student school year or during the last week of the student school year, unless the principal and designated central office employee, in his or her discretion, determines that such leave should be granted due to an emergency or extenuating circumstances beyond the employee's control.

Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought but may be required to state whether the absence is for "personal" reasons. Personal Leave days are deducted from the employee's earned sick leave.

### **Personal Leave Without Pay**

Personal leave without pay may be granted in unusual circumstances for reasons approved by the principal and superintendent.

## **Bereavement Leave**

In the event of a death in the immediate family of an employee, up to three (3) days cumulative bereavement leave shall be granted in any given year. Any additional leave shall be charged against the employee's sick leave.

## **Disability Leave**

Except in emergency cases, written notice accompanied by a physician's statement should be given to the Human Resource office at least 60 days before the anticipated date of disability. Maternity is classified as a disability.

If an employee wishes to discontinue work before the anticipated date of disability, the employee must notify the Human Resource office in writing 30 days before the leave is to begin.

An employee who wishes to continue working up to the time of physician-certified disability should notify the Human Resource Office at least 30 days before the anticipated date of disability.

If an employee has been absent 10 consecutive working days and has not notified the Human Resource office by completing a Leave Request Form along with a written attending physician's statement certifying the disability and anticipated return to work date, their position is subject to being declared vacant and may result in employment termination.

## **Disability- Returning From Leave**

When returning from disability leave, the employee must submit to the supervisor a release from the physician stating that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of the job.

A contracted employee who is returning to work after leave must notify Human Resources of their intention to return for the following school year. The employee will be placed in a job comparable to the one held before the leave. Employees who have been on an extended leave without pay must participate in the annual benefits open enrollment process at the time of open enrollment.

## **Family and Medical Leave Act (Board Policy GBRIG)**

It is the purpose of this policy to set out in summary form the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("Act") as adopted by the U.S. Congress on February 5, 1993 and which became effective August 5, 1993. This Board does not intend by this policy to create any additional rights to leave not provided by the Act; provided, however, the Board does wish to extend the rights of the Family and Medical Leave Act to certain employees who have worked at least twelve (12) months for the Board of Education. The Board does not intend to elect certain options as the Act authorizes. Any portion of this policy inconsistent or contrary to the Act is

unintentional and shall not be given effect. As to the interpretation of this policy, the Board's employees should look to the Act itself and its regulations.

### **A. ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES**

Employees of the Lumpkin County Board of Education ("Board") who have been employed by the Board for at least twelve (12) months immediately prior to requesting leave and who either (a) have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous twelve (12) months or (b) are classified as full-time employees in their positions are eligible to take twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA").

An employee may request leave for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Birth of a son or daughter and to care for the newborn child;
2. Adoption or foster placement of a son or daughter with the employee;
3. Care of an employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent, if that person has a serious health condition;
4. Serious health condition of employee that prevents the employee from performing his/her job functions.

In the event of the birth, adoption or foster placement of a son or daughter, all leave must be completed within 12 months after the birth, adoption or foster placement.

### **B. NOTIFICATION OF LEAVE**

If the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, an employee requesting leave must provide at least 30 days' advance written notice to the Human Resources office. If such advance notice is not possible, the employee must give notice to the Human Resources office as soon as practicable, ordinarily within one or two working days of learning of the need for leave. When planning medical treatment, the employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment, subject to the approval of the health care provider, so that any corresponding leave shall not unduly disrupt the operations of the school district.

For additional information please contact your building principal or the HR department.

Employees not covered by FMLA will need to complete the Request for Long Term Leave Form.

## **Paid Parental Leave**

The Board of Education shall make paid parental leave equally available to all eligible employees of the Board of Education under the following terms:

1. An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for paid parental leave for qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:
  - a. The employee is classified as full-time by the District and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System of Georgia) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and

b. The employee has six continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether he or she is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee paid on an hourly basis must have worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.

2. A qualifying life event means:

- a. The birth of a child of an eligible employee;
- b. The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
- c. The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.

3. The maximum amount of paid parental leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12 month period is 120 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur during such period.

- a. The rolling 12 month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave.
- b. Parental leave may be taken as needed, and the smallest increment of parental leave that may be taken is eight hours.
- c. Any unused paid parental leave that remains 12 months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use.
- d. Unused paid parental leave shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education.

4. Paid parental leave under state law shall run concurrently with any leave provided under federal law.

5. Eligible employees requesting paid parental leave must submit the district's designated form to the Superintendent or designee at least ten school days in advance of the requested leave start date.

### **Jury Duty, Subpoena, And Other Court Orders**

Each person employed by the Lumpkin County School System shall be allowed leave with pay for the purposes of serving as a juror in any court or when subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of the individual's duties as a school system employee. Jury and/or witness leave shall not be deducted from an individual's accumulated personal or sick leave. No employee utilizing jury and witness leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute to serve during his or her absence for such leave. Employees who serve on juries or who are subpoenaed for reasons arising out of their employment with the school system may keep their jury/witness compensation.

### **Military Leave**

All employees of the Lumpkin County Board of Education are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen (18) days in any calendar year for the purpose of complying with ordered military leave duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the militia or reserve component of the United States or State of

Georgia. Employees also are entitled to leave not exceeding thirty (30) days in any one calendar year if ordered to duty as a result of the declaration of any emergency by the governor or the appropriate officials of the United States Armed Forces. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the superintendent annually and shall cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of the Board of Education.

## **Professional Leave**

In an effort to ensure all employees attending Professional Learning opportunities are approved appropriately, the following procedures should be followed (this includes documentation for all attendance expenses as well as any required substitutes).

*Note: Approval must be submitted no less than 10 days prior to the date of the event on Professional Leave Funds Approval Request and Registration forms.*

Employees should fill out a Professional Leave form and take this to the school bookkeeper to scan into Absence Management (formerly Aesop). All supporting documentation for the professional leave request should also be scanned into Absence Management as an attachment (conference flyer, registration form, etc). If approved, the school bookkeeper will then generate a Purchase Order for any registration fees, etc. Account codes must be included on all forms for the professional leave request and purchase orders to be approved.

# **Employee Work Calendars**

## **Work Day Calendars**

Prompt and regular attendance is expected of all employees. All employees should follow sign-in and sign-out procedures as set by your supervisor each day. Absences should be reported to your supervisor as far in advance as possible or in the case of an emergency as soon as possible. See the system website at [www.lumpkinschools.com](http://www.lumpkinschools.com) under the Human Resources and Employee Portal link for the current school year employee work calendar.

Employee work calendars may be amended throughout the school year when deemed necessary by the superintendent and Board of Education.

**Employees Working 190 Days (10 month employees)**

- 12.50 Days Sick Leave (includes 3 days for personal leave)

**Employees Working 210 Days (11 month employees)**

- 13.75 Days Sick Leave (includes 3 days for personal leave)
- 190 Work days the same as the regular school calendar plus 20 additional days as specified by the superintendent each year.

**Employees Working 235 Days (12 month employees)**

- 15.00 Days Sick Leave (includes 3 days for personal leave)
- Annual Vacation Leave (see below for number of days)
- 190 Work days the same as the regular school calendar plus 45 additional days as specified by the superintendent each year.

**Employees Working 260 Days (Custodians, Maintenance & Mechanics)**

- 15.00 Days Sick Leave (includes 3 days for personal leave)
- Annual Vacation Leave (see below for number of days)
- Holidays and vacations are considered paid time off for employees working on the 260 day calendar.

**Application for annual vacation leave should be made 10 days prior to leave except in cases of emergency.**

Vacation for 12-month Employees:

<i>Years of Continuous Service in Lumpkin County</i>	<i>Vacation Days Earned Each Year</i>
1-4	10 vacation days
5-7	12 vacation days
8-10	14 vacation days
11 and over	15 vacation days

Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, vacation leave will allow carry-over and pay-out based on the following guidelines:



### Carry-Over

- Unused vacation days may be carried over to the next school year
- A maximum of 30 days may be accumulated for an employee

### Pay-Out

- Employees may request pay-out of the accumulated vacation days upon retirement or resignation from the system as long as the employee remains in good standing with the school system
- The maximum number of days that an employee may be paid is 15
- The rate of pay will be based on the employee's daily rate at the time of resignation or retirement
- Pay-outs must be requested in writing through the Human Resources department
- If approved, payment will not be made until after the last day of work

## **Non-Certified Employees & Sick Leave Reimbursement**

This procedure applies only to non-certified employees who are not members of the Teacher's Retirement System of Georgia and who have at least 10 years of experience in the Lumpkin County School System. Examples include but are not limited to custodians, bus drivers, custodial staff, and food assistants.

When the above-mentioned employees retire or resign from the Lumpkin County School System, they may apply for cash reimbursement of up to 50% of their accumulated sick leave days. The total number of sick leave days for the employee may not exceed 72.5 days, and the reimbursement amount will be calculated at the employee's daily rate at the time of their resignation or retirement. This procedure does not apply to employees who are terminated for any reason.

To request a cash reimbursement for up to 50% of an employee's accumulated sick leave days, the non-certified employee should do the following:

1. Contact Human Resources as soon as the decision has been made to retire or resign and request a cash reimbursement form
2. Fill out the cash reimbursement request form and return to Human Resources at the Central Office

Employees have up to 30 days after the last day of employment with Lumpkin County Schools to request the reimbursement. No requests will be accepted after 30 days of the last day of employment. Employees are only eligible for this offer once from Lumpkin County Schools (cannot request a second time if re-employed with the school system). This procedure is effective August 3, 2016, and is only available to employees brought before board consideration on or after this date.

