



**Social Circle City Schools  
Substitute Teacher Handbook**

## INTRODUCTION

In order to provide continuous, quality instruction for our students, provisions must be made to assure the operation of an effective substitute teacher program. Qualifications for a substitute teacher in the Social Circle City Schools should include a strong desire to teach, the ability and desire to work with young people, and a willingness to cooperate with regular school personnel in the effort to ensure that students will receive uninterrupted instruction when the regular teacher has to be absent.

The task of the substitute teacher is a difficult one. Effective substitute teachers understand that their job is important for students under his/her care and that effective work also requires professional ingenuity, patience, resourcefulness, and high standards of ethics.

The Social Circle City Schools Board of Education is an equal opportunity employer. It does not discriminate in employment practices based on race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability, as required by the 1972 Education Amendment.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Substitute teachers are temporary employees who serve at the pleasure of the Social Circle City Schools Board of Education.

Interactions with students should always be professional, even if you know the student outside of school.

**There will be no work available during scheduled school holidays or summer break for substitute teachers.**

### Updating of Substitute List

A master substitute list is maintained in the Human Resources office of the Social Circle City Schools Board of Education. This list is updated annually. Active substitutes will be contacted to confirm their desire to remain on the substitute list. Substitutes who have not worked during the previous school year will have their names removed and will be required to complete the entire hiring process if interested in returning as a substitute. Substitutes who chronically request assignments to be canceled will be removed from the substitute list.

**As a general rule, if you are called/texted to substitute on a particular day, please respond with a yes/no so the administration can move on to the next substitute if needed.**

### Employment of Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers are employed on an on-call, day-to-day, as needed basis. Employee absences are unpredictable and fluctuate; therefore, it is impossible to predict how many days a substitute will work in any school week or year. Substitute employees are encouraged to make themselves available daily and be flexible to various grades and subjects. A valid phone number, updated as needed, should be on file. Updates should be made in the YOSS Platform.

**Substitutes are expected to give no less than 24 hours notice if you are unable to fill an assignment that you have picked up. You will need to contact Jamie Sutton and the administrator for the school that you are canceling for as soon as possible. Excessive cancellations will result in removal from the substitute pool.**

Building substitutes should be available everyday to the school they are assigned to. If building substitutes are unable to be in the building everyday, they will be removed as building substitute and placed back in the substitute pool.

**Evaluation of Substitute Teachers**

Substitute teachers are not formally evaluated in the Social Circle City Schools. Substitute teachers are required to abide by all district and state policies and procedures. Violations will lead to disciplinary action up to and including removal from the substitute list.

**Substitute Pay Procedures**

Payroll checks will be direct deposited on the last working day in each month for the number of days worked during the pay period based on the payroll calendar below:

<b>Social Circle City Schools</b>				
<b>FY24 Due Dates for Payroll</b>				
Pay Period Dates	# of School Days in PR	Due Date	Begin Processing	Payment Date
June 11, 2023 - July 15, 2023	0	July 19, 2023	July 20, 2023	July 31, 2023
July 16, 2023 - August 19, 2023	13	August 23, 2023	August 24, 2023	August 31, 2023
August 20, 2023 - September 16, 2023	18	September 20, 2023	September 21, 2023	September 29, 2023
September 17, 2023 - October 21, 2023	20	October 25, 2023	October 26, 2023	October 31, 2023
October 22, 2023 - November 11, 2023	15	November 15, 2023	November 16, 2023	November 30, 2023
November 12, 2023 - December 9, 2023	15	December 13, 2023	December 14, 2023	December 29, 2023
December 10, 2023 - January 20, 2024	16	January 24, 2024	January 25, 2024	January 31, 2024
January 21, 2024 - February 17, 2024	20	February 21, 2024	February 22, 2024	February 29, 2024
February 18, 2024 - March 16, 2024	18	March 20, 2024	March 21, 2024	March 29, 2024
March 17, 2024 - April 13, 2024	15	April 17, 2024	April 18, 2024	April 30, 2024
April 14, 2024 - May 11, 2024	20	May 15, 2024	May 16, 2024	May 31, 2024
May 12, 2024 - June 8, 2024	10	June 12, 2024	June 13, 2024	June 28, 2024

**Social Security Benefits**

Social security taxes will be withheld from each payroll check at the rate of 7.65%.

**Substitute Pay**

\$90/day \$11.25 per hour	High School Diploma/GED or higher; No teaching Certificate; Transcript Required
\$110/day \$13.75 per hour	Valid or expired teaching certificate required; Transcript Required; Documented Experience

\$150/day	Long term sub (10 or more consecutive days for the same teacher)
\$18.75 per hour	Valid or expired teaching certificate required

There is no increase in pay for long-term substituting for a paraprofessional. The workday varies from school to school.

Entering Timesheets can be done on your phone on the YOSS platform or if a computer is available at the schools.

You will submit your timesheets in YOSS to the designated person at each school.

- Social Circle Primary:** Abby Shane
- Social Circle Elementary:** Michael Wright
- Social Circle Middle:** Brittany Fears
- Social Circle High:** Lisa Dyer

If you have any questions about your pay or how to enter timesheets, please contact Jamie Sutton.

**Workers' Compensation**

A substitute teacher who has an accident (even if uninjured) or is injured on the job must report the accident immediately to the principal and/or admin assistant of the school. The substitute will then be asked to complete/assist in completing an Accident/Injury Report Form. This report must be made for any injury (however slight) that occurs on the job.

A Panel of Physicians that may be seen regarding this injury is posted at each school. If it is determined by the employee and his/her immediate supervisor that the employee needs professional medical care or treatment, **he/she MUST SELECT ONE OF THE PHYSICIANS OR MEDICAL FACILITIES listed on the approved panel of physicians.** If one of the physicians or the hospital listed refers an employee to another physician, workers' compensation will cover the charges.

Failure to seek treatment for job-related injuries from the Panel of Physicians may jeopardize payment of medical bills under Workers' Compensation Law, and the employee may be personally liable for payment of unauthorized medical treatment.

If you have questions about the Worker's Compensation process, please contact Jamie Sutton at [jamie.sutton@socialcircleschools.org](mailto:jamie.sutton@socialcircleschools.org).

**Breakfast, Lunch, And Refreshments**

Lunch for adults will be \$4.00. Breakfast for adults will be \$2.50. If you would like a cafeteria account, please let Jamie Sutton know. She will send your information to be set up in Infinite Campus where you can add money to your account.

Staff members must consume all food and drink in the lounge/teacher workroom or cafeteria during the school day. Staff members must not take food or drinks into the classroom except on occasions when students can participate or when no students are present.

**SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## Procedures for Contacting Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers shall be secured through YOSS.

When a teacher is absent, it is his/her responsibility to enter his or her own time into YOSS. Assignments are available to substitute teachers as soon as those absences are entered.

## Parking

Parking spaces are available in the parking lots at each school. Below are the spaces available for substitute parking:

**Social Circle Primary:** Park in the parking lot near the gym or the side parking lot in front of the school if space is available.

**Social Circle Elementary:** Park in the lower parking lot or side parking lot of the building and enter through the front entrance

**Social Circle Middle:** Park in spots 50-53 in the teacher parking lot in front of the school.

**Social Circle High:** Park in the teacher parking lot in front of the school.

## Sign-in and Sign-out

If a substitute teacher is contacted prior to the day he/she is to work, plans should be made to report to school by the following times:

Social Circle Primary School	7:35am
Social Circle Elementary School	7:00am
Social Circle Middle School	7:15am
Social Circle High School	7:30am

If the substitute is called on the morning of work, he/she needs to inform the school secretary as to what time to expect their arrival.

**Social Circle Primary:** Pick up keys from the Secretary at the front desk.

**Social Circle Elementary:** Pick up keys from the Secretary at the front desk.

**Social Circle Middle:** Pick up keys from the Middle School Bookkeeper upon arrival. Plans will be in the classroom.

**Social Circle High:** Pick up keys from the High School Bookkeeper upon arrival.

Badges are distributed by Jamie Sutton at the Administrative Office. If you do not have a substitute badge, please contact her immediately.

Time after the students leave until it is time to sign out should be used to clean and straighten the classroom and prepare information for the returning teacher. Do not leave the classroom until all students have gone for the day.

## School Records/Attendance

The substitute teacher should send a list of the names of students who were absent or tardy for each class to the office.

Social Circle Primary & Elementary substitutes will not have to worry about tardies, only absences. And you'll only take attendance once a day.

## **Medication**

All medication administered to students will be administered by the school nurse. For regularly administered medication, there is a schedule and procedures for the administration at each school. If this information is not available in the classroom in which a substitute finds him/herself, ask a neighboring teacher for information. **Substitutes should never administer medication.**

## **Handling Emergencies, Injuries, Etc.**

In the event that a child is injured and should not be left unattended, contact the office or send another student for help. NEVER leave the injured child unattended. Children receiving injuries (from a scratch to one of greater degree) during the day should be reported to the school nurse so that a record can be kept of such injuries.

## **Fire Drills**

In the event of the fire alarm activation:

1. When the fire alarm sounds, staff and students should "stage" in the classroom preparing to exit. Go into soft lockdown. Pull students from the halls and lock your door. Cover door windows. Students should not be in transition. After 90 seconds an **ANNOUNCEMENT** will be made to evacuate students to assigned areas, to remain in soft lockdown or to go into hard lockdown.
2. Evacuate class to assigned areas. Route is posted on the wall. (Teachers take Teacher Response Bags. This includes Class Rosters, Dire Count Sheets.)
3. Hold up a status card after taking attendance. (Red - emergency in classroom, Yellow - missing or additional students, Green - all students accounted for).
4. Complete the Fire Drill Student Count Sheets.
5. Only re-enter the building after Public Safety and/or Administration gives the all clear. Teachers and students will re-enter the building through designated doors at the ends of the hall. (Do not prop your exterior door).

## **Severe Weather**

### **Thunderstorm/Tornado Watch, Thunderstorm Warning**

1. All mobile classes will proceed to the main building.
2. Status cards will be placed on front and rear windows (red - emergency in classroom, yellow missing or additional students in classroom, green - all students accounted for).
3. Normal school operations can continue when Administration gives the all clear.

### **Tornado Warning**

1. Evacuate class to the assigned safe area and take the appropriate position. (Teachers take Teacher Response Kit.)
2. Move nearby tables, chairs, desks, etc. into classrooms and clear the halls.
3. Normal school operations can continue when Administration gives the all clear by all call.

### **Bomb Threat**

**Administration will scan for suspicious bags, containers, or other likely items. If a suspicious item is found, students and staff will be moved from the area of danger.**

1. Teachers will take direction from Public Safety and Administration. If told to evacuate, teachers will take their Teacher Response Bag and move to the appropriate area.
2. Take roll and report to the designated leader in your area. Status cards (Red (emergency), yellow (students missing or extra students) and green (all present) cards will be appropriately displayed.
3. Only re-enter the building after the all clear has been given by public safety.

### **Shelter in Place**

If told to shelter in place: (may be due to severe weather, possible hazardous spill in area near facility (shelter in place or evacuate based on first responders), winter weather situation (such as the time many students had to stay overnight in schools due to unsafe travel conditions), flooding conditions that might prevent travel

1. Teachers and students will remain in class and await further directions from School Administration and Public Safety.
2. Status cards will be placed on front and rear windows (red - emergency in classroom, yellow missing or additional students in classroom, green - all students accounted for).
3. If told to evacuate, teachers will take their Teacher Response Kit.

### **Official Approval Required**

Students are not excused to leave school under any circumstances without official permission through the principal's office. Notes or other communication should not be sent to parents without the approval of the principal. Any student appearing to be ill should be sent to the school nurse with a pass/note. **Substitute teachers are not to keep students after school.**

### **Confidentiality of Student Records**

Substitutes should not take or post pictures of students on social media, even if they know the student outside of school.

Student records/information are considered confidential. Parents/guardians and those working with the student are allowed access to student record/information. This information should not be discussed outside the school. Neither should events that happen at school be discussed outside school doors. If asked about something which happened one might respond, "I'm not at liberty to discuss that. You need to contact the teacher or principal."

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The main responsibility is to provide meaningful learning activities for students. To fulfill this responsibility, it is essential that the substitute teacher implement the lesson plans prepared by the regular teacher. The responsibilities of a substitute teacher are great. He/she does not have an easy task. Dedicated substitute teachers render a great service to the students and to the community.

### **Job Performance Responsibilities**

1. Supervise students under his/her jurisdiction at all times. **Do not leave students unattended.**
2. Use vocabulary suitable to the students level and use standard English in oral and written

communication. Refrain from using language in classrooms to embarrass or humiliate students. Avoid the use of profanity in the presence of students.

3. Encourage student use of correct grammar for all students in oral and written communication.
4. Keep the classroom clean, orderly, attractive, and safe. See that windows are closed, shades are adjusted, the floor clean, the desks arranged neatly, and lights and other electrical equipment are turned off before departure each day. Encourage students to assist in keeping classrooms, halls, and grounds clean. Refrain from taping, nailing, tacking, gluing, or attaching anything to classroom walls or doors without the consent of the principal. Use lights, heaters, and air conditioners conservatively during the day.
5. Assume responsibility for proper care of furniture, building, instructional materials, books, etc. belonging to the school.
6. Problems should not be brought to school and allowed to interfere with responsibilities for the day.
7. Work harmoniously with co-workers and administrators. Maintain a friendly, professional attitude with students.
8. Display a loyal commitment and contribute towards upholding the educational philosophy of the school.
9. Complete extra duties assigned by the principal.
10. Become familiar with student discipline guidelines in the student handbook. Be aware that guidelines may vary from school to school. Student handbooks may be found at [www.socialcircleschools.com](http://www.socialcircleschools.com) under the 'Parents' tab.

### **Daily Routine**

Here is the information for Social Circle Elementary School:  
[LINK IS HERE](#)

1. Upon arriving at the school, report to the main office for class assignment and instructions if you have not already received them.
2. Clock in, obtain keys for the classroom if needed, check the teacher's mailbox.
3. Obtain plans, information, and any written instructions left by the regular teacher from the school secretary. Sometimes plans are left in the classroom on the teacher's desk. If no plans are present, contact the school secretary for immediate assistance.
4. Discuss methods or techniques used in keeping the appropriate records for the class with the principal or his/her designee.
5. Go to the assigned room.
6. Become familiar with fire drill procedures to see what route students will take to evacuate the building.



If specific instructions have not been left, check with the principal or his/her designee regarding the procedure to follow.

7. Take attendance in the morning. Include teacher's name and sub's name.
8. Follow the day's schedule and lesson plans prescribed by the regular classroom teacher.
9. During the teacher's planning time, report to the school secretary to see where you may assist.  
**Substitutes should not remain in empty classrooms.**
10. The substitute teacher should remain until all students are dismissed and it is time to sign out.
11. Leave a note for the teacher regarding the outcome of the day, how much of the lesson plans were completed, if not all was done, attendance information, etc.
12. At the end of the school day, if an incident has occurred which may be controversial or about which the teacher or principal might receive a telephone call, inform the principal and/or admin assistant before you leave.
13. Check with the school secretary in the office to see if your services will be needed the next day.
14. Clock out.

### **Professional Conduct**

A substitute teacher is encouraged to maintain a professional attitude toward his/her work. A friendly, cheerful, and cooperative attitude will have a great deal to do with acceptance of the substitute teacher by the faculty and by the students.

Each substitute teacher is advised to be cautious in adhering to the following guidelines:

1. Avoid criticizing any of the teachers for whom you substitute or other school personnel.
2. Avoid finding fault with the schools in which you work or discussing them with other people. Never make uncomplimentary comparisons between schools.
3. Avoid criticizing or discussing students you teach except when it may be complimentary or when you are seeking professional help.
4. Keep all information about students in confidence.
5. Cell phones **should not** be used while supervising students. **SOCIAL MEDIA - do NOT post pictures of students, even if they are family or children of friends, on social media, and do not post to social media during the school day. Best advice - stay off your phone during the work day.**

Substitute teachers do not always see the usual reactions of students in their classrooms, nor is it always possible for adequate plans to have been made. These two facts will need to be remembered in order that you do not jump to improper conclusions. It is important to respect the individual differences in teaching procedures. Substitute teachers must guard against making any unfavorable and unprofessional comparisons between schools, classes, and/or teachers. It is important that you do not

divulge personal opinions and reactions about what is observed in the teaching setting to anyone other than the teacher for whom you are substituting or to an administrator.

Accepting a job of being a substitute teacher means you accept responsibilities as assigned and you will be expected to account for the assigned services.

Be assured you can contribute to the success of the overall substitute program by being dependable and consistent, by following regulations and procedures, by discussing specific problems with the appropriate personnel, and by observing discretion in commenting on school matters.

## **Social Circle City Schools Board of Education Policies and Procedures**

Condensed policy overviews may be found below. Policies, in their entirety, may be found at [www.socialcircleschools.com](http://www.socialcircleschools.com)

### **Student Discipline**

A substitute teacher shall keep good order in the classroom and other places in which he is assigned to be in charge of students. Each substitute teacher is charged with the responsibility of correcting any Social Circle City Schools student's undesirable behavior at any place and any time during the school day. Good student control usually results from good planning, interesting presentations and the use of motivational learning activities. The development of student self-discipline is a more effective method of controlling students than teacher domination. Usually a good substitute teacher handles his/her own control problems; however, there are times when he/she may have individual problem cases. Consult with the principal and/or front office for advice if a problem is becoming acute.

**In Social Circle City Schools, corporal punishment may not be administered by any teacher, paraprofessional, substitute teacher, or other adult employee other than the principal.** Corporal punishment includes hitting, pushing, grabbing a student, or using any other physical force.

A teacher shall not under any circumstances suspend a student from school or class. A principal may suspend or recommend expulsion of a student for violation of reasonable and lawful regulations. The principal will follow suspensions and expulsions policy procedures recommended by the Social Circle City Schools Board of Education policies.

The use of copying or memorizing material to punish undesirable behavior is prohibited. The teacher is responsible for the safety of a child. A teacher or a substitute teacher shall never reduce a student's achievement grade because of his/her conduct.

The substitute teacher shall never hold an item directed toward a student in his/her hand -- it may give the appearance that someone is about to be hit.

### **Visitors to Schools**

All visitors to a school must go directly to the front office and obtain a visitor's pass before going elsewhere on the school campus. It is the responsibility of all school personnel to inquire as to whether or not a visitor has a visitor's pass; if he/she does not, he/she should be informed to report to the principal's office to obtain one and the principal's office should be notified of the person's presence on the campus.

### **Use of Tobacco**

Use of tobacco by any person on Board of Education property during the regular school day is prohibited.

## **Sexual Harassment**

The Board of Education forbids discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. The Board of Education will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its employees. This policy applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities. Any inappropriate conduct should be reported to an administrator immediately.

## **Weapons within School Safety Zones**

It is unlawful for any person to carry to or to possess or have under such person's control while within a school safety zone or at a school building, school function, or school property or on a bus or other transportation furnished by the school any weapon or explosive compound.

## **Drug-Free Work Force**

The Board of Education is concerned with the well-being of all employees of the . The Board recognizes that a drug-free work force encourages employee productivity and promotes the accomplishment of the Board's missions and goals. In accordance with the Drug-Free Work Force Act of 1990, the Social Circle City Schools Board of Education hereby declares that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, sale, possession or use of alcohol, controlled substances, or other dangerous drugs is prohibited for all system employees in the workplace, and for any school or system function.

## **Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting**

All school personnel at each school having a reason to believe that children within their care under 18 years of age, have had physical injuries inflicted upon them, other than by accidental means, by a parent or caretaker, or have been sexually assaulted, are mandated by law to make an oral report to the school principal/admin assistant/counselor before they leave campus, preferably as soon as possible.

## **Personal Property**

An employee's personal items which are brought to school are the responsibility of the employee should the items become damaged, lost, or stolen.

## **Dress**

All employees of the Social Circle City Schools are required to dress appropriate to their job roles. As individuals working in a professional environment with children, our responsibilities include being role models. It is essential that all employees dress appropriately for their job roles. We are treated as we are perceived. If we wish to be treated as a professional, it is essential we dress as professionals.

## **Personnel Records**

It is the responsibility of each employee to report, **in writing**, any changes in name, address, telephone number, or salary withholding information to the Human Resources Department (jamie.sutton@socialcircleschools.org) as soon as the change occurs.

The following information shall not be released on any employee except with the written consent of the employee:

- Home address
- Home telephone number
- Social security number
- Insurance information
- Medical information

Mother's birth name  
Bank account information  
Financial data or information

### **Classroom Telephones and/or Intercom System**

The classroom telephone/intercom is a system provided so that teachers may contact the office in situations in which teachers need immediate assistance or need to report critical incidents and so that office personnel may contact teachers with timely information or requests. Excessive and/or unnecessary use of the classroom telephone/intercom system either by teachers or office personnel interrupts instruction. The classroom telephone/intercom system is not to be used for routine matters that could be taken care of before or after school, at lunch, or at other times apart from teachers' instructional duties.

Social Circle Primary & Elementary: You will have a walkie talkie that you will need to make sure you have with you at all times if you are not in your classroom.

### **Emergency Procedures Manual:**

Each school has their own Emergency Procedures Manual. Substitutes should be instructed where to find this manual when they arrive.

To aid personnel and students in being aware of the hazards which threaten their lives and safety and in being prepared to take appropriate action in the event of any imminent or actual disaster, the Social Circle City Schools has developed an emergency procedures manual. This ready-reference guide has been prepared to direct the efforts of personnel in the effective management of emergency situations.

The schools work cooperatively with the Central Office and other government and community agencies to prevent, assess, manage, and follow-up on any threat to the safety of the student, faculty, or staff. This guide is designed to contain the primary elements or steps necessary for effective intervention and follow-up for selected common emergencies that affect schools including, but not limited to, injuries and illnesses, fires, thunderstorms, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, winter storms, hazardous materials, earthquakes, utility failure, bomb threats, civil disturbances, terroristic acts and nuclear emergencies.

### **Appropriate Use of Social Circle City Schools Computers and Network Resources**

It is the belief of the Social Circle City Board of Education that the use of technology for the purpose of information acquisition, retrieval, manipulation, distribution and storage is an important part of preparing children to live in the 21st century. The Board further believes that a "technology rich" classroom can significantly enhance both the teaching and learning process. This technology includes computer hardware, software, local and wide area networks and access to the Internet. Due to the complex nature of these systems and the magnitude of information available via the Internet, the Social Circle City Board of Education believes guidelines regarding acceptable use are warranted in order to serve the educational needs of students.

It shall be the policy of the Social Circle City Board of Education that the school system shall have in continuous operation, with respect to any computers belonging to the school having access to the Internet:

1. A qualifying "technology protection measure," as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(1) of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000; and

2. Procedures or guidelines developed by the superintendent, administrators and/or other appropriate personnel which provide for monitoring the online activities of users and the use of the chosen technology protection measure to protect against access through such computers to visual depictions that are (i) obscene, (ii) child pornography, or (iii) harmful to minors, as those terms are defined in Section 1703(b)(1) and (2) of the Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000. Such procedures or guidelines shall be designed to:

- a. Provide for monitoring the online activities of users to prevent, to the extent practicable, access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and the World Wide Web;
- b. Promote the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- c. Prevent unauthorized access, including so-called “hacking,” and other unauthorized activities by minors online;
- d. Prevent the unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors; and
- e. Restrict minors’ access to materials “harmful to minors,” as that term is defined in Section 1703(b)(2) of the Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000.
- f. Provide for students age-appropriate instruction regarding safe and appropriate behavior on social networking sites, chat rooms, and other Internet services, behaviors that may constitute cyber bullying, and how to respond when subjected to cyberbullying.

The district’s technology resources are provided for educational purposes that promote and are consistent with the instructional goals of the Social Circle City School System. Use of computers and network resources outside the scope of this educational purpose is strictly prohibited. Students and employees accessing network services or any school computer shall comply with the district’s acceptable use guidelines. The district reserves the right to monitor, access, and disclose the contents of any user’s files, activities, or communications.

It must also be understood that the Internet is a global, fluid community, which remains largely unregulated. While it is an extremely valuable tool for educational research, there are sections that are not commensurate with community, school, or family standards. It is the belief of the Board that the Internet’s advantages far outweigh its disadvantages. The Social Circle City Board of Education will, through its administrative staff, provide an Internet screening system which blocks access to a large percentage of inappropriate sites. It should not be assumed, however, that users are completely prevented from accessing inappropriate materials or from sending or receiving objectionable communications.

Additionally, access to the Internet and computer resources is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, users violating the Social Circle City Board of Education’s acceptable use policy shall be subject to revocation of these privileges and potential disciplinary action.

## **GAPSC CODE OF ETHICS**

**(1) Introduction.** The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.

**(2) Definitions.**

(a) “Breach of contract” occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the GaPSC.

(b) “Certificate” refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the GaPSC.

(c) “Child endangerment” occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.

(d) “Complaint” is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the GaPSC alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A “complaint” will be deemed a request to investigate.

(e) “Educator” is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the GaPSC and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

(f) “Inappropriate” is conduct or communication not suitable for an educator to have with a student. It goes beyond the bounds of an educator-student relationship.

(g) “Physical abuse” is physical interaction resulting in a reported or visible bruise or injury to the student.

(h) “Student” is any individual enrolled in the state’s public, or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the school year of graduation.

**(3) Standards.**

(a) Standard 1: **Legal Compliance** - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

(b) Standard 2: **Conduct with Students** - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
2. Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
3. Committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
4. Engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student;
5. Soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
6. Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
7. Failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).

(c) Standard 3: **Alcohol or Drugs** - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
2. Being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc).

(i) For the purposes of this standard, an educator shall be considered "under the influence" if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to: slurred speech, enlarged pupils, bloodshot eyes, general personality changes, lack of physical coordination, poor motor skills, memory problems, concentration problems, etc.

(d) Standard 4: **Honesty** - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

1. Professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
2. Information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
3. Information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;

4. Reasons for absences or leaves;

5. Information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and 6. Information submitted in the course of professional practice.

(e) Standard 5: **Public Funds and Property** - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Misusing public or school-related funds;

2. Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;

3. Submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);

4. Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and

5. Using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.

(f) Standard 6: **Remunerative Conduct** - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;

2. Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;

3. Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and

4. Coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.

(g) Standard 7: **Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;

2. Sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;



3. Violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
4. Violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

(h) Standard 8: **Required Reports** - An educator shall file with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Failure to report to the GaPSC all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
2. Failure to make a required report of a an alleged or proven violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
3. Failure to make a required report of any alleged or proven violation of state or federal law as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

(i) Standard 9: **Professional Conduct** - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position; or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students; or failure to supervise a student(s).

(j) Standard 10: **Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
2. Compromising the integrity of the assessment.

#### **(4) Reporting.**

(a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the GaPSC must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).

(b) The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

**(5) Disciplinary Action.**

(a) The GaPSC is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the educator:

1. Unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
2. Disciplinary action against a certificate on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
3. Order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6- 28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
4. Suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
5. Violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16- 13-111); and
6. Any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.

(b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or, in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

(c) The GaPSC is authorized to determine no probable cause as provided in O.C.G.A. § 20-2- 984.4(e) and § 20-2-984.5(e) if:

1. After a preliminary investigation is concluded it is unlikely that there exists a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove at a hearing that a violation occurred; or
2. After a hearing the administrative law judge makes a determination that there is not a preponderance of the evidence necessary to prove that a violation occurred.

(d) The GaPSC is authorized to determine no further action is necessary pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.5(a) if after review of the report of the preliminary investigation, sanctions should not be imposed.

## **(6) Sanctions.**

(a) As outlined in O.C.G.A. 20-2-984.5(c), the GaPSC has the discretion to issue a probable cause sanction against an educator. Common violations and associated sanctions can be found in the accompanying GaPSC Guidance.

1. Denial is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate;
2. Monitoring is the quarterly appraisal of the educator’s conduct by the GaPSC through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit periodic criminal background checks (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period;
3. Reprimand admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action;
4. Revocation is the permanent invalidation of any certificate held by the educator. A Voluntary Surrender is equivalent to and has the same effect as a revocation. A Voluntary Surrender shall be accepted and becomes effective upon receipt by the GaPSC;
5. Suspension is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the GaPSC; and
6. Warning informs the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.

## **(7) Application Procedures.**

(a) “Yes” answers to Personal Affirmation Questions (PAQs) require submission of information identified in the accompanying GaPSC Guidance.

(b) With respect to an initial applicant, an application and corresponding ethics case that is initiated pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-984.3(c) will automatically close and be placed on hold if the applicant fails to submit requested documentation to the Ethics Division within 45 days of the request to the applicant. The application will be placed on hold in anticipation of the submission of a new application and the applicant’s responding to any requests for documentation in a timely fashion.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200