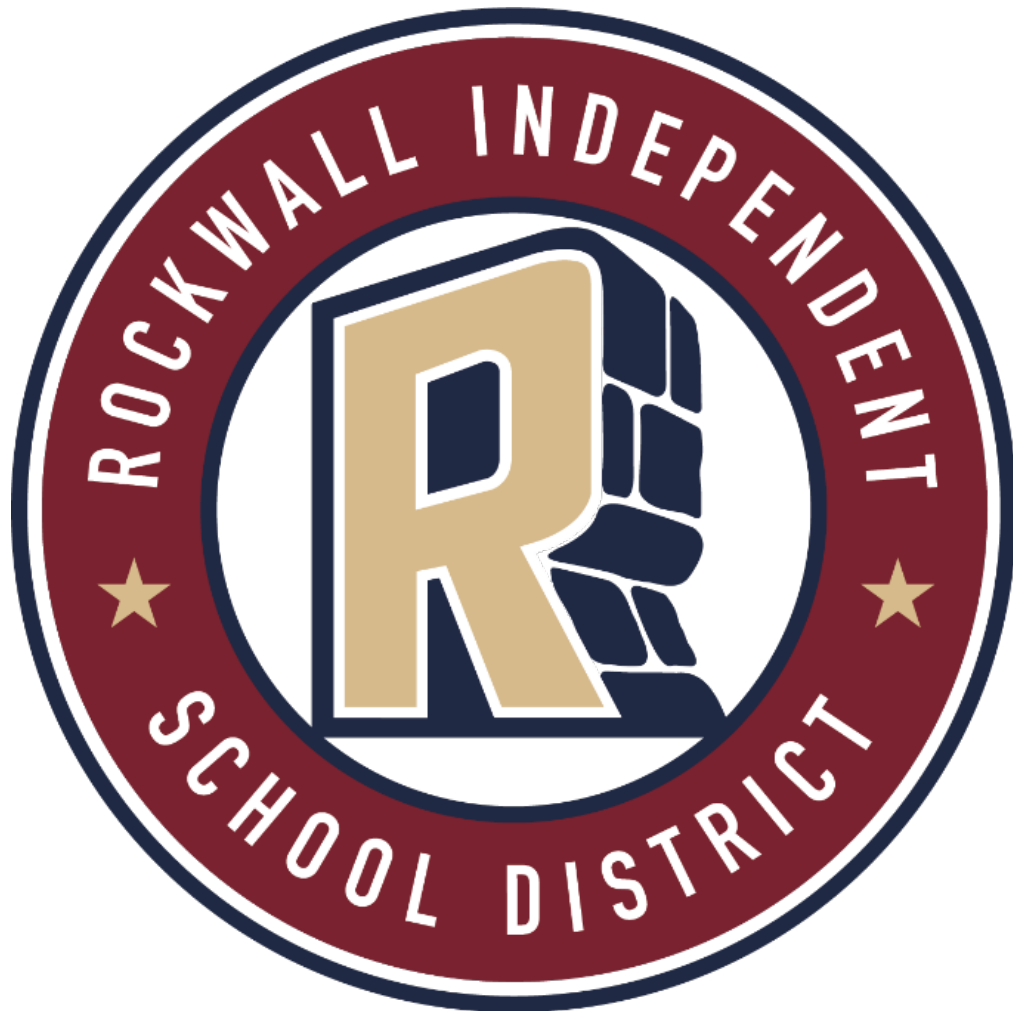


# 2024-2025

# Employee Handbook



If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of a disability, please email our District Webmaster at [communications@rockwallisd.org](mailto:communications@rockwallisd.org).

If you speak another language and need assistance with any District documents or forms, please contact the Parent Education Center at (972)772-2073.

Si usted habla otro idioma y necesita ayuda con cualquier documento o formulario del distrito, favor de ponerse en contacto con Maritza Bekdash en [maritza.bekdash@rockwallisd.org](mailto:maritza.bekdash@rockwallisd.org) o llamando al (972)772-2073.



# Rockwall

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Call to Action

Rockwall ISD empowers learners to embody independence, value relationships, and achieve excellence as thriving members of a dynamic global community.

## Our Beliefs

- We believe that collaborative relationships create a culture where learners thrive.
- We believe that an effective learning environment is collaborative, safe, challenging, and responsive to the diverse needs of all students.
- We believe that learning is a partnership that engages all members of our community to empower empathetic and responsible citizens for success beyond themselves.
- We believe that all learners deserve to be challenged in preparation for lifelong learning and future success.

## Our Goals

**Academics:** We will provide authentic and innovative learning experiences for every learner.

**Safety:** We will ensure a safe and civil environment that is responsive to the needs of our diverse community.

**Staff:** We will attract, recruit, develop and retain high-quality professional staff.

**Finance:** We will ensure continued fiscal efficiency and partner with the community and stakeholders to address accelerating growth.

**Communications:** We will partner with our community to enhance the learner experiences.

## Our Core Values

Relationships. Innovation. Excellence.

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all District policies and procedures are included. Those that are have been summarized.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for official District policy. It is not intended to alter the at-will status of Non-Contract employees in any way. It is a guide to and a brief explanation of District policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate District office. Policy manuals are available on the Intranet through the Rockwall Independent School District website ([www.rockwallisd.com](http://www.rockwallisd.com)) and are available for employee review in hard copy during normal working hours at the RISD administration offices located at 1050 Williams Street, Rockwall, Texas 75087.

The following is a list of employment policies, including (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) policies and exhibits which can be found on the RISD website at [www.rockwallisd.com](http://www.rockwallisd.com): Access the school board link to the policy. Additional related policies can be found on the website.

- DAA – Equal employment opportunity
- DBAA – Criminal history and credit reports
- DBD – Conflict of interest
- DBE - Nepotism
- DC – Employment practices
- DCA – Probationary contracts
- DCB – Educator term contracts
- DCC – Continuing contracts
- DCD – At-will employment
- DEA – Salaries, wages, and stipends
- DEAA – Incentives and stipends
- DEC Series– Leaves and absences DFAC – Return to probationary status
- DFBA – Suspension/termination during contract
- DFBB – Non-renewal
- DFD – Hearings before hearing examiner
- DFE – Resignation
- DF – Termination of contract
- DFF – Reduction in force
- DFBB – Non-renewal
- DGBA – Employee complaints/grievances
- DH – Employee standards of conduct
- DHE – Searches and alcohol/drug testing
- DI – Employee welfare
- DIA – Freedom from harassment
- DK – Assignment and schedules
- DN series – Performance appraisal



# EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK RECEIPT 2024-2025 – Employee Copy

If you **DO NOT** have a District email address, this form needs to be completed and submitted to the Department of Human Resources at the Central Office.

If you **HAVE** a District email address, you will complete the signature process through Employee Access at [rockwallisd.com](http://rockwallisd.com) under Staff Links.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please print first, middle, and last name according to social security card – no nicknames please)  
 District email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Campus/Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**PUBLIC INFORMATION (please check one)**  
 Due to the Public Information Act, RISD must release certain information to requestors; however, some information may be withheld such as a home address, phone number, social security number, and emergency contact information.

I do give my permission for the release of information.  
 I do not give my permission to release information.

Employees have the option of receiving the Handbook in electronic format or hard copy. You may request a hard copy from your campus/department supervisor or access a copy by going to [www.rockwallisd.com](http://www.rockwallisd.com) and accessing the Rockwall ISD Intranet.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Rockwall ISD Employee Handbook.

I agree to read the Handbook and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined and referenced in this document.

The information in this Handbook is subject to change. I understand that it is my responsibility to read this Handbook in its entirety.

I understand that changes in District policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in this Handbook. As the District provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes to District policies. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor if I have questions, concerns or need further explanation regarding any information contained in this Handbook or District policies.

I understand that no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will relationships are intended by this Handbook, or future modifications to this Handbook.

I understand that I have an obligation to promptly inform my supervisor or department head of any changes in personal data, including, but not limited to, personal mailing address, telephone numbers, and individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Employee Signature  
 RISD Employee Handbook 2024-2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**If you DO NOT HAVE a District email address, complete this form and submit to your campus or department administrator.**  
 If you HAVE a District email address, you will complete the signature process through Employee Access at rockwallisd.com under Staff Links.

It is important that all employees understand District policies and procedures, administrative regulations, agreement forms and ask questions if assistance is needed in understanding them. Inappropriate use will result in the loss of the privilege of using this educational and administrative tool.

The use of personal computing equipment is permitted; however, such equipment may only connect to the RISD’s wireless BYOD-Staff network. LAN connections are prohibited. RISD will not provide any support or software for personal computing devices. The District utilizes filtering technology to restrict access to such material; however, it is not possible to absolutely prevent such access. It is the responsibility of each employee to follow the rules for appropriate use.

**RULES FOR APPROPRIATE USE:**

- **Employees are responsible for the security of their equipment. To prevent unauthorized use or viewing of confidential information, employees are required to LOCK their computers when leaving their workstation.**
- Equipment issued by Rockwall ISD is the property of Rockwall ISD. The employee is responsible to caring for all equipment issued to him/her with care. Refer to the Device Checkout Agreement found in the Help Desk ticketing system for specific information.
- Accounts are to be used mainly for educational purposes, but some limited personal use is permitted.
- The employee will be held responsible at all times for the proper use of accounts. The District may suspend or revoke access if the rules are violated.
- Pictures of students may only be posted on district/school communication if the parent/guardian has given permission for posting. Parents/Guardians select this option as part of the online registration in Skyward. Teachers can see this form in Skyward under the student’s profile, Custom Forms, Release of Student Information. Pictures of students may not be posted on personal social media accounts.
- The employee should follow all procedures related to technology according to the 2024-2025 Employee Handbook.
- All employees shall be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic communications as for any other public conduct. Be aware that people who receive emails from a school address may think the message represents the District’s point of view. If an employee’s use of electronic communication violates state or federal law or District policy, or interferes with the employee’s ability to effectively perform his or her job, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- Equipment issued by Rockwall ISD is the property of Rockwall ISD. The employee is responsible for caring for all equipment issued to him/her with care. Keep equipment secure at all times. Never leave a laptop in a vehicle. Do not write on, draw on, or place stickers/labels on district issued equipment. If a laptop is stolen or damaged, contact the Technology Department.

**INAPPROPRIATE USE:**

- Using the system for any illegal purpose.
- Disabling or attempting to disable any Internet filtering device.
- Encrypting communications to avoid security review, including, but not limited to, the use of a VPN.
- Using another person’s Rockwall account or logging onto a computer or email system with another user’s password.
- Downloading or utilizing copyrighted information without permission from the copyright holder. This includes streaming media. Employees should check the Terms of Use for all streaming media before using.
- Intentionally hacking or sabotaging computer systems.
- Accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, illegal, threatening, harassing, or damaging to another’s reputation or illegal. Using inappropriate language such as swear words, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, and any other inflammatory language.
- Accessing social media services that are prohibited by federal, state, or local law.
- Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information or resources.
- Pretending to be someone else when transmitting or receiving messages.

**CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE:**

- Suspension of access to the system and/or revocation of the computer system account.
- Other disciplinary or legal action, in accordance with District policies and applicable law.

I understand that my electronic mail transmissions and other use of the District computer system are not private and may be monitored, reviewed, audited, intercepted, accessed, or disclosed at any time by designated District staff to ensure appropriate use.

I have read the Employee Agreement for Acceptable Use of Technology Resources and agree to abide by these provisions. I hereby release the District, its operators, and any institutions with which they are affiliated from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my use of, or inability to use, the system, including, without limitation, the type of damages identified in the District policy and administrative regulations.

The District shall not be liable for an employee’s inappropriate use of electronic communications resources or violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, an employee’s mistakes or negligence, and for any costs incurred by employees through the use of the System. The District shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy, age appropriateness, or usability of any information found on the Internet. No warranties of any kind are offered either expressed or implied.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Employee Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)



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Campus/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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I understand that I have an obligation to promptly inform my supervisor or department head of any changes in personal data, including, but not limited to, personal mailing address, telephone numbers, and individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# DISTRICT INFORMATION

## The District Profile

Rockwall Independent School District is one of the fastest-growing communities in the United States. Rockwall lies just across Lake Ray Hubbard approximately 23 miles east of Dallas. While embracing the culture of the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Rockwall retains traditional small town values. Dr. John Villarreal, Superintendent of Schools, provides a bold vision to guide the community's schools into the future.

Rockwall is also home to an acclaimed school District that spans across six communities. We educate just over eighteen thousand students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through high school.

## The Geographic Area

The District encompasses 102 square miles, approximately 70 percent of Rockwall County, and a mix of residential, commercial, and agricultural use properties. The District is bound on three sides by Collin, Dallas, and Kaufman counties.

This geographic area includes the cities of Rockwall, Heath and McClendon-Chisholm, as well as parts of Fate, Rowlett and Wylie.

## Board of Trustees

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

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

The Board of Trustees consists of members elected by the citizens of the District to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the District's children. Board Members are elected annually in May and serve three-year terms. Board members serve without compensation, must be qualified voters, and must reside in the District.

The Board of Trustees meets on the third Monday of each month typically at 6:00 p.m. in the RISD Administration/Education Building, Room 600, 1050 Williams Street, Rockwall, TX 75087. Special meetings may be called when necessary. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted on the District Website and at the RISD Administration/Education Building, 1050 Williams Street, Rockwall, TX 75087, at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a one-hour notice.

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

## **Administration**

Superintendent – Dr. John Villarreal

Chief Academic Officer of Elementary Schools – Dr. Mary Johnston

Chief Student Services Officer – Dr. Kelvin Stroy

Sr. Chief Financial Officer – Mr. David Carter

Chief Human Resources Officer – Ms. Joey Byrum

Chief Academic Officer of Secondary Schools – Dr. Megan Gist

Chief Communications Officer – Ms. Renae Murphy

For a complete list of all staff, please refer to our website at <http://www.rockwallisd.com>.

## **Campus Directory:**

**Amanda Rochell Elementary School**...Paige White, Principal

899 Rochell Court, Rockwall, Texas 75032...972-771-2112

**Amy Parks-Heath Elementary School**...Amy Sparks, Principal

330 Laurence Drive, Heath, Texas 75032...972-772-4300

**Billie Stevenson Elementary School**...Stacy Rosa, Principal

636 Stevenson Drive, Fate, Texas 75087...469-698-7474

**Celia Hays Elementary School**...Kelli Crossland, Principal

1880 Tannerson Drive, Rockwall, Texas 75087...469-698-2800

**Doris Cullins-Lake Pointe Elementary School**...Kelly Haack, Principal

5701 Scenic Drive, Rowlett, Texas 75088...972-412-3070

**Dorothy Smith Pullen Elementary School**...Michael Stuart, Principal

6492 FM 3097, Rockwall, Texas 75032...972-772-1177

**Dorris A. Jones Elementary School**...Teresa Twedell, Principal

2051 Trail Glen, Rockwall, Texas 75032...972-772-1070

**Grace Hartman Elementary School**...Jill Ebeling, Principal

1325 Petaluma Drive, Rockwall, Texas 75087...972-772-2080

**Howard Dobbs Elementary School**...Luz Biehle, Principal

901 E. Interurban Street, Rockwall, Texas 75087...972-771-5232

**Linda Lyon Elementary School**...Lori Bailey, Principal

2186 Trophy Drive, Heath, Texas 75032...214-771-4910

**Lupe Garcia Elementary School**...Crystal Shaklee, Principal

310 Williamsburg Parkway, Fate, Texas 75132...469-698-2870

**Nebbie Williams Elementary School**...Adrienne Hergert, Principal

350 Dalton Road, Rockwall, Texas 75087...972-772-0502

**Ouida Springer Elementary School**...Andrea Olive, Principal

3025 Limestone Hill Lane, Rockwall, Texas 75032...972-772-7160

**Sharon Shannon Elementary School**...Laurie Branch, Principal

3130 Fontanna Boulevard, Rockwall, Texas 75032...469-698-2900

**Sherry and Paul Hamm Elementary School**...Danielle Patterson, Principal

2911 Greenway Drive, Rockwall, Texas 75087...469-698-2854

**Virginia Reinhardt Elementary School...**Amanda Payne, Principal  
615 Highland Drive, Rockwall, Texas 75087...972-771-5247

**Herman E. Utley Middle School...**Kristin Marceau, Principal  
1201 Townsend Drive, Rockwall, Texas 75087...972-771-5281

**J.W. Williams Middle School...**Dr. Christina Bradford, Principal  
625 East FM 552, Rockwall, Texas 75087...972-771-8313

**Maurine Cain Middle School...**Brittney Zabochnik, Principal  
6620 FM 3097, Rockwall, Texas 75087...972-772-1170

**Rockwall High School 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Campus...**Shanon Zais, Principal  
2852 FM 1141, Rockwall, Texas 75087...469-698-2955

**Rockwall High School...**Dane Steinberger, Principal  
901 Yellowjacket Lane, Rockwall, Texas 75087...972-771-7339

**Rockwall – Heath High School 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Campus ...**Dr. Jeff Chandler, Principal  
2727 South John King Blvd, Heath, TX 75032...469-698-2915

**Rockwall – Heath High School...**Todd Bradford, Principal  
801 Laurence Drive, Heath, Texas 75032...972-772-2474

**Rockwall Quest Academy...**Kody Hergert, Principal  
1050 Williams Street, Rockwall, Texas 75087...972-772-2077

**Dr. Gene Burton College & Career Academy...**Alison Belliveau, Principal/Executive Director of CTE  
2301 S. John King Blvd., Rockwall, Texas 75032...469-698-0660

## **School Calendar**

For a copy of the 2024-2025 school calendar, visit our website at <http://www.rockwallisd.com>.

# **EMPLOYMENT**

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

*Policies DAA, DIA*

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Rockwall ISD does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information or on any other basis prohibited by law. Additionally, the District does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not discriminate on the basis of sex and is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The prohibition against discrimination extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the Title IX coordinator for employees to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment: Ms. Joey Byrum, Chief Human Resources Officer, 1050 Williams Street, Rockwall, TX 75087; 972-771-0605. Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, email ([titleix@rockwallisd.org](mailto:titleix@rockwallisd.org)), or by phone. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person.

The district designates and authorizes the following employee as the ADA/Section 504 coordinator for employees with concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of a disability: Ms. Katy Hill, Director of 504 and Intervention Services, 1050 Williams Street, Rockwall, TX 75087; 972-771-0605 ([katy.hill@rockwallisd.org](mailto:katy.hill@rockwallisd.org)).

Questions or concerns relating to discrimination for any other reason should be directed to the Superintendent or designee.

## **New Data Requirements**

The United States Department of Education (USDE) has issued the final guidance on the adoption of new federal standards for collecting and reporting ethnicity and race data for students and staff. The USDE requires that ethnicity and race be collected separately using a specific two-part response in a specific order. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is implementing this new federal standard for the collection of ethnicity and race.

New employees will be asked to complete the form, which designates one selection under ethnicity and allows for more than one selection under race. If you decline to provide this information, the USDE requires school Districts to use observer identification as a last resort to collect data for federal reporting.

If current employees wish to revise the ethnicity and race form on file, please contact the Department of Human Resources.

## **Job Vacancy Announcements**

*Policy DC*

Announcements of job vacancies by position and location are posted on a regular basis to the District's website at (<http://www.rockwallisd.com>).

## **Employment After Retirement**

*Policy DC*

Individuals receiving retirement benefits from the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) may be employed under certain circumstances on a full or part-time basis without affecting their benefits, according to TRS rules and State law. Detailed information about employment after retirement is available in the TRS publication Employment After Retirement. Employees can contact TRS for additional information by calling (800) 223-8778 or (512) 542-6400. Information is also available on the TRS website ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

## **Contract and Non-Contract Employment**

### *Policies DC series*

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

**Probationary contracts.** Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the District and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive probationary contracts during their first year of employment. Former employees who are hired after a two-year lapse in District employment or employees who move to a position requiring a new class of certification may also be employed by a probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed in public schools for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the District may not exceed one school year.

For those with less experience, the probationary period will be three school years (i.e., three one-year contracts), with an optional fourth school year if the District is doubtful about whether a term or continuing contract should be given.

**Term Contracts.** Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by term contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will sign their contract through Skyward Employee Access with the ability to print a copy. Employment policies can be accessed online at <http://www.rockwallisd.com> by accessing the school board and policies or copies will be provided upon request.

**Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees.** Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators) are employed by a one-year contract that is not subject to the provisions for Non-Renewal or termination under the Texas Education Code.

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

## **Certification and Licenses**

### *Policies DBA, DF*

Professional employees whose position requires SBEC certification or professional license are responsible for taking actions to ensure their credentials do not lapse. Employees must submit documentation that they have passed the required certification exam and/or obtained or renewed their credentials to the Department of Human Resources in a timely manner. Employees licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations (TDLR) must notify the Department of Human Resources when there is action against, or revocation of, their license.

A certified employee's contract may be voided without Chapter 21 due process and employment terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to renew or extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit. A contract may also be voided if SBEC suspends or revokes certification because of an individual's failure to comply with criminal history background checks. Contact the Department of Human Resources if you have any questions regarding certification or licensure requirements.

## **Recertification of Employment Authorization**

### *Policy DC*

At the time of hire, all employees must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form (Form I-9) and present documents to verify identity and employment authorization

Employees whose immigration status, employment authorization, or employment authorization documents have expired must present new documents that show current employment authorization. Employees should file the necessary application or petition sufficiently in advance to ensure that they maintain continuous employment authorization or valid employment authorization documents. Contact the Department of Human Resources if you have any questions regarding verification of employment. Failure to verify employment authorization may result in termination.

## **Searches, Alcohol, and Drug Testing**

### *Policy CQ, DHE*

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

**Employees Required to Have a Commercial Driver's License.** Any employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to alcohol and drug testing.

This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people counting the driver, drivers of large vehicles, or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements if their duties include driving a commercial motor vehicle.

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

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

Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug testing policies and related educational material should contact The Department of Human Resources.

## **Health Safety Training and Personnel Training**

*Policies DBA, DMA*

Certain employees who are involved in physical activities for students, including but not limited to head band directors, band directors, head coaches, coaches, and/or head sponsors of an extracurricular athletic activity that is sponsored or sanctioned by the District or UIL must maintain and submit to the District the following: proof of current certification in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), concussion, and extra-curricular athletic activity safety.

Certification must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association or other organizations that provide equivalent training and certification. Employees subject to this requirement must submit their certification to the appropriate administrator.

House Bill 684 requires school district personnel (anyone who has regular contact with students) to take a one-time approved course for seizure recognition and related first aid, to support the welfare of individuals with epilepsy and seizure disorders. We ask for new employees to complete this course prior to school starting. This course is accessible through your District approved Vector Training.

All Rockwall ISD staff are required to watch health safety training and personnel training online and pass the respective assessments. Under House Bill 3834, school districts are required to provide an annual cybersecurity training program to all employees who have access to a computer or database.

## **Reassignments and Transfers**

*Policy DK*

All personnel is subject to assignment and reassignment by the Superintendent or designee when the Superintendent determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the District. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract.



Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus except when reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract.

Employees who object to a reassignment may follow the District process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and District policy DGBA (LOCAL).

Employees with the required qualifications for a position may request a transfer to another campus or department. A written request for transfer must be completed and signed by the employee and the employee's supervisor. Requests for transfer during the school year will be considered only when the change will not adversely affect students. All transfer requests will be coordinated by the Department of Human Resources and must be approved by the receiving supervisor.

## **Workload and Work Schedules**

*Policies DEAB, DK, DL*

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

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

**Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees.** Support employees are employed at will and receive salary verification through employee access (employees without a District email receive a hard copy salary verification letter) for their position on an annual basis. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees must be compensated for overtime and are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

## **Breaks for Expression of Breast Milk**

*Policies, DEAB, DG*

The district supports the practice of expressing breast milk and makes reasonable accommodations for the needs of employees who express breast milk. A place, other than a multiple user bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from other employees and the public where the public can express breast milk will be provided.

A reasonable amount of break time will be provided when the employee has a need to express milk. For nonexempt employees, these breaks are unpaid and are not counted as hours worked. Employees should meet with their supervisor to discuss their needs and arrange break times.

The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections of Nursing Mothers Act (PUMP Act) requires an employee to notify the district if they believe the district is out of compliance in providing breaks for a nursing mother. The employee must give the district 10 days to come into compliance before making any claim of liability against the district. An employee with concerns should contact the Department of Human Resources.

## **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act**

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) provides consideration of accommodations to employees who have known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. An employee seeking a PWFA accommodation should contact Benefits Coordinator Debbie Roberts (North Campuses) or Rhonda Franks (South Campuses) at 972-771-0605 to begin the interactive process.

## **Notification to Parents Regarding Certification Status**

*Policies DK, DBA*

In schools receiving Title I funds, the District is required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. ESSA also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks, by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements.

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive instructional days to a teacher who does not hold an appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notice under ESSA is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals on an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take a certification exam) or individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request. Employees who have questions about their certification status can call the Department of Human Resources.

## **Outside Employment and Tutoring**

*Policy DBD*

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

## **Performance Evaluation**

*Policies DN series*

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

Upon receiving a report, a nursing review committee may review a nurse's nursing services, qualifications, and quality of patient care, as well as the merits of a complaint concerning a nurse, and a determination or recommendation regarding a complaint. A nurse may request, orally or in writing, a determination by the committee regarding conduct requested of the nurse believed to violate the nurse's duty to the patient.

## **Employee Involvement**

*Policies BQA, BQB*

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

## **Professional Development**

*Policy DMA*

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

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

## **Professional Learning Exchange Hours**

Rockwall ISD employees on a 10-month 187-day work calendar and a 10-month 197-day teacher work calendar are required to complete a minimum of 18 hours of professional development over the summer in exchange for November 25<sup>th</sup> through November 29<sup>th</sup>. To see a list of work calendars please see the RISD Compensation Plan at <https://www.rockwallisd.com>. Failure to complete the required hours will result in a loss of wages.

# COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

## Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

*Policy DEA, DEAA, DEAB*

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and an established pay structure. A representative with the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) reviews pay plans yearly and recommends to the administration adjustments to the salary schedules. All District positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional employees and academic administrators are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation.

Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid an hourly wage or salary and receive compensatory time or overtime pay for each overtime hour worked beyond 40 in a workweek. (See *Overtime Compensation, page 23*).

Salary and wage schedules are reviewed on an annual basis and adjusted according to the budgeted amounts approved by the Board of Trustees. Classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time nurses, and full-time counselors will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular or supplemental duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the District's extra-duty pay schedule.

Employees should contact the Department of Human Resources for more information about the District's pay schedules.

## Paychecks

Professional and paraprofessional employees are paid monthly in 12 equal payments. Auxiliary personnel is paid semi-monthly based on actual hours worked. Scheduled pay dates are the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month for professional employees and the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of each month for auxiliary employees. If the scheduled pay date falls on Saturday or Sunday, payday will be the Friday before the weekend. For Semi-monthly payroll, if the 15<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> of the month falls on a Saturday or Sunday, payday will be the Friday before the weekend. Requests by individuals for early preparation or distribution of their checks will not be honored. Paychecks will not be released to individuals other than the District employee named on the check without written authorization. Employees are responsible for regularly reviewing the accuracy of their pay statement.

Employees needing to make changes in deductions or other information should contact the

Department of Human Resources. Changes must be received by the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month to be reflected in the paycheck that month. Changes received after the 13<sup>th</sup> will be effective the following month.

During the summer months, the paychecks, or pay stubs for employees on direct deposit, will be mailed to employees on the regularly scheduled pay date to the address listed in pay records. Employees receiving checks by mail should allow sufficient time in their planning for delivery by mail. If an employee wishes to receive their funds on payday, a direct deposit form should be completed and returned to the Payroll Department before the summer break.

To access detailed payroll information, log onto [www.rockwallisd.com](http://www.rockwallisd.com) and select our Staff Link. Click on Skyward Employee Access and enter your Skyward user name and password. Then select Employee Access and then Payroll.

**Direct Deposit will be available by 8:00 A.M. on payday.** You may enroll in direct deposit at any time by completing the ACH Authorization Form, attaching a voided check, and sending it to the payroll office by the monthly cutoff date (in order to be effective for the current month).

**If you are already enrolled in Direct Deposit, please do not close your bank account without notifying the Payroll Department as soon as possible.**

## 2024-2025 MONTHLY PAYROLL DATES

MONTH	PAY DATE	CUT OFF DATE	PAY PERIOD
SEPTEMBER	9/25/2024	9/7/2024	8/4/2024 - 9/7/2024
OCTOBER	10/25/2024	10/5/2024	9/8/2024 - 10/5/2024
NOVEMBER	11/22/2024	11/2/2024	10/6/2024 - 11/2/2024
DECEMBER	12/20/2024	12/7/2024	11/3/2024 - 12/7/2024
JANUARY	1/24/2025	1/4/2025	12/8/2024 - 1/4/2025
FEBRUARY	2/25/2025	2/1/2025	1/5/2025 - 2/1/2025
MARCH	3/25/2025	3/1/2025	2/2/2025 - 3/1/2025
APRIL	4/25/2025	4/5/2025	3/2/2025 - 4/5/2025
MAY	5/23/2025	5/3/2025	4/6/2025 - 5/3/2025
JUNE	6/25/2025	6/7/2025	5/4/2025 - 6/7/2025
JULY	7/25/2025	7/6/2025	6/8/2025 - 7/6/2025
AUGUST	8/25/2025	8/2/2025	7/7/2025 - 8/2/2025

**2024-2025**  
**SEMI-MONTHLY PAYROLL DATES**

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>PAY DATE</b>	<b>CUT OFF DATE</b>	<b>PAY PERIOD</b>
SEPTEMBER	9/13/2024	8/17/2024	8/4/2024 - 8/17/2024
SEPTEMBER	9/30/2024	8/31/2024	8/18/2024 - 8/31/2024
OCTOBER	10/15/2024	9/14/2024	9/1/2024 - 9/14/2024
OCTOBER	10/30/2024	9/28/2024	9/15/2024 - 9/28/2024
NOVEMBER	11/15/2024	10/12/2024	9/29/2024 - 10/12/2024
NOVEMBER	11/22/2024	10/26/2024	10/13/2024 - 10/26/2024
DECEMBER	12/13/2024	11/9/2024	10/27/2024 - 11/9/2024
DECEMBER	12/20/2024	11/23/2024	11/10/2024 - 11/23/2024
JANUARY	1/15/2025	12/14/2024	11/24/2024 - 12/14/2024
JANUARY	1/30/2025	1/4/2025	12/15/2024 - 1/4/2025
FEBRUARY	2/13/2025	1/18/2025	1/5/2025 - 1/18/2025
FEBRUARY	2/28/2025	2/1/2025	1/19/2025 - 2/1/2025
MARCH	3/14/2025	2/15/2025	2/2/2025 - 2/15/2025
MARCH	3/28/2025	3/1/2025	2/16/2025 - 3/1/2025
APRIL	4/15/2025	3/15/2025	3/2/2025 - 3/15/2025
APRIL	4/30/2025	3/29/2025	3/16/2025 - 3/29/2025
MAY	5/15/2025	4/12/2025	3/30/2025 - 4/12/2025
MAY	5/30/2025	4/26/2025	4/13/2025 - 4/26/2025
JUNE	6/13/2025	5/10/2025	4/27/2025 - 5/10/2025
JUNE	6/30/2025	5/24/2025	5/11/2025 - 5/24/2025
JULY	7/15/2025	6/14/2025	5/25/2025 - 6/14/2025
JULY	7/30/2025	6/28/2025	6/15/2025 - 6/28/2025
AUGUST	8/15/2025	7/12/2025	6/29/2025 - 7/12/2025
AUGUST	8/29/2025	8/2/2025	7/13/2025 - 8/2/2025

**Payroll Deductions**

*Policy CFEA*

The District is required to make the following payroll deductions:

- Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) or Social Security employee contributions
- Federal income tax
- Medicare tax (applicable only to employees hired in this District on or after March 31, 1986)
- Child support and spousal maintenance, if applicable
- Delinquent federal education loan payments, if applicable

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

**Overpayments.** Employees are not entitled to any funds the District overpays. An overpayment occurs if an employee is paid more than the amount the employee should have been paid under the assigned pay grade and applicable supplemental pay.

If an overpayment is reported in the current fiscal year, a payment plan will be developed to recoup the payment. Generally, an overpayment will be paid in one pay cycle. However, if this creates an undue hardship for the employee, the district has the discretion to develop a plan for regular payroll deductions in the same fiscal year. An agreement between an employee and the District must be in place in order to deduct any overpayment.

## **Overtime Compensation**

*Policies DEAB, DEC*

The District compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only non-exempt employees (hourly employees and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. Non-exempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor. A nonexempt employee who works overtime without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Nonexempt paraprofessional employees are paid for a 37.5 hour work week and do not earn additional overtime pay unless the employee works more than 40 hours.

The 2.5 hours between 37.5 and 40 will always be paid as straight time.

Nonexempt employees that are paid on a salary basis are paid for the hours set by the normal work schedule. Hours worked beyond the normal schedule up to 40 hours will be paid at the regular rate of pay.

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. A salary is a fixed sum paid in equal installments and covers all hours in a workweek. Because of extenuating circumstances, overtime pay may be given in lieu of compensatory time. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:00 A.M. Sunday and ends at 11:59 P.M. Saturday.

All overtime worked must be approved by a supervisor in advance. Supervisors are responsible for preventing unauthorized overtime. Supervisors of nonexempt employees must ensure that employees understand how they will be compensated for overtime (compensatory time off or pay) prior to the employee working overtime hours. Supervisors may use flextime (adjusting work hours) to keep employee's work hours under the 40-hour limit to prevent overtime.

Employees may be compensated for overtime (i.e., hours beyond 40 in a workweek) at time-and-a-half with comp time off or direct pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

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

## **Travel Expense Reimbursement**

### *Policy DEE*

The District will reimburse employees for travel expenses that are reasonable and necessary. Each official and employee of the District has a responsibility to limit travel to purposes that are clearly essential and to consider the most economical means of accomplishing travel. Multiple employees traveling to the same event should coordinate travel to reduce expenses.

All travel requires the prior approval of the employee's supervisor and out-of-state travel requires the approval of the Superintendent or Designee. Employees traveling out of the District must complete appropriate forms for timely and complete reimbursement.

Please refer to RISD Procedural Guidelines – Travel for detailed information and instruction on the RISD Intranet under Staff Links.

All travel forms are online at <http://www.rockwallisd.com> or with the campus/department administrative assistants.

## **Student Activity Accounts**

The campus principal may authorize the creation of student groups and approve all plans for fundraising. A student group consists of a student body, student officers, and a faculty sponsor/advisor. Student activity accounts consist of monies raised by and on behalf of student groups to finance legitimate extracurricular activities of the organization. The faculty advisor has fiduciary responsibility for these funds, but the student group should initiate the disbursement of funds.

It is the responsibility of the campus principal and faculty advisor to closely control cash receipts from donations and sales. All donations should be acknowledged by pre-numbered cash receipts. All money should be deposited into the bank as soon as possible. When a student organization disbands or the senior class graduates, the officers or membership should make every effort to expend all available funds. Should they fail to do so; any residual funds will be transferred to the campus activity account.



## **Health, Dental, and Life Insurance**

### *Policy CRD*

Information is available at <http://www.rockwallisd.com>, linking to staff and employee benefit website.

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-Active Care, the statewide public school employee health insurance program. The District's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the Board of Trustees. Employees eligible for health insurance coverage include the following:

- Employees who are active, contributing TRS Members; and
- Employees who are not contributing TRS members who are employed for 10 or more regularly scheduled hours per week.

The insurance plan year is from September 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each year or when they experience a life event (e.g., marriage, divorce, birth).

Information regarding insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are available online at <http://www.rockwallisd.com> and link to staff and Employee Benefits Website.

Group term life insurance in the amount of \$20,000 is paid for by the District for all full-time employees.

All employees who are active members of TRS (Teacher Retirement System) have a life insurance policy that is double their annual salary up to \$80,000. Information is available on the web ([www.trs.state.tx.us](http://www.trs.state.tx.us)).

## **Supplemental Insurance Benefits**

### *Policy CRD*

At their own expense, employees may enroll in supplemental insurance programs for GAP, HSA, Flex Spending, child care reimbursement, vision, dental, disability, cancer, term life, pre-paid legal, identity theft protection, and life insurance. Premiums for these programs are paid by payroll deduction. Detailed information is available online at <http://www.rockwallisd.com> and link to the staff and Employee Benefits Website or you can contact the Department of Human Resources for more information.

## **Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)**

Employees are eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125). This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental, flex spending, childcare reimbursement and additional term life insurance). Any deductions made for supplemental insurance are automatically covered under the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125). See the Summary Plan Description (SPD) on the employee benefits website at [rockwallisd.com](http://rockwallisd.com).

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

## **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

### *Policy CRE*

The District, in accordance with State law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. Benefits pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case.

All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the Risk Management Specialist and your immediate supervisor. Employees who are unable to work due to a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code. (See *Workers' Compensation Benefits*, page 36, for information on use of paid leave for such absences.)

## **Unemployment Compensation Insurance**

### *Policy CRF*

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the Texas Workforce Commission at (888) 657-8742 or at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/uiclaim.html>.

## **Teacher Retirement**

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

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the Department of Human Resources during the retirement year. TRS provides a 90-day window after the date of retirement for a retiree to select any coverage provided under TRS-CARE and permits enrollment during other open enrollment periods established by TRS rules. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits are available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the web at ([www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov)).

## **Other Benefit Programs**

Employees covered under the District health insurance have access to tools and information so employees can get the most out of their health benefits. Information is available at <http://www.rockwallisd.com> and link to staff and Employee Benefit Website.

The District has a third party administrator to assist employees with Tax Sheltered Annuities, 403(b). RAMS Region 10 is a fiduciary for the District and District employees. Information is available at <http://www.rockwallisd.com> and links to staff and benefits.

## **457 Plan**

Rockwall ISD offers a 457 Deferred Compensatory voluntary retirement. The 457 plan is offered in addition to the 403(b) plans and is intended to give the employees an option for their retirement dollars. 457 plans may provide you with greater access to funds during your working years, and as a result, may be more attractive to some individuals. This plan is administered by RAMS Region 10.

For more information please visit [www.rockwallisd.com](http://www.rockwallisd.com) and click on employment and then benefits.

## **LEAVES AND ABSENCES**

*Policy DEC, DECA, DECB*

### **Use of Leave**

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

Paid leave must be used in half-day increments. Earned comp time must be used before any available paid state and local leave. Unless an employee requests a different order, available paid state and local leave will be used in the following order as applicable:

1. Local leave;
2. State sick leave accumulated before the 1995-1996 school year; and
3. State personal leave.

Employees must follow District, department or campus procedures to report or request any absence via Frontline Substitute System or Skyward Employee Access. Any unapproved absences or absences beyond accumulated or available paid leave shall result in a deduction from the employee's pay. Types of absences include, but not limited to: Local Leave, State Leave, Use of Non-Contract Days, Professional Development Days, Use of Comp Time, FMLA Leave, and/or Jury Duty/Subpoena. Failure to report or request an absence may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Days are earned, but are available to use at the beginning of the contract period. They are prorated if a person resigns prior to the end of their contract date. If an employee separates from employment with the District before his or her last duty day of the school year, the employee's final paycheck shall be reduced for state personal leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rata entitlement for the school year.

A “school year” for purposes of earning, using, or recording leave shall mean the term of the employee’s annual employment as set by the District for the employee’s usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time.

If an hourly employee does not report or request leave of absence(s) according to District procedures, the incident is considered a “no call/no show”. An employee who is absent for 5 consecutive days without notice is considered to have abandoned their job and may face disciplinary consequences up to and including termination.

## **Immediate Family**

For purposes of leave other than family and medical leave, immediate family is defined as the following:

- Spouse;
- Son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a son- or daughter-in-law, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis;
- Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, or other individuals who stand in loco parentis to the employee;
- Sibling, stepsibling, and sibling-in-law;
- Grandparent and grandchild; and
- Any person residing in the employee’s household at the time of illness or death.

For purposes of family and medical leave, the definition of family is limited to spouse, parent, son or daughter or next of kin of the service member. The definition of these is found in Policy DECA (LEGAL).

## **Medical Certification**

Any employee who is absent more than five consecutive days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and – in case of personal illness – the employee’s fitness to return to work.

An employee shall submit medical certification of the need for leave if:

1. The employee is absent for more than five consecutive workdays because of personal illness or illness in the immediate family.
2. The District requires medical certification due to a questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the supervisor or Superintendent; or
3. The employee requests FMLA leave for the employee’s serious health condition; a serious health condition of the employee’s spouse, parent, or child; or for military caregiver leave.

The district may require medical certification due to an employee’s questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the supervisor or superintendent. The district may also request medical certification when an employee requests leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for the employee’s serious health condition, a serious health condition of the employee’s spouse, parent, or child, or for military caregiver leave.

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

## **Continuation of Health Insurance**

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

Under TRS-Active Care rules, an employee is no longer eligible for insurance through the district after six months of unpaid leave other than FML. If an employee’s unpaid leave extends for more than six months, the district will provide the employee with notice of COBRA rights.

## **Local Leave**

All employees receive 5-days of paid local leave per year, at the same rate as state personal leave. Local leave shall accumulate to a maximum of 15-workdays. Local leave shall be used according to the terms and conditions of state personal leave.

**Nondiscretionary.** Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered nondiscretionary leave. Reason for this type of leave allows very little, if any advance planning. Nondiscretionary leave will be granted to employees for the following reasons:

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

**Discretionary.** Leave taken at an employee’s discretion that can be **scheduled in advance**. An employee wishing to take discretionary state personal leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor **seven days** in advance of the anticipated absence. Discretionary leave may be subject to the following limitations:

- A maximum of 10 percent of building or department employees permitted to be absent at the same time.
- Discretionary leave may not last more than three consecutive workdays.
- Discretionary leave is discouraged in the following circumstances:
  - The day before a school holiday
  - The day after a school holiday
  - The first and last week of a semester grading period
  - The last day of a grading period
  - Days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams
  - Days scheduled for STAAR tests
  - Professional and staff development days
  - The day before a scheduled break
  - The day after a scheduled break

In deciding whether to approve or deny a request for discretionary use of state personal leave, the supervisor shall not seek or consider the reasons for which an employee requests to use leave.

The supervisor shall, however, consider the duration of the requested absence in conjunction with the effect of the employee's absence on the educational program and District operations, as well as the availability of substitutes.

Exceptions for extenuating circumstances should be submitted to the administrator/supervisor for approval. An appeal process is available through the Department of Human Resources.

## **Sick Leave Bank**

All District employees are eligible to enroll in the Sick Leave Bank during open enrollment each year. District employees must donate one (1) local sick day to be eligible to use this benefit from September 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup>. For information contact the Human Resources Department.

## **State Sick Leave**

State sick leave accumulated before 1995 is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas.

State sick leave can be used for the following reasons:

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

Previously accumulated state sick leave is available for use and may be transferred to other school districts in Texas. There is no maximum to the number of state sick leave days you can accrue.

## Bereavement Leave

The District will offer full-time employees up to five (5) days of Bereavement Leave upon the death of the employee's immediate family.

For purposes of this provision, immediate family shall include spouse; son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, or a child for whom the employee stands in loco parentis; and parent or stepparent.

Full-time employees shall be granted no more than 5-days of Bereavement Leave per contract year. Days designated as Bereavement Leave shall not result in loss of pay for the employee or be charged against the employee's accrued paid leave. If an employee takes more than 5 days of Bereavement Leave in a contract year, those additional days shall be charged against the employee's accrued paid leave or the employee's pay may be docked in accordance with board policy.

## Donated Days

The District will allow an employee to donate Local leave days only, to a Rockwall ISD colleague in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury. State Personal Leave days are not eligible for donation. The opportunity for donating days is in addition to participation in the District's Sick Leave Bank. For information please contact the Department of Human Resources.

## State Personal Leave

State law requires that all employees receive five days of paid state personal leave per year. State Personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of state personal leave is equivalent to the number of hours per day in an employee's usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time. State personal leave accumulates without limit, is transferrable to other Texas school Districts, and generally transfers to education service centers.

Personal leave may be used for two general purposes: **non-discretionary** and **discretionary**.

**Non-discretionary.** Leave taken for personal or family illness, family emergency, a death in the family, or active military service is considered non-discretionary leave. The reason for this type of leave allows very little if any advance planning. Nondiscretionary leave may be used for the following reasons:

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

**Discretionary.** Leave taken at an employee's discretion that can be **scheduled in advance**. An employee wishing to take discretionary leave must submit a request to his or her principal or supervisor **seven days** in advance of the anticipated absence. Discretionary leave may be subject to the following limitations:

- A maximum of 10 percent of building or department employees are permitted to be absent at the same time.
- Discretionary leave may not last more than three consecutive workdays.

Discretionary leave is discouraged in the following circumstances:

- The day before a school holiday
- The day after a school holiday
- The first and last week of a semester grading period
- The last day of a grading period
- Days scheduled for end-of-semester or end-of-year exams
- Days scheduled for STARR tests
- Professional and staff development days
- The day before a scheduled break
- The day after a scheduled break

The effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or department operations, as well as the availability of substitutes, will be considered by the principal or supervisor.

Exceptions for extenuating circumstances to be approved by the administrator/supervisor. An appeal process is available through the Department of Human Resources.

## **Leave Proration**

If an employee separates from employment with the district before his or her last duty day of the year or begins employment after the first duty day, state personal leave will be prorated based on the actual time employed.

When an employee separates from employment before the last duty day of the school year, the employee's final paycheck will be reduced by the amount of state personal leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rata entitlement for the school year.

## **Employee Non-Contract Days**

Non-Contract days may be accumulated for all 226-day and 238-day employees only, based on the date of hire and work calendar for the school year. All requests for use of Non-Contract days must have prior approval from the immediate supervisor. Non-Contract days may not be accumulated from year to year and must be used by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following school year.

## **Family and Medical Leave (FML) General Provisions**

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



### **What is FMLA leave?**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees with **job-protected leave** for qualifying family and medical reasons. The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) enforces the FMLA for most employees. Eligible employees can take **up to 12 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for:

- The birth, adoption or foster placement of a child with you,
- Your serious mental or physical health condition that makes you unable to work,
- To care for your spouse, child or parent with a serious mental or physical health condition, and
- Certain qualifying reasons related to the foreign deployment of your spouse, child or parent who is a military servicemember.

An eligible employee who is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin of a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness **may take up to 26 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember.

You have the right to use FMLA leave in one block of time. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave **intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule** by working less hours each day or week. Read Fact Sheet #28M(c) for more information.

FMLA leave is **not paid leave**, but you may choose, or be required by your employer, to use any employer-provided paid leave if your employer's paid leave policy covers the reason for which you need FMLA leave.

### **Am I eligible to take FMLA leave?**

You are an **eligible employee** if **all** of the following apply:

- You work for a covered employer,
- You have worked for your employer at least 12 months,
- You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before your leave, and;
- Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location  
Airline flight crew employees have different "hours of service" requirements.

You work for a **covered employer** if **one** of the following applies:

- You work for a private employer that had at least 50 employees during at least 20 workweeks in the current or previous calendar year;
- You work for an elementary or public or private secondary school; or
- You work for a public agency, such as a local, state or federal government agency. Most federal employees are covered by Title II of the FMLA, administered by the Office of Personnel Management.

## How do I request FMLA leave?

Generally, to request FMLA leave you **must**:

- Follow your employer's normal policies for requesting leave,
- Give notice at least 30 days before your need for FMLA leave, or
- If advance notice is not possible, give notice as soon as possible.

You **do not have to share a medical diagnosis** but must provide enough information to your employer so they can determine whether the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. You **must also inform your employer if FMLA leave was previously taken** or approved for the same reason when requesting additional leave.

Your **employer may request certification** from a health care provider to verify medical leave and may request certification of a qualifying exigency.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

State employees may be subject to certain limitations in pursuit of direct lawsuits regarding leave for their own serious health conditions. Most federal and certain congressional employees are also covered by the law but are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or Congress

## What does my employer need to do?

If you are eligible for FMLA leave, your employer **must**:

- Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason;
- Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis as if you had not taken leave; and
- Allow you to return to the same job, or a virtually identical job with the same pay, benefits and other working conditions, including shift and location, at the end of your leave.

Your **employer cannot interfere with your FMLA rights** or threaten or punish you for exercising your rights under the law. For example, your employer cannot retaliate against you for requesting FMLA leave or cooperating with a WHD investigation.

After becoming aware that your need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, your **employer must confirm whether you are eligible** or not eligible for FMLA leave. If your employer determines that you are eligible, your **employer must notify you in writing**:

- About your FMLA rights and responsibilities, and
- How much of your requested leave, if any, will be FMLA-protected leave.

## Where can I find more information?

Call **1-866-487-9243** or visit **dol.gov/fmla** to learn more.

If you believe your rights under the FMLA have been violated, you may file a complaint with WHD or file a private lawsuit against your employer in court.

## **Local Procedures for Implementing Family and Medical Leave Provisions**

Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in the 12-month period, from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>, provided they have worked for at least one year, or 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months.

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

**Combined Leave for Spouses.** Spouses who are both employed by the District are limited to a combined total of 12-weeks of FML to care for a parent with a serious health condition; or for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. Military caregiver leave for spouses is limited to a combined total of 26-weeks.

**Intermittent leave.** When medically necessary, or in the case of a qualifying exigency, an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule. The District shall permit the use of intermittent or reduced schedule FMLA leave for the care of a newborn child or for the adoption or placement of a child with the employee. [See DECA (LEGAL) for use of intermittent or reduced schedule leave due to a medical necessity.]

**Fitness for Duty.** An employee that takes FML due to the employee's own serious health condition shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification from the health care provider. When leave is taken for the employee's own serious health condition, the certification must address the employee's ability to perform essential job functions. The district shall provide a list of essential job functions (e.g., job description) to the employee with the FML designation notice to share with the health care provider. Fitness for duty is not required when an employee returns to work following leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition; to care for a child following birth, adoption, or foster care placement; or for qualifying exigency leave.

**Reinstatement.** An employee returning to work at the end of FML will be returned to the same position held when the leave began or to an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

In certain cases, instructional employees desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester may be required to continue on family and medical leave until the end of the semester. The additional time off is not counted against the employee's FML entitlement, and the district will maintain the employees group health insurance and reinstate the employee at the end of the leave according the procedures outlined in policy (see DECA (LEGAL)).

**Failure to Return.** If, at the expiration of FML, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the district may require the employee to reimburse the district's share of insurance premiums paid during any portion of FML when the employee was on unpaid leave. If the employee fails to return to work for a reason beyond the employee's control, such as a continuing personal or family serious health condition or a spouse being unexpectedly transferred more than 75 miles from the district, the district may not require the employee to reimburse the district's share of premiums paid.

**District contact.** Employees that require FML or have questions should contact The Department of Human Resources for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

## **Temporary Disability Leave**

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

Employees must request approval for temporary disability leave. An employee's notification of need for extended absence due to the employee's own medical condition shall be accepted as a request for temporary disability leave. The request must be accompanied by a physician's statement confirming the employee's inability to work and estimating a probable date of return. If disability leave is approved, the length of leave is no longer than 180 calendar days.

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

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

## **Workers' Compensation**

Workers' compensation is not a form of leave. The workers' compensation law does not require the continuation of the District's contribution to health insurance.

An employee absent from duty because of a job-related illness or injury may be eligible for workers' compensation weekly income benefits if the absence exceeds seven calendar days. An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits for a job-related illness or injury may choose to use available sick leave or any other paid leave benefits.

An employee choosing to use available leave will not receive workers' compensation weekly income benefits until all requested paid leave is exhausted or to the extent that paid leave does not equal the pre-illness or pre-injury wage. If the use of paid leave is not elected, then the employee will only receive workers' compensation wage benefits for any absence resulting from a work-related illness or injury. However, these wage benefits may not equal his or her pre-illness or pre-injury wage. The District shall not permit the option for paid leave offset in conjunction with workers' compensation income benefits.

## **Assault Leave**

Employees have the right to take assault leave, which provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person non-responsible for purposes of criminal liability. An incident involving an assault is a work-related injury and should be immediately reported to your direct supervisor and the District Risk Management Specialist.

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. At the request of an employee, the District will immediately assign the employee to assault leave. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation benefits. Upon investigation, the District may change the assault leave status and charge leave used against the employee's accrued paid leave. The employee's pay will be deducted if accrued paid leave is not available.

## **Jury Duty**

*Policies DEC, DG*

The District provides paid leave to employees who are summoned to jury duty including service on a grand jury. The district will not discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce any regular employee because of juror or grand juror service or for the employee's attendance or scheduled attendance in connection with the service in any court in the United States. Employees who report to the court for jury duty may keep any compensation the court provides. An employee should report a summons for jury duty to his or her supervisor as soon as it is received and may be required to provide the district a copy of the summons to document the need for leave.

An employee may be required to report back to work as soon as they are released from jury duty. The supervisor may consider the travel time required and the nature of the individual's position when determining the need to report to work. A copy of the release from jury duty or documentation of time spent at the court may be required.

Absences due to compliance with a valid subpoena or for jury duty shall be fully compensated by the District and shall not be deducted from the employee's pay or leave balance.

## **Compliance with a Subpoena**

Employees will be paid while on leave to comply with a valid subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding and will not be required to use personal leave. Employees may be required to submit documentation of their need for leave for court appearances.

## **Truancy Court Appearances**

An employee who is a parent, guardian of a child or a court-appointed guardian ad litem of a child who is required to miss work to attend a truancy court hearing may use personal leave or compensatory time for the absence. Employees who do not have paid leave available will be docked for any absence required because of the court appearance.

## **Religious Observance**

The District will reasonably accommodate an employee's request for an absence for a religious holiday or observance. Accommodations such as changes to work schedules or approving a day of absence will be made unless they pose an undue hardship to the district.

The employee may use any accumulated personal leave for this purpose. Employees who have exhausted applicable paid leave may be granted an unpaid day of absence.

## **Military Leave**

**Paid Leave for Military Service.** Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, reserve component of the United States Armed Forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized Urban Search and Rescue Team is entitled to 15 days of paid leave per fiscal year when engaged in authorized training or duty orders by proper authority. An additional seven days of leave per fiscal year are available if called to state active duty in response to a disaster. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

**Reemployment after Military Leave.** Employees who leave the District to enter into the United States uniformed services who are ordered to active duty as a member of the military force of any state (e.g. National or State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the District will be re-employed provided they can be qualified to perform the required duties. Employees returning to work following military leave should contact the Department of Human resources. In most cases, the length of federal military service cannot exceed five years.

**Continuation of Health Insurance.** Employees who perform service in the uniformed services may elect to continue their health plan coverage at their own cost for a period not to exceed 24 months. Employees should contact the Department of Human Resources for details on eligibility, requirements, and limitations.

# EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

## Employee Recognition and Appreciation

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

## District Communications

Throughout the school year, the Office of Communications/Public Relations/Marketing publishes newsletters, brochures, fliers, calendars, news releases, and other communication materials. These publications offer employees and the community information pertaining to school activities and achievements.

# COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

## *Policy DGBA*

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

The formal grievance process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of the organization if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative grievance procedures are exhausted, employees can bring grievances to the Board of Trustees. For ease of reference, the District's policy concerning the process of bringing concerns and complaints is available on the Internet through the RISD website (<http://www.rockwallisd.com>). At the top of the home page in the dark blue header bar, click on "About Us" > "About" > "Policies & Procedures". Under Policies & Procedures, you will find Complaint/Appeal Forms.

# EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WELFARE

## Standards of Conduct

### *Policy DH*

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

- Recognize and respect the rights and property of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- Know and comply with Department and District policies and procedures.

- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use District time, funds, and property for authorized District business and activities only.

All District employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District policy and procedures, and ethical standards.

Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines, including intentionally making a false claim, offering false statements, or refusing to cooperate with a district investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by educators, including having a criminal record (refer to section on Employee Arrests and Convictions), must be reported to SBEC no later than the seventh day after the Superintendent knew of the incident. See *Reports to the Texas Education Agency* for additional information. Contact the Department of Human Resources for further information.

The *Educator Code of Ethics* which all District employees must adhere to is reprinted below:

## **Texas Educator’s Code of Ethics**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom.

The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty and good moral character. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community. This chapter shall apply to educators and candidates for certification. (19 TAC 247.1(b)).

## **Enforceable Standards**

### **1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance**

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Standard 1.13** The educator shall not be under the influence of alcohol or consume alcoholic beverages on school property or during school activities when students are present.

## **2. Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Standard 2.8** The educator shall not intentionally or knowingly subject a colleague to sexual harassment.

## **3. Ethical Conduct Toward Students**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Standard 3.9** The educator shall refrain from inappropriate communication with a student or minor, including, but not limited to, electronic communication such as cell phone, text messaging, email, instant messaging, blogging, or other social network communications.

Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

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

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**Employee Standards of Conduct**  
*DH (LOCAL)*

All District employees shall perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District policy, and ethical standards. [See DH (EXHIBIT)]

All District employees shall recognize and respect the rights of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community and shall work cooperatively with others to serve the best interests of the District.

**VIOLATIONS OF STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Employees wishing to express concern, complaints, or criticism shall do so through appropriate channels. [See DGBA]

Employees shall comply with the standards of conduct set out in this policy and with any other policies, regulations, and guidelines that impose duties, requirements, or standards attendant to their status as District employees. Violation of any policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment. [See DCD and DF series]

#### SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Each employee shall adhere to District safety rules and regulations. Each employee shall keep his or her classroom door locked at all time during class time and shall report unsafe conditions or practices to the appropriate supervisor. Violations of the District's safety policy, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

#### HARASSMENT OR ABUSE

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment of:

1. Other employees. [See DIA]
2. Students [See FFH; see FFG regarding child abuse and neglect]

While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other persons, including Board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or Parents.

#### RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

Employees shall not form romantic or other inappropriate social relationships with students. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual. [See FFH]

#### TOBACCO, NICOTINE, AND E-CIGARETTES

An employee shall not smoke or use tobacco or nicotine products or e-cigarettes on District property, in District vehicles, or at School-related activities. [See also GKA]

#### ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Employees shall not manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours while at school or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours:

1. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
3. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
4. Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drugs.
5. An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered “under the influence” of a controlled substance.

## EXCEPTIONS

An employee who manufactures, possesses, or dispenses a Substance listed above as part of the employee’s job responsibilities, or who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician prescribed for the employee’s personal use shall not be considered to have violated this policy.

## NOTICE

Each employee shall be given a copy of the District’s notice regarding drug-free schools. [See DI (EXHIBIT)] A copy of this policy, a purpose of which is to eliminate drug abuse from the workplace, shall be provided to each employee at the beginning of each year or upon employment.

## ARRESTS, INDICTMENTS, CONVICTIONS, AND OTHER ADJUDICATIONS

An employee shall notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor, within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of the employee for any felony, any offense involving moral turpitude, and any of the other offenses as indicated below:

1. Crimes involving school property or funds;
2. Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator;
3. Crimes that occur wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity; or
4. Crimes involving moral turpitude, which include:
  - Dishonesty; fraud; deceit; theft; misrepresentation;
  - Deliberate violence;

- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor;
- Felony possession, transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to possess, transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance defined in Chapter 481 of the Health and Safety Code;
- Acts constituting public intoxication, operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, or disorderly conduct, if any two or more acts are committed within any 12-month period; or
- Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code.

## DRESS AND GROOMING

The dress and grooming of District employees shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments, and in accordance with any Additional standards established by their supervisors and approved by the Superintendent.

# Employee Dress Code

## General Guidelines

An employee's dress and grooming shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for his or her assignment, and in accordance with the following standards:

- Employees may not wear clothing items prohibited by the student handbook.
- No tight or form-fitting pants, stretch pants, yoga pants or leggings may be worn unless, under a skirt, or dress, that complies with the dress code.
- Staff are not permitted to wear any clothing, paraphernalia, grooming, jewelry, accessories, or body adornments that are disruptive to the education environment as determined by the Principal or Supervisor.
- Employees should wear clothing that is professional as it pertains to necklines and shirt/skirt lengths.
- All administrative staff are expected to dress in a professional manner.
- Good personal hygiene is required at all times.

**Hair** - Hairstyles and facial hair must be neat in appearance and present a professional style.

**Shoes** - Footwear shall exclude flip-flops and slippers.

**Jeans** - Jeans may be worn on days designated by the principal or supervisor, (i.e., designated spirit days, and teacher in-service days).

**Support Staff** - Auxiliary employees in maintenance, transportation, child nutrition, and positions requiring a uniform are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to their position and type of work, and shall comply with dress and grooming guidelines specified by their supervisors in the handbooks for those positions.

**Piercings /Body Ornamentation/ Tattoos** – Ear and nose piercings are permitted so long as they are not disruptive or distracting to the learning environment. Other visible body piercings and tongue piercings are not permitted. Tattoos and body art must not be visible and must be appropriately covered.

## Exceptions to Guidelines

- Physical education staff/coaches may choose to wear appropriate attire, approved by the administration, during the physical education instructional or athletic periods (duty hours).
- Instructors in CTE, industrial or special education classes may wear clothing and shoes deemed necessary for the safety of the employee.

The campus principal and/or supervisor will be solely responsible for initially interpreting and enforcing the dress code, and may approve variations of the dress code for special situations such as field day, spirit day, etc.

### All Staff

- All staff must wear their Rockwall ISD badge at all times during business hours,
- In the case of an epidemic, pandemic, or other circumstances involving a communicable disease, employees may be required to utilize face coverings, face shields, or other personal protective equipment when executing their duties and responsibilities as employees.

If you have questions concerning dress requirements, please contact the Department of Human Resources. Concerns regarding dress code requirements may be appealed as provided by Board Policy DGBA (Legal) and DGBA (Local).

## **Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation**

### *Policies DH, DIA*

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

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated or retaliated against or harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, or appropriate District official. If the campus principal, supervisor, or District official is the subject of a complaint, the complaint should be made directly to the Chief Human Resources Officer. A complaint against the superintendent may be made directly to the Board.

Any district employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, or believes that another employee has experienced such prohibited conduct, should immediately report the alleged acts. The employee may report the alleged acts to his or her supervisor, the campus principal, the Title IX coordinator, or the superintendent. The district's Title IX coordinator's name and contact information is listed in the Equal Employment Opportunity section of this handbook.

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

# EMPLOYEE WELFARE FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

*DIA (LOCAL)*

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**Note:** This policy addresses discrimination, harassment, and retaliation against District employees. For Title IX and other provisions regarding discrimination, harassment, and retaliation against students, see FFH. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

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## DEFINITIONS

Solely for purposes of this policy, the term “employee” includes former employees, applicants for employment, and unpaid interns.

## DISCRIMINATION

The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Discrimination against an employee is defined as conduct directed at an employee on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the employee’s employment.

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In accordance with law, discrimination on the basis of sex includes discrimination on the basis of biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, gender stereotypes, or any other prohibited basis related to sex.

## PROHIBITED CONDUCT

In this policy, the term “prohibited conduct” includes discrimination, harassment, and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

Prohibited conduct also includes sexual harassment as defined by Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)]

## PROHIBITED HARASSMENT

Prohibited harassment of an employee is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on an employee’s race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:



Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee's work performance;

1. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive work environment; or Otherwise adversely affects the employee's performance, environment, or employment opportunities.

## EXAMPLES

Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, gender identity, or need for workplace accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors; cyberharassment; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

## SEX-BASED HARASSMENT

As required by law, the District shall follow the procedures below at Response to Sexual Harassment—Title IX upon a report of sex-based harassment, including sexual harassment, when such allegations, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)]

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination defined as unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to the conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a condition of an employee's employment, or when submission to or rejection of the conduct is the basis for an employment action affecting the employee; or  
The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the employee's work performance or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive work environment.

## EXAMPLES

Examples of sexual harassment may include sexual advances; touching intimate body parts; coercing or forcing a sexual act on another; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, contact, or communication, including electronic communication.

## REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any employee who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another employee has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts. The employee may report the alleged acts to his or her supervisor or campus principal.

Alternatively, the employee may report the alleged acts to one of the District officials below.

DEFINITION OF DISTRICT OFFICIALS	For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Superintendent.
TITLE IX COORDINATOR	Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the designated Title IX coordinator. [See DIA(EXHIBIT)]
ADA / SECTION 504 COORDINATOR	Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the designated ADA/Section 504 coordinator. [See DIA(EXHIBIT)]
SUPERINTENDENT	The Superintendent shall serve as coordinator for purposes of District compliance with all other nondiscrimination laws.
ALTERNATIVE REPORTING PROCEDURES	<p>An employee shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX coordinator or ADA/Section 504 coordinator, may be directed to the Superintendent.</p> <p>A report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.</p>
TIMELY REPORTING	To ensure the District's prompt investigation, reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act.
NOTICE OF REPORT	<p>Any District supervisor who receives a report of prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed above and take any other steps required by this policy.</p> <p>Any District employee who receives a report of prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, shall immediately notify the Title IX coordinator.</p>
INVESTIGATION OF REPORTS OTHER THAN TITLE IX	The following procedures apply to all allegations of prohibited conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. [See FFH(LEGAL)] For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, see the procedures below at Response to Sexual Harassment—Title IX The District may request, but shall not require, a written report. If a report is made orally, the District official shall reduce the report to written form.
INITIAL ASSESSMENT	Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proved, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation, regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory

investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending.

#### INTERIM ACTION

If appropriate, the District shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent prohibited conduct during the course of an investigation.

#### DISTRICT INVESTIGATION

The investigation may be conducted by the District official or a designee, such as the campus principal, or by a third party designated by the District, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the principal or supervisor shall be involved in or informed of the investigation.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.

#### CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the District official overseeing the investigation.

#### DISTRICT ACTION

If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

The District may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the conduct did not rise to the level of prohibited or unlawful conduct.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

#### APPEAL

A complainant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through DGBA (LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

The complainant may have a right to file a complaint with appropriate state or federal agencies

RESPONSE TO SEXUAL  
HARASSMENT—TITLE IX  
GENERAL RESPONSE

For purposes of the District’s response to reports of harassment prohibited by Title IX, definitions can be found in FFH (LEGAL). When the District receives notice or an allegation of conduct that, if proved, would meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, the Title IX coordinator shall promptly contact the complainant to:

- Discuss the availability of supportive measures and inform the complainant that they are available, with or without the filing of a formal complaint;
- Consider the complainant’s wishes with respect to supportive measures; and
- Explain to the complainant the option and process for filing a formal complaint.

The District’s response to sexual harassment shall treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures to both parties, as appropriate, and by following the Title IX formal complaint process before imposing disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

If a formal complaint is not filed, the District reserves the right to investigate and respond to prohibited conduct in accordance with Board policies and administrative procedures.

TITLE IX FORMAL  
COMPLAINT PROCESS

To distinguish the process described below from the District’s general grievance policies [see DGBA, FNG, and GF], this policy refers to the grievance process required by Title IX regulations for responding to formal complaints of sexual harassment as the District’s “Title IX formal complaint process.” The Superintendent shall ensure the development of a Title IX formal complaint process that complies with legal requirements. [See FFH(LEGAL)]

The formal complaint process shall be posted on the District’s website. In compliance with Title IX regulations, the District’s Title IX formal complaint process shall address the following basic requirements:

1. Equitable treatment of complainants and respondents;
2. An objective evaluation of all relevant evidence;
3. A requirement that the Title IX coordinator, investigator, Decision maker, or any person designated to facilitate an informal resolution process not have a conflict of interest or bias;
4. A presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sexual harassment until a determination is made at the conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process;

5. A presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sexual harassment until a determination is made at the conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process;
6. Time frames that provide for a reasonably prompt conclusion of the Title IX formal complaint process, including time frames for appeals and any informal resolution process, and that allow for temporary delays or the limited extension of time frames with good cause and written notice as required by law;
7. A description of the possible disciplinary sanctions and remedies that may be implemented following a determination of responsibility for the alleged sexual harassment;
8. A statement of the standard of evidence to be used to determine responsibility for all Title IX formal complaints of sexual harassment;
9. Procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal a determination of responsibility or a dismissal of a Title IX formal complaint or any allegations therein;
10. A description of the supportive measures available to the complainant and respondent
11. A prohibition on using or seeking information protected under a legally recognized privilege unless the individual holding the privilege has waived the privilege;
12. Additional formal complaint procedures in 34 C.F.R. 106.45(b), including written notice of a formal complaint, consolidation of formal complaints, recordkeeping, and investigation procedures; and
13. Other local procedures as determined by the Superintendent.

**STANDARD OF EVIDENCE** The standard of evidence used to determine responsibility in a Title IX formal complaint of sexual harassment shall be the preponderance of the evidence.

**RETALIATION** The District prohibits retaliation against an employee who makes a claim alleging to have experienced discrimination or harassment, or another employee who, in good faith, makes a report of harassment or discrimination, files a complaint of harassment or discrimination, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates or refuses to participate in an investigation.

**EXAMPLES** Examples of retaliation may include termination, refusal to hire, demotion, and denial of promotion. Retaliation may also include threats, intimidation, coercion, unjustified

negative evaluations, unjustified negative references, or increased surveillance.

## RECORDS RETENTION

The District shall retain copies of allegations, investigation reports, and related records regarding any prohibited conduct in accordance with the District's records control schedules, but for no less than the minimum amount of time required by law. [See CPC]

[For Title IX recordkeeping and retention provisions, see FFH (LEGAL) and the District's Title IX formal complaint process.]

## ACCESS TO POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Information regarding this policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually to District employees. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

## Harassment of Students

*Policies DF, DH, DHB, FFG, FFH, FFI*

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and District employees are prohibited.

Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate District official. Any district employee who suspects or receives direct or indirect notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, of a student shall immediately notify the district's Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, or Superintendent and take any other steps required by the district policy.

All allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect occurred must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

See *Reporting suspected child abuse*, page 61, for additional information.

The District's policy that includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating harassment of students is available [here](#) and reprinted below.

The definition of solicitation of a romantic relationship is as follows:

*(DHB LEGAL)*  
“SOLICITATION OF A  
ROMANTIC  
RELATIONSHIP”

“Solicitation of a romantic relationship” means deliberate or repeated acts that can be reasonably interpreted as the solicitation by an educator of a relationship with a student that is romantic in nature. A romantic relationship is often characterized by a strong emotional or sexual attachment and/or patterns of exclusivity, but does not include appropriate educator-student relationships that arise out of legitimate contexts such as familial connections or longtime acquaintance. The following acts, considered in context, may constitute prima facie evidence of the solicitation by an educator of a romantic relationship with a student:

1. Behavior, gestures, expressions, or communications with a student that are unrelated to the educator’s job duties and evidence a romantic intent or interest in the student, including statements of love, affection, or attraction. Factors that may be considered in determining the romantic intent of such communications or behavior include:
  - a. The nature of the communications;
  - b. The timing of the communications;
  - c. The extent of the communications;
  - d. Whether the communications were made openly or secretly;
  - e. The extent that the educator attempts to conceal the communications;
  - f. If the educator claims to be counseling a student, SBEC may consider whether the educator’s job duties included counseling, whether the educator reported the subject of the counseling to the student’s guardians or to the appropriate school personnel, or, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect, whether the educator reported the abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities; and
  - g. Any other evidence tending to show the context of the communications between educator and student.
2. Making inappropriate comments about a student’s body, creating or transmitting sexually suggestive photographs or images, or encouraging the student to transmit sexually suggestive photographs or images.
3. Making sexually demeaning comments to a student.
4. Making comments about a student’s potential sexual performance.

5. Requesting details of a student’s sexual history.
6. Requesting a date, sexual contact, or any activity intended for the sexual gratification of the educator.
7. Engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party.
8. Inappropriate hugging, kissing, or excessive touching.
9. Providing the student with drugs or alcohol.
10. Suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage.
11. Any other acts tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with the student.

## Termination of Employment

*Policy DF (LEGAL)*

<p><b>“DISCHARGE OF CONVICTED EMPLOYEES”</b></p>	<p><i>A district shall discharge or refuse to hire an employee or applicant for employment if the district obtains information through a criminal history record information (CHRI) review that the employee or applicant has been:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for an offense requiring registration as a sex offender under Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 62; or</i></li> <li><i>2. Convicted of: a. A felony under Title 5, Penal Code, if the victim of the offense was under 18 years of age at the time the offense was committed; or b. An offense under the laws of another state or federal law that is equivalent to an offense under item 1 or 2a, above.</i></li> </ol>
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*19 TAC 249.3(50)*

A superintendent may notify SBEC of any educator misconduct that the superintendent believes in good faith may be subject to sanctions by SBEC. *19 TAC 249.14(d)*

FFH (LOCAL)

STUDENT WELFARE FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT & RETALIATION

**Note:** This policy addresses discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving District students. For provisions regarding discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving District employees, see DIA. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG. For provisions regarding bullying, see FFI.



**STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION** The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. The District prohibits dating violence, as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy.

**DISCRIMINATION** Discrimination against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or on any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the student.

**PROHIBITED HARASSMENT** Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student’s race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student’s academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student’s educational opportunities.

Prohibited harassment includes dating violence as defined by this policy.

**EXAMPLES** Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person’s religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT BY AN EMPLOYEE** Sexual harassment of a student by a District employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

1. A District employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on

- whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
- 2. The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
  - a. Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or
  - b. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and District employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a District employee is always prohibited, even if consensual. [See DF]

## BY OTHERS

Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

- 1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- 2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- 3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

**EXAMPLES** Examples of sexual harassment of a student may include sexual advances; touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Necessary or permissible physical contact such as assisting a child by taking the child's hand, comforting a child with a hug, or other physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature is not sexual harassment.

## DATING VIOLENCE

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship.

Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense.

For purposes of this policy, dating violence is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

1. Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

**EXAMPLES** Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults; name-calling; put-downs; or threats directed at the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household. Additional examples may include destroying property belonging to the student, threatening to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempting to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, threatening a student's spouse or current dating partner, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

## RETALIATION

The District prohibits retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation.

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is subject to appropriate discipline.

**EXAMPLES** Examples of retaliation include threats, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances, such as negative comments that are justified by a student's performance in the classroom.

## PROHIBITED CONDUCT

In this policy, the term "prohibited conduct" includes discrimination, harassment, dating violence and retaliation as defined by this policy, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

REPORTING  
PROCEDURES

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee.

Alternatively, a student may report prohibited conduct directly to one of the District officials below:

DEFINITION OF  
DISTRICT  
OFFICIALS

For the purposes of this policy, District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the Superintendent.

TITLE IX  
COORDINATOR -  
**EMPLOYEES**

Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Employee Title IX Coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name: Ms. Joey Byrum ([joey.byrum@rockwallisd.org](mailto:joey.byrum@rockwallisd.org))  
Position: Chief Human Resources Officer  
Address: 1050 Williams Street, Rockwall, TX 75087  
Telephone: (972) 771-0605

TITLE IX  
COORDINATOR -  
**STUDENTS**

Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Student Title IX Coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended:

Name: Dr. Kelvin Stroy ([kelvin.stroy@rockwallisd.org](mailto:kelvin.stroy@rockwallisd.org))  
Position: Chief Student Services Officer  
Address: 1050 Williams Street, Rockwall, TX 75087  
Telephone: (972) 771-0605

ADA/ SECTION 504  
COORDINATOR

Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the ADA/Section 504 coordinator. The District designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended:

Name: Ms. Katy Hill ([katy.hill@rockwallisd.org](mailto:katy.hill@rockwallisd.org))  
Position: Director of 504 and Intervention Services  
Address: 1050 Williams Street, Rockwall, TX 75087  
Telephone: (972) 771-0605

SUPERINTENDENT	The Superintendent shall serve as coordinator for purposes of District compliance with all other antidiscrimination laws.
ALTERNATIVE REPORTING PROCEDURES	<p>A student shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX coordinator or ADA/Section 504 coordinator, may be directed to the Superintendent.</p> <p>A report against the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.</p>
TIMELY REPORTING	<p>Reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to promptly report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.</p>
NOTICE OF REPORT	Any District employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate District official listed above and take any other steps required by this policy.
NOTICE TO PARENTS	The District official or designee shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by a District employee or another adult.
INVESTIGATION OF THE REPORT	<p>The District may request, but shall not insist upon, a written report. If a report is made orally, the District official shall reduce the report to written form.</p> <p>Upon receipt or notice of a report, the District official shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the District official shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation, regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending.</p> <p>If appropriate, the District shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent prohibited conduct during the course of an investigation.</p> <p>The investigation may be conducted by the District official or a designee, such as the campus principal, or by a third party designated by the District, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the campus principal shall be involved in or informed of the investigation.</p>

CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION	<p>The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.</p> <p>Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the report; however, the investigator shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.</p> <p>The investigator shall prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall be filed with the District official overseeing the investigation.</p>
DISTRICT ACTION	<p>If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.</p> <p>The District may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the conduct did not rise to the level of prohibited or unlawful conduct.</p>
CONFIDENTIALITY	<p>To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.</p>
APPEAL	<p>A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG (LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.</p>
RECORDS RETENTION	<p>Retention of records shall be in accordance with FB (LOCAL) and CPC (LOCAL).</p>
ACCESS TO POLICY	<p>Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to District employees and included in the student handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.</p>

## **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

*Policies DG, FFG, GRA*

All employees with reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect as defined by Texas Family Code §261.001, to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services (CPS), or appropriate state agency (e.g.: state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the reasonable cause to believe. Alleged abuse or neglect involving a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child (including a teacher) must be reported to CPS.

Employees are also required to make a report if they have reasonable cause to believe that an adult was a victim of abuse or neglect as a child and they determine in good faith that the disclosure of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of another child, elderly person, or person with a disability.

Reports to Child Protective Services can be made online at <https://www.txabusehotline.org/Login/Default.aspx> or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person or administrator to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the District is prohibited from taking an adverse employment action against a certified or licensed professional who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution as a Class A misdemeanor. The offense of failure to report by a professional may be a state jail felony if it is shown the individual intended to conceal the abuse or neglect. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the Texas Educators Code of Ethics.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should also report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies.

Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. In addition, employees must cooperate with investigators of child abuse and neglect. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the investigator is prohibited.

## **Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment of Children**

The District has established a plan for addressing sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children. The plan is outlined in our [District Improvement Plan](#), which can be found on the RISD Home Page at <https://www.rockwallisd.com> > "About Us" > "About" > "Required Postings" > "Accountability".

As an employee, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. Maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect following the procedures described in *Reporting Suspected Child Abuse (page 61)*.

## **Reporting Crime**

*Policy DG*

The Texas Whistleblower Act protects district employees who make good faith reports of violations of law by the district to an appropriate law enforcement authority. The district is prohibited from suspending, terminating the employment of, or taking other adverse personnel action against, an employee who makes a report under the Act.

State law also provides employees with the right to report a crime witnessed at the school to any peace officer with authority to investigate the crime.

## **Scope and Sequence**

*Policy DG*

If a teacher determines that students need more or less time in a specific area to demonstrate proficiency in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for that subject and grade level, the district will not penalize the teacher for not following the district's scope and sequence.

The district may take appropriate action if a teacher does not follow the district's scope and sequence based on documented evidence of a deficiency in classroom instruction. This documentation can be obtained through observation or substantiated and documented third-party information.

## **Technology Resources**

*Policy CQ, CQC*

Access to the District's technology resources, including its networks, computer systems, e-mail accounts, devices connected to its networks, and all district-owned devices used on or off school property are primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use is permitted if the use:

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



The District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review, and store files at any time without prior notice. This includes any and all usage of the computer network, Internet access, and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. Designated District staff shall be authorized to monitor the District's technology resources at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the District's technology resources by students, employees, and members of the public shall not be considered private. Email messages composed or received through our system may be considered Rockwall Independent School District records, and therefore subject to Open Records Act requests and other legal disclosure.

System users may not use the District's e-mail system to promote activities or events for individuals or organizations not directly affiliated with, or sanctioned by, RISD.

Employees are required to abide by the provisions of the District's acceptable use agreement and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary and legal action. Employees with questions about computer use and data management can contact the Department of Human Resources.

Internet access through District computers and Wi-Fi is filtered. This filtering software blocks access to inappropriate material, as defined by the federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Employees that have an instructional need to access web sites that may be blocked should submit a ticket through the Technology Help Desk.

Computer accounts are strictly for use by the authorized owner of the account. Employees are responsible for all activity that occurs within their accounts. **Employees should not share their passwords with any person or allow students to access the network or Internet through an employee's account.**

Employees are responsible for the security of their workstations. To prevent unauthorized use, employees should log off all applications and lock or shut down their computers when leaving their workstation.

To assure continued uninterrupted services for computers and networks, all computer users must keep approved software enabled on their computers. Users may not bypass the scanning process. Software and apps are not permitted to be installed or used on district owned computers. Social media services and applications that are prohibited by state law may not be used on district owned equipment.

Any District computer system user must report immediately to the Department of Technology if data from District data systems is lost or inadvertently disclosed to unauthorized parties.

## **Personal Use of Electronic Communications**

*Policies CQ, DH*

"Electronic communication" means any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes emails, text messages, instant messages, and any communications made through a website, including a social media website or a social networking website.

As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting within the course and scope of District employment, on/off school property, and/or within the workday. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as for any other public conduct in accordance with District policies and state and federal law. Should an employee's use of electronic media interfere with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Should an employee wish to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for web links on the employee's page. Employees are also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content of the social media and are responsible for monitoring social media sources for appropriate content on a continuous basis.

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

- The employee shall limit the use of personal electronic communication devices to send or receive calls, text messages, pictures, and videos during breaks, meal times, and before and after scheduled work hours; unless there is an emergency or the use is authorized by a supervisor to conduct district business.
- Employees shall not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment and/or during the employee's duty day if it affects the performance of professional duties.
- Employees shall not use the district's name, logo, pictures of students, facilities, related topics, or other copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent from the District.
- An employee may not share or post, in any format, information, videos, or pictures obtained while on duty or on district business unless the employee first obtains written approval from the employee's immediate supervisor.
- Employees should be cognizant that they have access to information and images that, if transmitted to the public, could violate privacy concerns.

- Employees continue to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educator Code of Ethics, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include, but are not limited to:

**Confidentiality of student records.** This includes discussing any information online or otherwise that could lead to the identification of a particular student or in any manner violates the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. (“FERPA”). [See Policy FL, GBA Legal]

**Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.** [See DH (EXHIBIT)]

**Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses. (i.e., parent email addresses), crime victims, victims of abuse, etc.** [See Policy GBA]

**Copyright law.** [See Policy CY]

**Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague, students or the school system.** [See DH (EXHIBIT)]

## **Electronic Communications between Employees, Students, and Parents**

### *Policy DH*

A certified or licensed employee, or any other employee designated in writing by the superintendent or a campus principal, may communicate through electronic media with students who are currently enrolled in the district only about matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities. All other employees, with the exceptions outlined in the next paragraph, are prohibited from communicating with students who are enrolled in the district through electronic media.

An employee is not subject to these provisions only to the extent that the employee has a social or familial relationship with a currently enrolled student. For example: 1) a familial relationship (Son/Daughter, Niece/Nephew). 2) a relationship with a student who is the child of an adult friend of the employee. 3) a friend of the employee’s child. 4) a member of the same civic, social, recreational, or religious organization.

An employee claiming exception based upon social or familial relationship shall provide the Superintendent or campus principal written consent from the student’s parent(s) or guardian (s) to communicate through electronic media. The written consent, signed by the parents(s) or guardian (s), shall include an acknowledgement that:

- A social or familial relationship exists outside of school;
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) release the District from all liability pursuant to communication with the student through electronic media;
- The employee has provided the parent(s) or guardian(s) with a copy of this protocol;
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) understand that the employee’s communications with the student are expected from District regulations; and
- The parent(s) or guardian(s) are solely responsible for monitoring electronic communications between the employee and the student.

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

"Electronic communication" means any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes emails, text messages, instant messages, and any communications made through a website, including a social media website or a social networking website.

**Communicate** means to convey information and includes one-way communication as well as a dialogue between two or more people. A public communication by an employee that is not targeted at students (e.g., a posting on the employee's personal social network page or a blog) is not a communication; however, the employee may be subject to district regulations on personal electronic communications. See *Personal Use of Electronic Media*. Unsolicited contact from a student through electronic means is not a communication.

**Certified or licensed employee** means a person employed in a position requiring State Board of Educator Certification or a professional license, and whose job duties may require the employee to communicate electronically with students.

The term includes all individuals identified in Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code, classroom teachers, counselors, principals, librarians, paraprofessionals, nurses, educational diagnosticians, licensed therapists, and athletic trainers.

### **Acceptable Electronic Communication Methods**

Electronic communication methods are deemed "acceptable" because they have been vetted for compliance with COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act), have accounts that can be monitored by the District, and/or have data that is retrievable and may be produced as documentation, if required.

- Skyward Family Access
- District Email (Office 365)
- Rockwall ISD Google Accounts
- District-provided Curriculum Resources (such as, Canvas, See Saw, Edgenuity, etc)
- Remind
  - Note: If teachers use Remind with students, they must have signed parent permission each year. Parents can be directed to complete this form online in Skyward Family Access. Staff members should purge their class lists at the end of each year.
- RANK ONE
- Text Message [Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]
  - The employee shall include his or her supervisor as a recipient on each text message to the student, or send a copy of each text message to the employee's and his/her supervisor's District email addresses so that the student and supervisor receive the same message.
  - The employee shall include at least one of the student's parents or guardians as a recipient on each text message to the student so that the student and parent receive the same message.

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

- The employee shall limit communications to matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities (e.g., for classroom teachers, matters relating to class work, homework, and tests; for an employee with an extracurricular duty, matters relating to the extracurricular activity).
- The employee is prohibited from knowingly communicating with students through a personal social network page; the employee shall use District approved “acceptable electronic communication methods” for the purpose of communicating with students.
- The employee is permitted to communicate directly with any student, via electronic media, only in a professional capacity during reasonable hours.
- The employee does not have a right to privacy with respect to communications with students and parents in violation of this policy.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Texas Educator’s Code of Ethics [Policy DH (EXHIBIT)], including:
  - Compliance with the Public Information Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including retention and confidentiality of student records. [See Policies CPC and FL]
  - Copyright law. [See Policy CY]
- The employee is prohibited from soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student. [See Policy DF]
- Upon request from administration, an employee will provide the phone number(s), social network site(s), or other information regarding the method(s) of electronic media the employee uses to communicate with one or more currently enrolled students.
- Upon written request from a parent or student, the employee shall discontinue communicating with the student through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or any other form of one-to-one communication.
- All staff are required to use approved electronic communication methods for all electronic communications with parents. Communication about school issues through personal email accounts or text messages is not allowed as they cannot be preserved in accordance with the district’s record retention policy.

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

### **Standard Footers for E-Mail**

This footer should be appended to all e-mails:

All signatures must be limited to the following information:

- Name
- Position
- Campus Information
- Phone Number
- Email Address

In addition, it is recommended that the following footer should be used appended to all e-mails sent both in and outside of the District:

***OPEN RECORDS NOTICE:*** *This email and responses may be subject to Texas Open Records laws and may be disclosed to the public upon request. Please respond accordingly.*

## **Public Information on Private Devices**

### *Policy GB*

Ownership of Public Information: A current or former board member or employee of a district does not have, by virtue of the board member's or employee's position or former position, a personal or property right to public information the board member or employee created or received while acting in an official capacity.

Surrender or Return of Public Information: A temporary custodian with possession, custody, or control of public information shall surrender or return the information to the district no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day after the date the officer for public information or the officer's agent requests the temporary custodian to surrender or return the information.

## **Criminal History Background Checks**

### *Policy DBAA*

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

## **Employee Arrests and Convictions**

### *Policies DH, DHB, DHC*

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

#### **Offenses listed below:**

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

#### **Moral turpitude includes the following:**

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation

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

If an educator is arrested and/or criminally charged, the superintendent is also required to report the educator's criminal history and misconduct to the Division of Investigations at TEA.

**Certified Employees.** The superintendent and directors are required to report the misconduct or criminal history of a certified employee or individual applying for certification or permit to the TEA Division of Educator Investigations. Information about misconduct or allegations of misconduct of a certified employee obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse that results in termination, resignation, or criminal history (e.g., arrest, indictment, prosecution, conviction, or other disposition by the criminal justice system, including probation and deferred adjudication) will be reported to TEA.

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

- Abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor
- Possessed, transferred, sold, or distributed a controlled substance
- Illegally transferred, appropriated, or expended school property or funds
- Attempted by fraudulent means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit to gain employment or additional compensation
- Committed a criminal offense on school property or at a school-sponsored event, or
- Solicited or engaged in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor

**Uncertified Employees.** Misconduct or criminal history of an uncertified employee also must be reported to TEA. Information about misconduct or the allegations of misconduct obtained by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse that results in termination, resignation, or criminal history (e.g., arrest, indictment, prosecution, conviction, or other disposition by the criminal justice system, including probation and deferred adjudication) will be reported to TEA.

Misconduct or allegations of misconduct include:

- Abuse or unlawful act with a student or minor, or
- Involvement in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor

## **Alcohol and Drug-Abuse Prevention**

### *Policy DH*

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

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## Employee Standards of Conduct

### DH (LOCAL)

**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS** Employees shall not manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours while at school or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours:

1. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
3. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
4. Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drugs.

An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered “under the influence” of a controlled substance.

### EXCEPTIONS

An employee who manufactures, possesses, or dispenses a substance listed above as part of the employee’s job responsibilities, or who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician prescribed for the employee’s personal use shall not be considered to have violated this policy.

### NOTICE

Each employee shall be given a copy of the District’s notice regarding drug-free schools. [See DI (EXHIBIT)]  
A copy of this policy, a purpose of which is to eliminate drug abuse from the workplace, shall be provided to each employee at the beginning of each year or upon employment.

### DI (LOCAL) DRUG FREE AWARENESS PROGRAM

The District shall maintain a drug-free environment and shall establish, as needed, a drug-free awareness program complying with federal requirements. [See DH] The program shall provide applicable information to employees in the following areas:

1. The dangers of drug use and abuse in the workplace.
2. The District’s policy of maintaining a drug-free environment. [See DH (LOCAL)]
3. Drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs that are available in the community, if any.
4. The penalties that may be imposed on employees for violation of drug use and abuse prohibitions. [See DI (EXHIBIT)] All fees or charges associated with drug/alcohol abuse counseling or rehabilitation shall be the responsibility of the employee.



## **Tobacco and Nicotine Products and E-Cigarette Use**

*Policies DH, FNCD, GKA*

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

Employees are prohibited from possessing or using any type of nicotine product, including nicotine pouches, regardless of whether the product contains tobacco, while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. Exceptions may be made for smoking cessation products with supervisor approval.

## **Fraud and Financial Impropriety**

*Policy CAA*

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

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the District;
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document;
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other District assets, including employee time;
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of District financial transactions;
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of District information or activities;
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties;
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the District  
Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the District, except as otherwise permitted by law or district policy;
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment;
- Failing to provide financial records required by federal, state or local entities;
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by law or district policy;
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the District; and
- Failure to comply with requirements imposed by law, the awarding agency, or a pass-through entity for state and federal awards.

## **Conflict of Interest**

*Policies CB, DBD*

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

**Non-school employment:** Employees are required to complete a Disclosure of Non-School Employment form to inform their immediate supervisor and the district of any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the District. This form is located on the Intranet under Human Resources on the RISD website. The supervisor may examine the non-school employment on a case-by-case basis to determine the level and impact of outside employment on the interests of the District.

**Substantial interest:** Any employee who is in a position to affect a financial decision involving any business entity or real property in which the employee has a substantial interest, shall file an affidavit with the Superintendent.

**Endorsements:** An employee shall not recommend, endorse, or require students to purchase any product, material, or service in which the employee has a financial interest or that is sold by a company that employs or retains the District employee during non-school hours.

**Sales:** An employee shall not use his or her position with the District to attempt to sell product or services.

**Private Tutoring/Instruction of Students for pay:** An employee shall disclose in writing to his or her immediate supervisor any private tutoring of District students for pay. Teachers are prohibited from tutoring/instructing students for pay who are currently enrolled in the teacher's class. Use of school facilities for private tutoring/instruction for pay will follow Use of Facility process.

Employees should contact their supervisors for additional information.

## **Gifts and Favors**

### *Policy DBD*

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

## **Copyrighted Materials**

### *Policy CY*

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

## **Associations and Political Activities**

### *Policy DGA*

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

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

Use of District resources, including work time, for political activities is prohibited.

The district encourages personal participation in the political process, including voting. Employees who need to be absent from work to vote during the early voting period or on Election Day must communicate with their immediate supervisor prior to the absence.

## **Charitable Contributions**

### *Policy DG*

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

## **Safety and Security**

### *Policy CK series*

The District has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety and security of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety and security program includes written guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. See *Emergencies, on page 77* for additional information.

#### **The following safety and security measures will be enforced:**

- Employees must wear their Rockwall ISD Identification badge at all times while on District property during business hours.
- To ensure safety, all Rockwall ISD Identification badges should not be altered in any fashion.
- All exterior doors shall be closed and locked at all times. Exterior doors shall not be propped open.
- All classroom doors will remain locked at all times.

- No device shall be placed on any door, exterior or classroom, which would interfere with its normal closing and locking.
- Teachers will not be allowed to share keys that are issued to them; including giving keys to students to unlock a door.
- Any door or door lock that becomes inoperative will immediately be reported to the Facilities Department and the Director of Safety and Security. Administrators will submit a work order and the repairs will be a priority for an immediate repair.

Employees must follow established protocols and response to emergencies for each campus and department. Refer to written security procedures specific to your location and work area.

**To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students and to protect and conserve District equipment, employees must comply with the following requirements:**

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

While driving on district business, employees are required to abide by all state and local traffic laws. Employees driving on district business are prohibited from texting and using other electronic devices that require both visual and manual attention while the vehicle is in motion.

Employees will exercise care and sound judgment on whether to use hands-free technology while the vehicle is in motion.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact the Student Services Department.

## **Bloodborne Pathogens**

Bloodborne Pathogen training is required for all employees who are considered to have an occupational risk of exposure. In accordance with the Health and Safety Code of the State of Texas, all campus employees will receive training coordinated by the campus healthcare professional.

Employees who are considered to have an occupational risk of exposure will be offered the Hepatitis B vaccine at no cost. Employees who decline to receive the vaccine may later elect to receive the Hepatitis B vaccine at no cost. The Pathogen Exposure Control Plan will be available on each campus or from the Health Services Director. (Federal Standard CFR 1910)

## **Possession of Firearms and Weapons**

*Policies DH, FNCG, GKA*

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

No violation of this policy occurs when:

1. A District employee who holds a Texas handgun license stores a handgun or other firearm in a locked vehicle in a parking lot, parking garage, or other parking area provided by the District, provided the handgun or other firearm is not loaded and not in plain view; and
2. The use, possession, or display of an otherwise prohibited weapon takes place as part of a District-approved activity supervised by proper authorities.

## **Visitors in the Workplace**

### *Policy GKC*

All visitors are expected to enter any District facility through the main entrance and report to the building's main office. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the District premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

Rockwall ISD employs the use of the Raptor visitor registry system at all campus sites. This program is designed to help campus administrators maintain positive identification of all visitors and to identify those individuals who are listed as Registered Sexual Offenders who might desire to enter one of our schools. All visitors will be required to present a governmental identification when entering the campus.

This identification will be scanned for immediate notification of the status of the visitor. Picture identification will be then issued for each visitor to the campus.

## **Asbestos Management Plan**

### *Policy CSC*

The District is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. Our Environmental Supervisor has developed an asbestos management plan for each school. A copy of the District's management plan is kept in the Department of Maintenance and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

## **Pest Control Treatment**

### *Policies CLB, DI*

Rockwall Independent School District allows only people holding a license with TDA and the approval of the IPM Coordinator to purchase, store and apply any type of pesticides on district property. A pesticide is defined as a substance or mixture of substances intended for destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. (This includes items such as glue boards, flytraps, and EEPA-approved products). A pest is defined as any living thing that exists where it is not wanted.

Rockwall ISD is committed to following the principles of Integrated Pest Management, IPM as required in Division 7 section 7.202 through 7.204 of the Texas Administrative Code in all pest control activities that take place on District property.

Notices of planned pest control treatments will be posted in a District building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices, when applicable, are to be located on the front door.

Individual employees may request in writing to be notified of pesticide applications. An employee who requests individualized notice will be notified via email by the District's IPM Coordinator. In addition, a Consumer Information Sheet is available upon request.

A copy of the District IPM policy is available upon request from the Facility Services Environmental Technician (972-772-1148).

## **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

### **Emergency School Closing**

The District may close schools because of severe weather, epidemics, or other emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the Superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the District's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late, release students early, or cancel school, District officials will post a notice on the District's Website, social media, mobile app and notify by phone call and email. The following television stations are also notified:

Channel 4
Channel 5
Channel 8
Channel 11

You can also access current information at the Rockwall Independent School District website at [www.rockwallisd.com](http://www.rockwallisd.com).

### **Emergencies**

*Policies CKC, CKD*

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

Rockwall ISD uses the Blackboard call-out notification system and also utilizes a mobile app to inform employees of emergency situations. It is important for all employees to update their Employee Access profile in the event of a change of a phone number to ensure they are included in District-wide communications.

## **Purchasing Procedures**

### *Policy CH*

All requests for purchases (including purchases via school district credit card) must be submitted to the Office of the Director of Purchasing in the form of a *Purchase Requisition* (PR) in Skyward with the appropriate approval signatures. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the District can be made without an authorized purchase order. The District may not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without authorization. Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the District's Business Office. Refer to the District Procurement Manual, found on the Purchasing Info page of the Intranet or contact the Director of Purchasing for additional information on purchasing procedures.

The purchasing process from approved vendors consists of the following controls:

- Have available budgeted funds.
- Receive approval from a supervisor.
- Obtain quotes as follows:
  - Purchases under \$2,500 will be made from any District approved vendor
  - Purchases over \$2,500 require three price quotes (may be telephone quotes), when feasible
  - Purchases over \$10,000 require three written quotes, when feasible
  - Purchases over \$50,000:

Except as provided by Education Code Chapter 44, Subchapter B, all district contracts for the purchase of goods and services, except contracts for the purchase of produce or vehicle fuel, valued at \$50,000 or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period, shall be made by the method, of the following methods, that provides the best value for a district:

1. Competitive bidding for services other than construction services.
2. Competitive sealed proposals for services other than construction services.
3. A request for proposals for services other than construction services.
4. An interlocal contract. (\*)
5. A method provided by Government Code Chapter 2269 for construction services [see CV series];
6. The reverse auction procedure as defined by Government Code 2155.062(d).
7. The formation of a political subdivision corporation under Local Government Code 304.001 (purchase of electricity).

*Education Code 44.031(a)*

\* A district that purchases goods and services by agreement with another local government, through the state or state agency, or through a cooperative purchasing program, satisfies any law requiring it to seek competitive bids.

## **Name and Address Changes**

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees must notify the human resources office if there are any changes or corrections to their name. Name changes can only be processed by submitting a new social security card. Home address, telephone number and emergency contact information can be changed through Employee Access. Beneficiary changes can be processed through employee benefits. Changes in W-4 information need to be processed through payroll.

## **Personnel Records**

*Policy DBA, GBA*

Most District records, including personnel records, are public information and must be released upon request. In most cases, an employee's personal e-mail address is confidential and may not be released without the employee's permission.

Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld:

- Address
- Phone number, including personal cell phone number
- Social Security number
- Emergency contact information
- Information that reveals whether they have family members
- Personal email address

Employees with a District email address will complete a Public Information Consent Form electronically at the beginning of the school year. Employees without a District email who will be receiving a hard copy of the handbook will submit the employee handbook receipt with this information, to the Department of Human Resources at the beginning of each school year.

It may be completed at any time by submitting a written request to the Department of Human Resources. New or terminated employees have 14 days after hire or termination to submit a request. If not received, personal information may be released to the public if requested until a request to withhold the information is submitted or another exception for release of information under law applies. An employee is responsible for notifying the district if he or she is subject to any exceptions for disclosure of personal or confidential information.

## **Facility Use**

*Policies DGA, GKD*

Employees who wish to use District facilities after school hours must follow established procedure. The Facility/Reservation Manager is responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact our Facility Department at 972-772-1166 to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

# **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

## **Resignations**

*Policy DFE, DHB*

**Contract Employees.** Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received at least 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the Department of Human Resources. Contract employees may resign at any other time only with the approval of the superintendent or the Board of Trustees. Resignation without consent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).



The principal is required to notify the superintendent of an educator's resignation within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in *Reports to Texas Education Agency* on page 76. The superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee resigns and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

**Non-Contract Employees.** Non-Contract employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the District Human Resources Office at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of a noncertified employee's resignation or termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct of abuse of a student, or was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual conduct with a student or minor. The superintendent will notify TEA within seven business days of receiving a report from a principal, or of knowing about an employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

## **Dismissal or Non-Renewal of Contract Employees**

*Policy DF Series, DHB*

Employees on a probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year according to the procedures outlined in District policies. Employees on probationary or term contracts can be non-renewed at the end of the contract term. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the allegation against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The timelines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or non-renewal occurs will be provided when written notice is given to an employee.

The principal is required to notify the Superintendent of an educator's termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct for any of the acts listed in *Reports to Texas Education Agency* on page 73. The Superintendent will notify SBEC when an employee is terminated and there is evidence to indicate that the employee has engaged in such misconduct.

Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or when the employee's certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on timelines and procedures can be found in the DF policies that are provided to employees or in the policy manuals located on the Rockwall ISD website (<http://www.rockwallisd.com>), clicking on About > Policies & Procedures > [Rockwall ISD Policy Online](#).

Resignations cannot be extended by using accumulated days.

## **Dismissal of Non-Contract Employees**

*Policies DCD, DP*

At-will employees may be dismissed at any time for any reason not prohibited by law or for no reason, as determined by the needs of the District. At-will employees who are dismissed shall receive pay through the end of the last day worked.

Non-Contract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the District to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Non-Contract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the District process when pursuing the grievance.

The principal is required to notify the superintendent of a noncertified employee's resignation or termination within seven business days following an alleged incident of misconduct of abuse of a student, or was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual conduct with a student or minor. The superintendent will notify TEA within seven business days of receiving a report from a principal, or knew about an employee's resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct described above.

Failure to report any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication for any felony, any crime involving moral turpitude, or other offenses listed in DH (Local) may result in contract non-renewal or termination.

## **Discharge of Convicted Employees**

*Policy DF*

The district shall discharge any employee who has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for an offense requiring the registration as a sex offender or convicted of a felony under Title 5 Penal Code if the victim was a minor. If the offense is more than 30 years before the date the person's employment began or the person satisfied all terms of the court order entered on conviction the requirement to discharge does not apply.

## **Exit Interviews and Procedures**

Employees leaving the District will receive information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references from the Department of Human Resources. Separating employees are asked to provide the District with a forwarding address and phone number and complete an *Exit Interview* survey that provides the District with feedback on his or her employment experience.

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

## **Reports to the Texas Education Agency**

*Policies DF, DHB, DHC*

**Certified Employees.** The resignation or termination of a certified employee must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA if there is evidence that the employee was involved in any of the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other unlawful conduct with a student or a minor, Soliciting or engaging in sexual contact or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance.
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of district or school property or funds.
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation.
- Committing a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on district property or at a school-sponsored event.

The reporting requirements above are in addition to the superintendent's ongoing duty to notify TEA when a certified employee or an applicant for certification has a reported criminal history. "Reported criminal history" means any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions including arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal information, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction that is obtained by a means other than the Fingerprint-based Applicant Clearinghouse of Texas (FACT).

**Noncertified Employees.** The voluntary or involuntary separation of a noncertified employee from the District must be reported to the Division of Investigations at TEA by the superintendent if there is evidence the employee abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor, was involved in a romantic relationship with a student or minor, or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor.

### **Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding**

The District is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance. Notice of the following must be sent to the support recipient and the court or, in the case of child support, the Texas Attorney General Child Support Division:

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

# STUDENT ISSUES

## Equal Educational Opportunities

*Policies FB, FFH*

In an effort to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Rockwall ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students based on any of the reasons listed above should be directed to the Superintendent's office.

## Student Records

*Policy FL*

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

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

- Parents: Married, separated, or divorced unless parental rights have been legally terminated and the school has been given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights.
- The student: The rights of parents transfer to a student who turns 18 or is enrolled in an institution of post-secondary education. A district is not prohibited from granting the student access to the student's records before this time.
- School officials with legitimate educational interests.

The RISD Student Handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

## Parent and Student Complaints

*Policy FNG*

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

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

## **Administering Medication to Students**

*Policy FFAC, FFAF*

Only designated employees may administer medication, nonprescription medication, and herbal or dietary supplements to students. Exceptions apply to the administration of medication for respiratory distress, medication for anaphylaxis (e.g., EpiPen), opioid antagonists, and medication for diabetes management, if the medication is administered in accordance with District policy and procedures.

A student who must take any other medication during the school day must bring a written request from his/her parent and the medicine, in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the principal or nurse for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

## **Dietary Supplements**

*Policies DH, FFAC*

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

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

*Policy FFAC*

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood or behavior altering substance. District employees are prohibited by state law from doing the following:

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

## **Student Conduct and Discipline**

*Policies in the FN series and FO series*

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

GENERAL  
GUIDELINE

A District employee shall adhere to the following general guidelines when imposing discipline:

1. A student shall be disciplined when necessary to improve the student's behavior, to maintain order, or to protect other students, school employees, or property.
2. A student shall be treated fairly and equitably. Discipline shall be based on an assessment of the circumstances of each case. Factors to consider shall include:
  - a) The seriousness of the offense;
  - b) The student's age;
  - c) The frequency of misconduct;
  - d) The student's attitude;
  - e) The potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment;
  - f) Requirements of Chapter 37 of the Education Code; and
  - g) The Student Code of Conduct adopted by the Board.
3. Before a student under 18 is assigned to detention outside regular school hours, notice shall be given to the student's parent to inform him or her of the reason for the detention and permit arrangements for necessary transportation.

STUDENT CODE OF  
CONDUCT

At the beginning of the school year and throughout the school year as necessary, the Student Code of Conduct shall be:

1. Posted and prominently displayed at each campus or made available for review in the principal's office, as required by law; and
2. Made available on the District's Website and/or as hard copy to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and to others on request.

REVISIONS

Revisions to the Student Code of Conduct approved by the Board during the year shall be made available promptly to students and parents, teachers, administrators, and others.

PARENT DEFINED

Throughout the Student Code of Conduct and discipline policies, the term "parent" includes a parent, legal guardian, or other person having lawful control of the child.

CORPORAL  
PUNISHMENT

The Board prohibits the use of corporal punishment in the District. Students shall not be spanked, paddled, or subject to other physical force as a means of discipline for violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Within the scope of an employee's duties, a District employee may physically restrain a student if the employee reasonably believes restraint is necessary in order to:

1. Protect a person, including the person using physical restraint, from physical injury.
2. Obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous object.
3. Remove a student refusing a lawful command of a school employee from a specific location, including a classroom or other school property, in order to restore order or to impose disciplinary measures.
4. Control an irrational student.
5. Protect property from serious damage.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR

With the approval of the principal and Superintendent, sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities may develop and enforce standards of behavior that are higher than the District-developed Student Code of Conduct and may condition membership or participation in the activity on adherence to those standards. Extracurricular standards of behavior may take into consideration conduct that occurs at any time, on or off school property.

Extracurricular behavioral standards shall not have the effect of discriminating on the basis of gender, race, color, disability, religion, ethnicity, or national origin.

A student shall be informed of any extracurricular behavior standards at the beginning of each school year or when the student first begins participation in the activity. A student and his or her parent shall sign and return to the sponsor or coach a statement that they have read the extracurricular behavior standards and Consent to them as a condition of participation in the activity.

Standards of behavior for an extracurricular activity are independent of the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of these standards of behavior that are also violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in independent disciplinary actions.

A student may be removed from participation in extracurricular activities or may be excluded from school honors for violation of extracurricular standards of behavior for an activity or for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

## VIDEO AND AUDIO MONITORING

Video and audio recording equipment shall be used for safety purposes to monitor student behavior on District property. The District shall post signs notifying students and parents about the District's use of video and audio recording equipment. Students shall not be notified when the equipment is turned on.

## USE OF RECORDINGS

The principal shall review recordings as needed, and evidence of student misconduct shall be documented. A student found to be in violation of the District's Student Code of Conduct shall be subject to appropriate discipline.

## ACCESS TO RECORDINGS

Recordings shall remain in the custody of the campus principal and shall be maintained as required by law. A parent or student who wishes to view a recording in response to disciplinary action taken against the student may request such access under the procedures set out by law. [See FL (LEGAL)]

## **Student Attendance**

### *Policy FEB*

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The district has put the following procedures in place in order to document parental consent [FEB (LOCAL)]:

- For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out.
- For students in high school, the same process will be followed. If the student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the attendance office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school will require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the attendance office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required. Documentation is subject to state and district guidelines for excused absences and may or may not be counted as an excused absence.
- If a student is evaluated in the health clinic and the school nurse or clinic personnel determines that the student is ill and should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school.
- Under no circumstances will a child in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.
- These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the Student Handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

## **Bullying**

### *Policy FFI*

Bullying is defined by §TEC 37.0832. All employees are required to report student complaints of bullying, including cyberbullying, to their direct supervisor. The District's policy includes definitions and procedures for reporting and investigating bullying of students and is reprinted below:



*Note:* This policy addresses bullying of District students. For provisions regarding discrimination, harassment, and retaliation involving District students, see FFH. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

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BULLYING PROHIBITED	The District prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by state law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.
EXAMPLES	Bullying of a student could occur by physical contact or through electronic means and may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.
RETALIATION	The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.
EXAMPLES	Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.
FALSE CLAIM	A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
TIMELY REPORTING	Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.
REPORTING PROCEDURES	
STUDENT REPORT	To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believed that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principals, or other District employee. The Superintendent shall develop procedures allowing a student to anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying.

EMPLOYEE REPORT	Any District Employee who suspects or received notice that a student or group of students has or may have experience bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.
REPORT FORMAT	A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.
NOTICE OF REPORT	When an allegation of bullying is reported, the principal or designee shall notify a parent of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The Principal or designee shall also notify a parent of the student alleged to have engaged in the conduct within a reasonable amount of time after the incident is reported.
PROHIBITED CONDUCT	The Principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigations under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.
INVESTIGATION OF REPORT	The Principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegation in the report. The Principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation if appropriate.
CONCLUDING THE INVESTIGATION	Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.  The Principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination or whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.
NOTICE TO PARENTS	If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the Principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the

victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

## DISTRICT ACTION

**BULLYING** If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct. The District may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances.

**DISCIPLINE** A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action.

The Discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION** Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine whether any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.

**TRANSFERS** The Principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.

**COUNSELING** The Principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

**IMPROPER CONDUCT** If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

APPEAL

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG (LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

RECORDS  
RETENTION

Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC (LOCAL).

ACCESS TO  
POLICY AND  
PROCEDURES

This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the Districts website ([www.rockwallisd.com](http://www.rockwallisd.com)), to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and District's administrative offices.

## Hazing

1. Engages in hazing.
2. Solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in engaging in hazing.
3. Has firsthand knowledge of the planning of a specific hazing incident involving a student in an educational institution, or firsthand knowledge that a specific hazing incident has occurred, and knowingly fails to report that knowledge in writing to the principal, Superintendent, or designee.

### *Education Code 37.152(a)*

“Hazing” means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution directed against a student, by one person alone or acting with others, that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students. The term includes:

1. Any type of physical brutality, such as whipping, beating, striking, branding, electronic shocking, placing of a harmful substance on the body, or similar activity.
2. Any type of physical activity, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, and confinement in a small space, calisthenics, or other activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
3. Any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student.
4. Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism, that subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation, or that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student or discourages the student from entering or remaining registered in an educational institution, or that may reasonably be expected to cause a student to leave the organization or the institution rather than submit to acts described above.

5. Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of the Penal Code.

6. Any teacher, student or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing, must report the fact or suspicion to the campus administrator.

## **Non-District Travel Programs**

### *Policy DBD (LOCAL)*

The following rules shall apply to an employee involved in a non-District travel program in which District students may participate:

1. An employee involved in such a program must make clear to all student participants and parents that:
  - a. The employee is not acting as an agent of the District;
  - b. Participation in a non-District student travel program is not a prerequisite for any part of the District's curriculum; and
  - c. The District prohibits recruitment during school hours for participants for a non-District student travel program.
2. Distribution of promotional materials shall be in accordance with GKDA (LOCAL).
3. Any meeting conducted on District property for the purpose of promoting a non-District travel program shall be in accordance with GKD (LOCAL).

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