



Russell County School District

506 14th Street

Phenix City, AL 36867

(334) 468-5540

Employee Handbook

2024 -2025

www.myrcsd.org

Greetings Warriors,



It is my honor to welcome new and returning employees to a shining 2024-2025 school year. We are elated to have you on our Warrior team. I am super excited about the new school year and all of the wonderful opportunities this year will bring to us as we inspire, empower, and educate our students with excellence. It is my sincerest desire that we collaborate as a warrior team to ensure that our school district provides the best learning and working environment possible for all students and employees. Russell County School District is an amazing educational system and I appreciate you choosing to be a Russell County Warrior.

As an employee of the Russell County School System, you are part of an outstanding staff that has demonstrated high standards and a strong commitment to the delivery of a great educational program for the students and citizens of Russell County. We are committed to our mission of engaging students in quality learning experiences that will prepare them for success in college, career, and life. Russell County School District strives to provide an employee friendly environment in which every employee is required to perform to his or her highest potential.

The purpose of this resource is to provide you with general information about working conditions, job expectations, employee benefits, and some of the policies and procedures affecting your employment. The contents of this guide will provide you with many answers to common questions concerning employment with Russell County School District. You must read and comply with all provisions of this handbook.

Please be advised that employees of the Russell County School System are workers of a profession whose professional and personal demeanor reflects upon our great county and state as well as the public's trust. Therefore, you must demonstrate the highest standards of dedication and ethical conduct in the performance of your duties. Every employee is a valuable member of the warrior team. You play a critical role in the success of our students and school district. Therefore, employee accountability is a priority and mandate for all personnel.

Thank you for your commitment and for all you will do to help Russell County School District shine in "Excellence". As a school district, we have demonstrated resilience, endurance, faced numerous challenges, and overcome numerous obstacles, but I believe that our time to rise has arrived. This academic school year is our opportunity to achieve "greater works" and not only succeed, but to shine throughout our community, county, region, state, and nation. I invite you to join me in embracing this year's district theme, "It's Our Time To Shine". We appreciate your support and adherence to this handbook. Please feel free to reach me anytime at (334) 468-5540 or coleyb@russellcsd.net.

Brenda Coley, Ed.D.

Purpose

This Employee Handbook has been prepared to outline the Russell County School District's (RCSD) personnel policies. Maintaining this handbook will be an ongoing process that will require frequent updating. Employees will be notified whenever there are revisions to be made by the Superintendent's office. The purposes of this handbook will be as follows:

1. Provide employees with information concerning their benefits, rights and responsibilities.
2. Establish guidelines/procedures for day-to-day administration of personnel matters.
3. Ensure that the district recruits, selects and retains the best personnel, i.e. those with high capabilities and a commitment to the mission and goals of the RCSD.
4. Provide a climate and culture of high expectations that foster optimal staff performance and high morale.
5. Meet both the system and employee needs in providing leadership and service for high quality education in Russell County.

The Employee Handbook is not intended as a detailed statement of all applicable personnel statutes, regulations and policies. Employees may request further information from their supervisor or from the System's Personnel Department when questions arise and more specific information is desired. In the case of any inconsistency between the content of this handbook and applicable statutes, regulations or policies, policies shall prevail.

This handbook is a continuous working document and subject to modification and further development as determined by the Superintendent of schools. Russell County School District reserves the right to amend, alter or change the policies at any time pending Board approval. Employees are encouraged to provide suggestions to their immediate supervisor concerning improvements in personnel guidelines/procedures.

Non-Discrimination Statement

It is the policy the Russell County Board of Education to prohibit discrimination of any type without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, citizenship or genetic information and to afford equal opportunities to employees.

Section I: The Board of Education

RUSSELL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Kenneth Barnes (President)	(334) 667-6606
Mr. Tommy Pugh (Vice President)	(334) 291-0234
Mr. Keith Mitchell	(334) 297-4783
Mrs. Chelsea Smith	(334) 614-4181
Mrs. Barbara Clark	(706) 662-3730
Mr. Joseph Williams	(334) 855-3579
Mr. Timothy Simpson	(334) 614-2610

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Brenda Coley	(334) 468-5540
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DEPARTMENTS

Administrative Services	Tammy Barnes	506 14 th Street	Phenix City, AL 36875	(334) 468-5540
Prevention/Support Services	Jacob Johnson	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4986
Community Education	Paula Thompson	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4970
Child Nutrition	Vantreise Davis	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4933
Curr/Instr/Testing K-5	Marceda Lewis	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4965
Curr/Instr/Testing/CTE 6-12	Cameron Whitlow	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4957
Federal Programs	Jina Rudolph	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4947
Finance	Robert Oliver	506 14 th Street	Phenix City, AL 36867	(334) 468-5540
Maintenance	Jerome Battle Sgt.	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4967
Safety Coordinator	Billy Jones	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4972
Special Education/Testing	Shelena Eldred	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4970
Technology	Fabian Bauerschmidt	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4977
Transportation	Scottie Ates	85 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 408-4926
Human Resources Director	Sarah Kimmel	91 Poorhouse Rd	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 468-5540

SCHOOLS

Dixie Elementary	Derrick Lane	4914 US Hwy 80W	Opelika, AL 36804	(334) 468-5323
Ladonia Elementary	Sherry Huckaby	9 Woodland Dr.	Phenix City, AL 36869	(334) 468-5805
Mount Olive Primary	Lisa Rushing	454 State Hwy 165	Ft. Mitchell, AL 36856	(334) 468-5100
Mount Olive Intermediate	Vanita Pharrams	454 State Hwy 165	Ft. Mitchell, AL 36856	(334) 468-5002
Oliver Elementary	Nancy Kennedy	77 Longview St.	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 468-5400
Russell County Middle School	April Parker	80 Warrior Way	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 468-5604
Russell County High School	Tonya Keene	57 Warrior Way	Seale, AL 36875	(334) 468-5701

Mission

Our mission is to engage students in quality learning experiences that will prepare them for success in college, career, and life.

Vision

Inspire, Empower, and Educate with Excellence

Goals

- Create a Safe Environment
- Establish and Maintain a Professional Workforce
- Create a Positive Culture and Climate
- Improve Academic Growth and Achievement

Section II: Employment

Employment Relationship

Employees are contracted to perform duties as outlined within their job description and as the supervisor deems appropriate. Employees are subject to be terminated by the Superintendent at any time, with notice, cause, or compensation. The employment relationship between the Superintendent and the employee may be terminated by either party. Reasons for terminations by the Superintendent include, but are not limited to, immorality, incompetence, cruelty, insubordination, intemperance, willful neglect of duty, unsatisfactory performance, the conviction of a felony or a guilty plea or a plea nolo contendere (do not wish to contend) to a felony charge, misuse of funds or property, violations of the law or policies of the board, lack of need, or lack or loss of funding.

Tenure/Non-Probationary Status

Employees earn tenure/non-probationary status in accordance with Alabama Law Code Title 16, Section 16-24C-4.

Special/Temporary Employment

Neither tenure nor non-probationary status may be attained as a chief school financial officer, superintendent of a city or county board of education, or in or by virtue of employment in temporary, part-time, substitute, summer school, occasional, seasonal, supplemental, irregular, or like forms of employment, or in positions that are created to serve experimental, pilot, temporary, or like special programs, projects, or purposes, the funding and duration of which are finite. Additionally, a supplement associated with additional duties is not covered by the Students First Act. Supplemental appointment is terminable at will.

Section 16-24C-4 (3) b.

Orientation

The Superintendent/designee will conduct an annual mandatory employee orientation program. Orientation is to be conducted prior to the opening of or during the school year. Topics to be discussed, but not limited to, are policies of the Board, rules and regulations of the Board, and other matters that will assist employees in becoming better acquainted with School System procedures and operational methods and in having a better understanding of their employment responsibilities.

The principal is directed to develop early in the school year an orientation program for his/her staff. Emphasis should be made to inform each member of the staff of the school's rules and regulations, of his/her particular assignment, and of his/her duties and responsibilities. Each first-year teacher should be assigned a consulting teacher (mentor) whose duty shall be to assist the probationary teacher in acclimating to the teaching profession, the school, and the school system. (Policy 5.5)

Communications

To ensure high employee morale and productivity, the Russell County Board of Education is committed to establishing and maintaining communication with and among employees at all levels of the organization. The following vehicles are used to accomplish this objective, including but not

limited to: holding frequent staff meetings, maintaining an up-to-date website, issuing written communication including email and providing an open-door policy for permitting employees to speak openly with supervisors. In addition, all supervisors are responsible for informing staff members about matters affecting their job responsibilities or work assignments, the organization's goals and objectives, policies, concerns and matters of mutual interest. In addition, employees may request to speak to the Board during Board Meetings, they can recommend policies for amendment, and they can recommend new policy.

Categories

The Russell County Board of Education categorizes employees as **certified** or **classified**.

Certified Employees are Assistant Principals, Counselors, Director of Administrative Services, Director of Career Technical Education, Director of Community Education, Directors of Curriculum/ Instruction (K-5/6-12), Director of Federal Programs, Director of Special Education and Testing, Director of Prevention and Support, Director of ESSER, Instructional Coaches, Media Specialists, Principals, Reading Specialists, Teachers, Superintendent and other professionally certified employees.

Classified Employees (Exempt/non-Exempt) are Administrative Assistants, Accounts Payable Clerk, Assistant Financial Officer, Bookkeepers, Bus Drivers, Carpenter, Career Coach, Chief Financial Officer, Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Managers, Director of Maintenance, Director of Transportation, Director of CNP, Director of Technology, Clerks, CNP Assistant Managers, CNP Workers, Data Entry Clerks, Certified Diesel Mechanics, Head Mechanic, Mechanic Helpers, Certified General Mechanics, Courier, Custodians, Mental Health Service Coordinator, Electrician, Executive Assistant, Grounds Maintenance, Heating & Air Conditioning, Interpreter, Painters, Paraprofessionals, Auxiliary Teachers, Parent Liaison, Payroll Clerk, Plumbers, Receptionists, Registrar, Director of Safety, Secretaries, Shop Foreman, Parts Specialist, Senior Accountant, Technology Technician. and all other persons who do not hold a professional teaching certificate and who are full time employees of Russell County School System.

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of the Board that applicants for positions will be selected on the basis of their qualifications, merit, and ability. No person shall be denied employment, reemployment, advancement, or evaluations, nor shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, race, religion, color, national origin, ethnic group, disability, or genetics.

The Board shall comply with regulations of Title II of the Education Amendment of 1972, The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as evidenced by the Equal Opportunity Policy shown above. (Policy 5.13)

Employees with Disabilities

No employee will be discriminated against because of a documented disability. In accordance with state and federal laws, reasonable accommodation will be made for qualified employees. (Policy 5.13)

Harassment

It is the policy of the Board to maintain a learning, working environment that is free from verbal, physical, and/or sexual harassment. No employee or student of the school system shall be subjected to harassment of any form.

It is a violation of Board policy for any employee of the school system to harass another staff member or student through conduct or communication(s).

Violations of this policy or procedure will be cause for disciplinary action. (Policies 5.14; 6.18)

Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) provides that “no person in the united states shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” 20 U.S.C. 1681 (a).

The System’s Title IX Policy defines sexual harassment and outlines the policies and procedures that the System follows in identifying, investigating, and responding to allegations of sexual harassment. The following persons has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation:

Tammy Barnes
334-468-5540
barnest@russelcsd.net
Central Office Annex
506 14th Street
Phenix City, AL 36867

Inappropriate Sexual Contact Act No. 201-354

Inappropriate Sexual Contact by School Employees (Act No. 2016-354) Effective August 1, 2016

- ADDS a new section, 13A-6-82.1, to the Code of Alabama that makes the *distribution or transmission of obscene material to a student by a school employee* a Class A misdemeanor (eligible for a jail sentence of up to one (1) year and a fine up to \$6,000.00)
- **AMENDS 13A-6-80** to:
 - expand definition of school employee from teacher, school administrator, student teacher, safety or resource officer, coach, to also include "adult volunteer in a position of authority or any other school employee who has contact with a student in his or her official capacity as a school employee"
 - define student "as any person under the age of 19 enrolled or attending classes in a public, private at church school that offer instruction in grades *K-12*, regardless of whether school is in session"
- **AMENDS 13A-6-81** to define the crime and penalty of a school employee *engaging in a sex act*:
 - Class B felony (no less than two years and no more than 20 years of imprisonment and a fine of not more than \$30,000)
 - Sexual intercourse as defined by Section 13A-6-60 (1) of the Criminal Code:
 - **SEXUAL INTERCOURSE.** Such term has its ordinary meaning and occurs upon any penetration, however slight; emission is not required.

- Deviate sexual intercourse as defined by 13(A)-6-60 (2) of the Criminal Code:
 - **DEVIATE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE.** Any act of sexual gratification between persons not married to each other involving the sex organs of one person and the mouth or anus of another.
- **AMENDS 13A-6-82** to define the crime and penalty of a school employee who *engages or solicits in sexual contact*:
- Class C felony (no less than one year and one day and no more than 10 years of imprisonment and a fine of not more than \$15,000)
- *Sexual contact* is defined by Section 13A-6-60 (3) of the Criminal Code:
 - **SEXUAL CONTACT.** Any touching of the sexual or other intimate parts of a person not married to the actor, done for the purpose of gratifying the sexual desire of either party.

Crime of *soliciting* a student: If a school employee solicits, persuades, encourages, harasses or entices a student to engage in a sex act including, but not limited to, sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse or sexual contact, it is a Class A misdemeanor (see above).

Prepared by School Superintendents of Alabama

Section III: Work and Salary Schedules

Work Schedules

The Board of Education has established normal business hours as **8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**, Monday through Friday, with a thirty-minute lunch period **for leadership and central office personnel**. Supervisors may set the times for lunch and break periods and may stagger these times to ensure that each worksite is appropriately staffed at all times.

Normal work hours for teachers and instructional assistants are from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. **Certificated** personnel may work beyond 4:00 p.m. as deemed necessary by their immediate supervisor (Security, PTA/PTO, extra-curricular activities, etc.) or as needed to satisfactorily complete job duties. Employees in violation of this policy will be addressed according to the time missed (Policies 5.1.2 [a. and b.]. *Normal work hours for Child Nutrition employees fall between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.; normal hours for the transportation department fall between 6:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.; and maintenance hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.* **Classified employees may not work before their designated start time or beyond their designated end time.** (Policies 5.10 and 3.11.5)

e-Learning School Day

Employee requirements for e-Learning workdays are the same as for a typical face-to-face workday.

Salary

Salary schedules are based on training and job-related experiences. Salary schedules are approved by the board of education. (Policy 3.11.1)

Overtime

Certified employees and classified employees who are in supervisory (“Exempt”) positions are not entitled to overtime pay or compensatory release time. For other classified employees, overtime is defined as the amount of time worked beyond 40 hours in a week. **All overtime work must be approved in advance by the Superintendent. (Policy 3.11.5)**

Personnel in violation of the Overtime Policy may be brought before the Superintendent for disciplinary purposes in accordance with the Students’ First Act.

Pay Periods/Pay Days

Payroll data is compiled at the school or district department level at the close of each month and reported to the district payroll department approximately one week later. The payroll is processed, and paychecks are issued on the last business day of each month. For example, days worked in August are compiled at the school level and reported to the payroll department by September 5. The payroll department develops the payroll, and paychecks related to those days worked in August will be issued on the last business day (for Central Office) of September. Employees must sign-in to work in the beginning and sign-out of work at the end of the day. Employees not signed in/signed out will be considered as not worked, and their pay will be deducted accordingly. **All employees are required to utilize the Direct Deposit of paycheck.** “First-time-ever” education employees may opt to be paid over thirteen (13) months for the first year only. (Policy 3.11.3)

Payroll Deductions

Employees' earning statements are archived monthly through the Employee Self Service Portal located under the "Faculty" tab on the Russell County School District website. It is the employee's responsibility to review earnings statements each pay day. Any errors or unexplained discrepancies should be reported to the payroll department immediately. Employees are encouraged to use their personal email for account access in order to continue usage once employment ends.

Mandatory deductions from paychecks are Federal Withholding Tax, State Withholding Tax, Social Security Withholding Tax (FICA), Medicare, and Teachers Retirement System Contribution. Other payroll deductions may be made based on authorization by the employee including, but not limited to: insurance premiums, union dues, charitable contributions, court ordered payments, and other miscellaneous deductions. (Policy 3.11.4)

403(b) Plan Eligibility Announcement to Employees

To: All Eligible Employees

Date: School Year 2024-2025

Re: Notice of your right to participate in the 403(b) Retirement Plan sponsored by:

Russell County Schools, AL
(Employer)

In compliance with Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) Universal Availability requirements, we are pleased to offer eligible employees the opportunity to voluntarily save for retirement by participating in the 403(b) Plan (“the Plan”). All employees who receive compensation reportable on an IRS Form W-2 are eligible to participate in the Plan, except for those who are specifically excluded by the Plan.

If eligible, you may participate in this Plan by establishing a 403(b) account with one of the Plan’s approved Investment Providers and completing a salary reduction agreement to make pre-tax contributions or (if permitted by the Plan) Roth 403(b) after-tax contributions.

Generally, salary reduction contributions can be made in an amount up to the lesser of 100% of includable compensation or the annual limitations set by the IRS. For the 2022 tax year, the annual contribution limit is \$20,500 with a catch-up contribution of up to \$6,500 for employees that are age 50 or older. If permitted in the Plan, you may also qualify for an additional catch-up contribution of up to \$3,000 if you have completed 15 years of service or more with the school district. To determine the amount of additional catch-up, a Maximum Allowable Contribution (MAC) worksheet must be completed with your sales agent and returned to the payroll department along with a completed salary reduction agreement for approval.

Please be aware that if you participate in more than one 403(b) Plan or another qualified Plan such as a 401(k), you will be responsible for tracking and reporting the amount of your total contributions to the school district so you do not exceed the annual contribution limitation as permitted by the IRS.

By electing to participate in the Plan, you are acknowledging and agreeing to abide by the Plan’s rules and all IRS regulations related to 403(b) Plans. To learn more about the 403(b) Plan, including, but not limited to, (1) exclusions to participation, (2) Plan distribution/transfer/rollover rules, and (3) a list of the Plan’s approved Investment Providers, please contact the school district. You may also contact our administrative services provider, AFPlanServ, by calling 866-560-6415 or by sending an email to WGAnnuity-AF-PlanServ@americanfidelity.com.

For information about specific 403(b) investment products offered by each of our Plan’s approved Providers, it will be the employee’s responsibility to contact each company directly.

Please contact the school district if you have questions regarding this Notice and/or if you would like to participate in the Plan.

Please be sure to consult with your legal or tax advisor before participating in the 403(b) Plan. AFPlanServ does not provide tax or legal advice.

403(b) Investment Provider Options:

Investment Provider Options Provider and Product Name	Product Type	Contact
American Fidelity Assurance	Annuities	(800) 662-1113 www.americanfidelity.com
Horace Mann Insurance Company	Annuities	Phone (800) 999-1030 http://www.horacemann.com
National Life Group (ValuTeachers)	Annuities	(866) 243-7174
Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company (VALIC)	Annuities	Phone (800) 448-2542 http://www.valic.com
Voya Reliastar Life Insurance	Annuities	(877) 884-5050

Third Party Administrator
AF-PlanServe
Plan Record-keeper
Phone (866) 560-6415
Email: [AFPLANSERV-
APPROVER@americanfidelity.com](mailto:AFPLANSERV-APPROVER@americanfidelity.com)

Employer Benefits Administrator
Russell County School District
Robert Oliver, CSFO
Phone (334) 468-5540
Email: oliverr@russellcsd.net
OR
Raven Huguley, Payroll
Phone (334) 468-5540
Email: huguleyr@russellcsd.net

Section IV: Benefits

Holidays Observed:

Employees are granted time off in observance of the following official holidays:

1. New Year's Day - 1st Day of January
2. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday - 3rd Monday of January
3. President's Day - 3rd Monday of February (dependent on school calendar)
4. Spring Break-(dependent on school calendar)
5. Memorial Day - Last Monday in May
6. Juneteenth- 19th Day of June
7. Independence Day - 4th Day of July
8. Labor Day - 1st Monday of September
9. Columbus Day - 2nd Monday of October (dependent on school calendar)
10. Veterans Day - 11th Day of November
11. Thanksgiving - 4th Wednesday, Thursday & Friday of November
12. Winter Break – December–January (varies year to year by adopted school calendar)

The School System will make reasonable accommodations for an employee's religious holiday observance, but an employee cannot observe a religious holiday not of his faith and one of his faith.

Leave Expectations (Absences/Tardies)

It is the responsibility of the supervisor/principal to monitor employee absences. Abuse of leave affects all employees and may lead to more strict control thereof, including but not limited to, being

required to produce a physician's statement of all absences. If an employee's attendance record suggests a problem, the supervisor/principal shall hold a conference with the employee to identify and resolve the problem. Continued abuse of leave may result in termination. (Policies 5.10.3 and 5.10.5)

Annual Leave (Vacation)

Only full-time (12 month personnel) employees are eligible to earn annual leave. Annual leave is earned according to an employee's total length of verified employment in the Russell County School District. Annual leave will not surpass 25 days. (Policy 5.10.6)

Catastrophic Leave

Catastrophic Leave covers any illness, injury, pregnancy, or any medical condition related to childbirth certified by a doctor that causes the employee to be absent for an extended period of time.

In order for an employee to participate in the Catastrophic Sick Leave plan as defined in The Code of Alabama, 16-22-9, he/she must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Be a member of the Russell County School Board's Sick Leave Bank.
2. Have used all accumulated leave days.
3. Be a full-time or part-time employee that meets federal guidelines under the "Family and Medical Leave Act."
4. Employees may donate sick leave days to employee in-system and out-of-system if both members belong to the sick leave bank in Alabama.
5. Members may donate up to 30 days. (Policy 5.12)

Family Medical Leave Act

In the event an employee is absent multiple days, the absences on day five must be reported to payroll by the employee and the employee's supervisor. Employees eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will receive notification.

Your Employee Rights Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

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.

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. **Scan the QR code or go to www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/contact/complaints to learn about our WHD complaint process.**



WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



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.

Sick Leave

Leave with pay may be granted to employees of the School System for absences from their assigned duties due to illness or some other unavoidable cause which prevents such employees from discharging their duties. Employees may not use sick leave days in increments of less than one-half (1/2) days. **Employees must notify their immediate supervisor of their absence as early as possible.** In the event an employee is absent multiple days, the absences on day five must be reported to payroll by the employee and the employee's supervisor on day five of the absences. Employees eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will receive notification. Authorization is granted under provision of State law, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and policies of the Board. Sick leave may be taken for the following purposes:

1. Personal illness;
2. Incapacitating personal injury;
3. Attendance upon an ill member of the employee's immediate family, defined as a spouse, parent, child, sibling or any person with a close personal tie;
4. Death of a family member, including a spouse, parent, child, sibling, mother- or father-in-law, son- or daughter-in-law, brother- or sister-in-law, nephew or niece, grandparent, grandchild, aunt or uncle;
5. Death or care of an individual with whom unusually strong personal ties exist because of a relationship other than those listed above. (Policy 5.10.3)

Personal Leave

Each full-time employee shall be entitled to five (5) days of non-cumulative personal leave annually. The first two (2) days used are state-funded and may be taken at no cost to the employee. The last three days are considered local days and the employee shall have the daily cost of a substitute withheld from his/her next monthly payroll check for each day taken. The total number of personal leave days is earned over the terms of the full contract period. Therefore, certified employees who use all five (5) personal leave days and fail to complete their full contract period may be required to reimburse the school system for such days on a daily rate of pay basis prior to leaving the school system.

Employees are encouraged to notify their principal and/or supervisor as far in advance as possible prior to taking personal leave. Personal leave must be requested in accordance with such procedures as may be established by the Superintendent or the Board. Employees may not use personal leave days in increments of less than one-half (1/2) days. Personal leave may not be taken during the first or last two weeks of school, or immediately before or after a holiday, or other times deemed critical by the Superintendent, unless approved by the employee's immediate supervisor.

Personal leave days are non-cumulative and may not be carried forward to the next school year. Upon written request, teachers may be compensated for unused personal leave at the end of the scholastic year at the same daily rate of pay used for substitute teachers. All other unused personal leave converts to sick leave days at the end of the scholastic year. (Policy 5.10.5/ALA Code 16-8-26)

Military Leave

All employees are entitled to military leave of absence when ordered to active duty for training as members of the Alabama National Guard or any component of U.S. Armed Forces. Employees who volunteer, are drafted, or are ordered to extended active duty with any component of the U.S. Armed Forces shall be entitled to reinstatement to their former positions or comparable positions. (Policy 5.11.4)

Maternity/Paternity Leave

Maternity leave shall be without pay, except that accumulated sick leave days may be utilized for illnesses associated with pregnancy, and/or when the attending physician notifies the Board that the employee is no longer able to perform assigned duties. Maternity leave normally shall not extend over a period of time exceeding 12 calendar weeks.

Certified employees on returning from maternity leave shall be restored to his/her exact former position. **Classified employees** returning from maternity leave shall be restored to her former position or a position of like nature. Both categories of employees shall maintain tenure/permanent status and all accruable benefits, except that days are not to be accrued for sick leave or annual leave while on maternity leave without pay. (Policy 5.11)

Professional Leave

Detached Duty – The Board authorizes the Superintendent to grant release time for personnel to participate in short-term study, conferences, and general educational development activities related to common goals and objectives held by personnel and the School System.

Staff Development – Personnel may be excused without loss of pay for professional staff development if the education is currently job related and approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and Superintendent.

All professional leave as noted above must be approved at least ten (10) days in advance by the principal/worksite supervisor and Superintendent. Such leave time shall be at the discretion of the Superintendent based on available finances, number of other personnel on leave, and educational value to the School System and may be with or without pay, with or without pay for any needed substitute personnel, and/or with or without travel or lodging expenses based on funds available (Policy 5.10.7).

Legal Service Absences

Court Appearance – Personnel may be excused without loss of pay for serving as a witness under a subpoena in a court of law that is school related. To be eligible for court appearance leave with pay, personnel must present the subpoena to his/her immediate supervisor as far in advance of the leave date as possible to secure appropriate substitute personnel. (Policy 5.10.9)

Jury Service – Personnel may be excused without loss of pay for jury duty. To be eligible for jury duty leave with pay, personnel must present the jury summons to his/her immediate supervisor as far in advance of the leave date as possible to secure appropriate substitute personnel. Personnel are not required to reimburse the school system for expense allowances paid for jury or court service. (Policy 5.10.9)

Voting Service – Personnel may **not** be excused with pay for serving as a voting official.

Retirement

The Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA) offers excellent benefits for employees. All member services are conducted online. Please go to the RSA website at www.rsa-al.gov to learn more. At least 30 days prior to retirement, notify your principal, superintendent, and the Teacher's Retirement System (TRS). Here are some common services.

- View your account details
- Update your contact information
- Make requests to the RSA
- Check the status of your requests
- PEEHIP:
 - View current coverage(s)
 - Enroll in PEEHIP or change coverage(s)
 - ✦ Open enrollment
 - ✦ New employees
 - ✦ Qualifying life events (QLE)
 - ✦ Other updates
 - Upload required documents
 - Make PEEHIP payments

Section V. Employment and Related Policies

Employment Process

When the Superintendent is notified and determines that a job vacancy exists in the School System, he/she and other appropriate personnel will conduct a review of the applications on file to determine the most qualified applicants for the position. The most qualified applicants will be determined by reviewing, analyzing, and comparing the non-prioritized employment criteria (see data shown on the employment application forms). The applicants found to be best qualified will then be scheduled for interviews by the Superintendent and/or the applicable principal/work site supervisor(s) and other person(s) designated by the Superintendent. Interviews will be scheduled and conducted, writing sample (if applicable) collected, and references contacted. All information from the employment application form, interviews, writing sample analyses (when applicable), and reference contacts will be reviewed and analyzed to determine the top candidate(s) to be considered for employment.

Whenever possible, administrators/supervisors should be consulted in the process of determining the Superintendent's recommendation.

The Superintendent will recommend the employment of all prospective employees to the Board for review and approval. In order to be employed by the School System, all applicants must be recommended by the Superintendent and receive a majority vote of the whole board. (Policy 5.2) LEGAL REF: The Code of Alabama, 16-4-9, 16-8-23, 16-9-23 to 24; Attorney General's Op., July 7, 1960.

In consultation with the local superintendent of education, the local board of education shall appoint a chief school financial officer who shall be an employee of the board. LEGAL REF: The Code of Alabama, Section 16-13A-4.

Job Description and Job Posting

The Superintendent, upon determining a job vacancy, shall develop a job description and shall provide all schools and worksites with the job announcement for posting. The job posting will also be on the District Website and HireTrue. The job announcement shall remain posted until the job vacancy has been filled or the Superintendent directs removal of the posting.

Employee Code of Conduct/Performance Expectations

As your employer, the Russell County School Board expects each employee at a minimum to:

- ***develop deep knowledge of subject area** staying abreast of current developments in his/her field
- ***perform assigned duties as stated in job description**
- *post grades by deadlines, submit attendance on time, update grades weekly, utilize comment tool for feedback to students/parents enter and maintain Unified Insights and PowerSchool Special Programs
- *documentation throughout the year
- *a grade change after posting must follow the appropriate procedure set forth by the school
- *submit lesson plans consistently in a timely manner
- *regular and consistent communication with parents and guardians
- *align lesson plans with state/common core standards and adjust as needed throughout the week
- *demonstrate attention to punctuality, attendance, reports, and records as applicable
- *maintain supervision of students and remain observant of all arising situations the entire time students

- *are in teachers' care and is proactive and intentional about addressing issues as they arise
- *address discrepancies in student information proactively
- *represent the school system in a positive and professional manner
- *support students at after school community involvement events
- *plan learning activities for parents
- *work effectively as a member of the educational team
- *demonstrate self-control
- *exhibit an attitude of mutual respect and tolerance
- *set an example for students by following, at a minimum, standards of dress and grooming as set forth in student handbook**
- *consistently meet system expectations for personal hygiene and professional dress
- *demonstrate ethical conduct including appropriate personal use of social media/technology
- *demonstrate good work habits
- *demonstrate effective writing and oral presentation skills
- *abide by Russell County Board of Education policies, and abide by state and federal laws and regulations, State Board of Education policies, directives of the State Superintendent or designee
- *follow/adapt to the school's and district's mission and vision
- *strictly adhere to confidentiality in the work place

Job Related Duties

Extra Duties may be assigned to and/or requested by certified personnel. (Policy 5.1.1 [b])

Performance Evaluation

The Russell County Board of Education will require the evaluation of all employees. The Superintendent shall have the responsibility for the implementation of the evaluation program approved for use by the Alabama State Board of Education. All personnel serving as evaluators will undergo the required state training and be certified under the program. (Policy 5.8)

Observation Protocol

Who	<u>ALL</u> Tenured And Non-Tenured Teachers
Observation(s)	2 Minimum 20 minutes or more Additional Observations As Needed ✦ For Professional Development No minimum time requirement Possible Conference Possible Lesson Reflection
Post Conference	Post Conference within 5 working days Teacher Lesson Reflection (see below suggested questions)

The Russell County School District will use the Alabama Teacher Growth Program and the elect component of Cognia as part of the evaluation for teachers.

Personnel File

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall have the responsibility to initiate and maintain a current personnel record file at the Central Office on each employee of the Board. Such records shall be considered as confidential and shall not be transmitted to other persons or agencies without the written consent of the employee involved.

Employees shall have the right to examine, after having signed appropriate request forms in the Central Office, the contents of their personnel file, except application references. Such references shall not be made available to employees or other persons or agencies. (Policy 5.9)

Outside Employment

Part-time employment that interferes with teaching or other duties as assigned by the Board or negatively reflects upon the image of the School System is looked upon unfavorably.

In the event the regular work of an employee suffers because of part-time employment, the employee will be requested to eliminate the part-time work. In the event the employee does not give up the part-time work, the Board will exercise its prerogative in declaring that the quality of work performed for the Board does not meet the required standards and may initiate dismissal proceedings against said employee.

During normal work hours or at times when additional duties and responsibilities have been assigned, employees will not engage in business activities or render any service for monetary gain. (Policy 5.6)

Employment of Family Members

The Board prohibits any supervisor/administrator/principal having a member of his/her immediate family (defined here as husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister) working directly under his/her supervision. All personnel employed as of the adoption date of this policy are exempt based on prior employment assignments. (Policy 5.2.5)

Section VI: Administrative Policies Employee Leave

Work Attendance is an Essential Job Function—Punctual, regular attendance is an essential job function of every job and position, and employees are expected to report to work when scheduled to work and to remain at work each working day.

Absence Reporting

All absences must be reported to the immediate supervisor in a timely manner. Personal, sick and/or vacation leave requires prior approval by immediate supervisor through Kronos. All detached duty requests should be submitted in TalentED for approval. In addition, where appropriate AESOP/ Kelly Services will be used by employee(s) to secure a substitute. (Policy 5.10.2)

Appearance

School employees serve as role models and are responsible for representing the educational profession in a professional manner regarding dress, grooming and conduct.

Employees are expected to use good judgment in determining appropriate attire. **Dress code is business professional.** Clothing that alludes to profanity, obscenity, violence, sex or advertises alcohol, tobacco or an illegal substance is prohibited. Professional educators are expected, at a minimum, to set an example for students by modeling standards of dress set forth in the student handbook. For example, our student dress code states: “For student safety, no body piercings with rings or dangling jewelry are permitted. All inappropriate tattoos must be covered.” The immediate supervisor and job function will determine what is deemed to be appropriate attire, taking into consideration contact and interaction coaches, maintenance employees, and bus drivers.

Specific questions regarding personal attire should be directed toward an employee’s immediate supervisor. (Policy 5.1.1[i]; Student Handbook)

Professional Educators are expected to hold themselves to a higher standard of dress than our students by coming to work in business professional attire. Please see the student expectations below.

Therefore, it is believed that the following dress and appearance standards are essential to the orderly operation of the school based on health, sanitation, safety, and prevention of disruptive appearances at school:

- No student will be allowed to wear any type of clothing that, in the opinion of the administration, is too revealing, suggestive, provocative or otherwise inappropriate. Tops that expose undergarments, see-through apparel, clothing with low-cut necklines or spaghetti straps or clothing that exposes the midriff are not allowed.
- Appropriate undergarments for boys and girls must be worn at all times and may not be visible.
- Hats/caps, bandanas, scarves, and visors, are prohibited except for JROTC and band uniform hats when worn with the uniform during performances. Hats and other headgear will be taken from the student.
- Students are required to wear garments as they are intended to be worn and in such a manner that is appropriate for school. Pants must be worn at the normal waistline. Under no circumstances will excessively baggy pants, low riding pants or oversized shirts or sweatshirts be allowed (an oversized shirt is defined as –bottom of shirt cannot hang below the wrist). No large belt buckles or chains will be allowed.

- All shorts, skirts, or dresses must be no more than two inches above the knee. Excessively tight, short, or form fitting clothing such as bodysuits, biker shorts or spandex clothing cannot be worn to school.
- Shoes must be worn at all times. Shower shoes, flip flops and house shoes will not be allowed. If shoes are to be laced up with shoelaces, they must be laced at all times. Articles of clothing or accessories which show or allude to by slogan, picture or drawing, any inflammatory, suggestive, gun and ammunition, offensive or obscene behavior or alcoholic, drugs, or tobacco products will not be allowed.
- Bathrobes, pajamas, and boxer shorts worn as outer garments will not be allowed. Straps of overalls or suspenders must be worn over the shoulder.
- Sunglasses or dark glasses may not be worn inside the building unless authorized by doctor's prescription.
- For student safety, no body piercings with rings or dangling jewelry are permitted. All inappropriate tattoos must be covered.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices Instructional purposes

Cellular phones – Cellular phones should not be used during class time unless for instructional purposes **and should not be visible to students (back pocket, hip, desk, etc.)** or audible for incoming calls. Employees may use cell phones during breaks and before and after work. Please do not use cell phones in the presence of students or in the public view. Exceptions may be made to this policy as deemed appropriate by your immediate supervisor.

Bluetooth Devices (i.e., earbuds, etc.) are not appropriate for use during the school day and should not be worn.

Cell phones taken up by teachers or staff must be documented and immediately turned into the office

Artificial Intelligence Assistant Devices

Russell County School District does not allow **any** artificial intelligence assistant products such as but not limited to Amazon Alexa, Echo Dots, or Google Homes on our campuses. Such devices may permit data privacy risks and the possibility of FERPA and CIPA violations.

Testing: Digital Device Policy for Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP)

Alabama State Department of Education Digital Device Policy for the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) Testing

Each local education agency (LEA) shall have in place a *School Test Security Plan* for each school that includes a digital device collection plan for both school personnel and students who will participate in the ACAP. This collection shall take place **prior to entering the testing room** for both school personnel and students.

For the purposes of this policy, digital devices are defined to include anything that can capture, store, relay, or receive electronic information. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: laptops, smart phones, smart watches, fitness trackers, MP3 players, and tablets. Additionally, classroom computers must be powered off during testing. Exceptions to this policy include any digital device that is medically necessary for the health and/or well-being of school personnel or students. All exceptions must be pre-approved in writing by the Building Test Coordinator or the school Principal by completing the *Digital Device Exception Request* form.

LEAs shall make all school personnel and students participating in the ACAP, parents, and/or guardians aware of this prohibition through inclusion of this policy in the employee handbook, the Student Code of Conduct Handbook, and may also publicize this policy through other normally accepted methods.

LEA PERSONNEL POLICY:

LEA personnel shall not **possess** any digital device within the testing room when administering or proctoring an ACAP test. This prohibition does not apply to school personnel who are serving as hall monitors during a test.

The possession of a digital device by school personnel participating in ACAP testing is strictly prohibited during the administration of a test. The **ONLY** exception to this policy is for school personnel who have been pre-approved by the Building Test Coordinator or the Principal to have a digital device that is necessary for the health and/or well-being of school personnel.

If school personnel are in **possession** of a digital device during the administration of an ACAP test, the device may be confiscated and, if the appropriate administrator determines that there is reasonable suspicion that the device was used to capture, record, or share test information or to facilitate cheating on the test, it may subject to search pursuant to LEA policy for any information directly related to the ACAP test being administered. Additionally, school personnel shall be dismissed from testing, and students' tests may be invalidated in accordance with ACAP policy. **Violation(s) may result in disciplinary action by the LEA and by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), up to and including possible employment termination and certification revocation.**

To be completed by school personnel:

By signing, I am affirming that I understand, accept, and will comply with this policy.

Printed Name

Position/Title

Signature

Date

Policy updated 6.23.2022

Confidentiality

Employees may be exposed to information that must remain confidential. Sharing of confidential information is only allowable **if** there is a need to know. Employees are prohibited from disclosing confidential information to include, but not limited to, student information, personal passwords and building entrance key codes.

Drugs

The Board does not differentiate between drug users or drug sellers. Any employee who gives or in any way transfers a controlled substance to another person or sells or manufactures a controlled substance while on the job or on Russell County Board of Education premises will be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Each employee is required by law to inform the Board within five (5) days after he or she is convicted for violation of any federal or state criminal drug statute. (Policy 5.17)

Facilities

Alcohol/Tobacco- Smoking and/or use of tobacco/alcohol, in any form, by all employees, both certified and classified, and all other persons, is prohibited on, or in, all Board properties at all times, including extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities are those activities that occur at any time and place that are school related and/or supervised. (Policy 4.6)

Building Access- Employees are not to access any building during non-business hours. Although, the Russell County Board of Education recognizes that there may be a need for an employee to access his/her place of employment during non-duty hours, permission from his/her immediate supervisor must be given before entering the building. (Policy 4.5)

Traditional “Metal” Keys- To maintain safety of personnel and the security of board property, employees are to maintain possession of the keys given to them by their immediate supervisor. Employees are to unlock their doors when entering and employees are to lock their doors when exiting. If an employee loses his/her key, he/she is to notify his/her immediate supervisor immediately. There is a replacement \$25.00-75.00 fee for misplacing a key. Employees are to turn in all keys before their last day of work.

Employee Identification Cards- The Russell County School District issues employee identification cards to all personnel who are on the payroll. These identification cards serve multiple functions such as clock in/clock out and to allow employees to gain access to any entrance/exit door by use of a proximity reader. As such, the identification cards are keys to the building and must be regarded as sensitive items and reported immediately. In the event of the loss or misplacement of an I.D. card there will be a \$8.00 replacement fee. This fee will be paid and the identification card made by appointment at Central Office.

Parking- To be fair, employees are not assigned parking spaces. It is a first come first serve opportunity. Employees are not to park their vehicles so that their vehicles block vehicle movement or mass exiting. Employees are only to park their vehicles in the faculty parking area. Employees are not to park alongside the building or directly in front of doors.

Solicitations- Direct or indirect political solicitation on board property is prohibited. Nonpolitical solicitation, sale and/or distribution of literature or merchandise by board employees are prohibited on board property without the written permission of the Superintendent. (Policy 4.4)

Workplace Security- It is the policy of the Russell County Board of Education to take reasonable measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its personnel while in the buildings or on the grounds of the School Board. Therefore, the Russell County Board of Education prohibits the possession of any firearm or dangerous/deadly weapon or the exhibition of threatening behavior or language in Board workplaces. (Policy 4.5)

Use of School Facilities- Approval for any use of school facilities at any time must have approval of the principal and the Superintendent (form is available on district web site). All normal policies and procedures must be observed and the sponsoring group is responsible for proper supervision (1:25 adult to student ratio), security, damage to property, and clean up. (Policy 4.2)

Disposal of School Board Property

In order to remove item(s) for the purpose of disposal, the building principal must complete a "Request for Discard" form. Submit the form to the appropriate department in which the item was purchased (Federal Programs, Technology, Local Funds). Once approved, item(s) are to be relocated to an identified space for pick up. After the Board has granted approval to dispose, the item(s) must be appropriately removed from the facility unless otherwise specified. Item(s) designated for disposal cannot be used in the building for any reason.

Health and Safety

Employees are expected to follow safety instructions and to comply with procedures established to prevent accidents. All accidents must be reported immediately, not to exceed 24 hours to the building supervisor at the location of the accident and to the immediate supervisor if that person is not the building supervisor. **Steps A and B of the On-the-Job Injury Leave must be completed in order for consideration to be given for paid On-the-Job Injury leave without the employee using sick days.** An employee is responsible for immediately reporting health and safety concerns to his/her immediate supervisor. (Policy 5.10.4)

Emergency Injury Response

It is recommended that each school and department identify individuals to serve together as a team with the purpose of responding to emergencies. If an emergency occurs, stay calm and notify the school nurse, and administrator on site. The administrator will determine if the team needs to respond. Take detailed notes of the incident. As soon as the emergency is under control, please complete an on-the-job injury report and submit to the CSFO at central office. Please submit a copy to the following persons: Nursing Supervisor, Director of Administrative Service, and Superintendent.

Life-threatening (not breathing, uncontrolled bleeding, neck or back injury, unconscious, etc.)

If an injury is life-threatening, contact 911 and a family member, parent or person listed as an emergency contact. The district administrator or principal/designee should contact the superintendent. Give your full attention to the victim to assist the school nurse or other trained responder(s) until emergency services arrive. Take detailed notes of the incident. If additional aid is needed emergency services will transport the victim to the nearest medical facility. As soon as the emergency is under control, please complete an on-the-job injury report and submit to the CSFO at central office. Please submit a copy of the report to the following persons: Nursing Supervisor, Director of Administrative Service, and Superintendent.

Non-life-threatening (manageable illness or injury)

If an injury is not life-threatening, contact the school nurse and/or administrator on site. The school nurse or administrator on site will contact a family member, parent or person listed on the emergency contact list if needed. For non-life-threatening situations, the school nurse and/or administrator on site will coordinate with the parent or emergency contact for the next level of care as decided by the family. Take detailed notes of the incident. As soon as the emergency is under control, please complete an on-the-job injury report and submit to the CSFO at central office. Please submit a copy of the report to the following persons: Nursing Supervisor, Director of Administrative Service, and Superintendent.

Russell County School District Anaphylaxis Plan

Policy statement and purpose:

The Russell County School District believes that the safety and well-being of children who are at risk of anaphylaxis is a whole community responsibility. The school is committed to:

- Providing as far as practical, a safe and healthy environment.
- Raising awareness about allergies and anaphylaxis among the school community and children in attendance.
- Ensuring each staff member and other relevant adults has adequate knowledge of allergies, anaphylaxis and emergency procedures.
- Facilitating communication between all staff, students and families to ensure the well-being of children at risk for anaphylaxis.

Scope:

This policy applies when a child is diagnosed as being at risk for anaphylaxis and is enrolled in school. It applies to the whole school community, students, parents/ guardians and school volunteers.

Background:

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. Up to two percent of the general population and up to five percent of children are at risk. The most common causes in young children are eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, cow milk, bee or other insect stings, and some medications.

Young children may not be able to express the symptoms of anaphylaxis. A reaction can develop within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but with planning and training, a reaction can be treated effectively by using an adrenaline auto-injector called an EpiPen®. The school recognizes the

importance of staff responsible for the child/children at risk of anaphylaxis undertaking training that includes preventative measure to minimize the risk of an anaphylactic reaction, recognition of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and emergency treatment, including administration of an EpiPen®.

Staff and parents/guardians need to be made aware that it is not possible to achieve a completely allergen-free environment in any school that is open to the general community. Staff should not have a false sense of security that an allergen has been eliminated from the environment. Instead the school recognizes the need to adopt a range of procedures and risk minimization strategies to reduce the risk of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including strategies to minimize the presence of the allergen in the school.

Definitions:

Allergen: A substance that can cause an allergic reaction.

Allergy: An immune system response to something that the body has identified as an allergen. People genetically programmed to make an allergic response will make antibodies to particular allergens.

Allergic reaction: A reaction to an allergen. Common signs and symptoms include one or more of the following: hives, tingling feeling around the mouth, abdominal pain, vomiting and/or diarrhea, facial swelling, cough or wheeze, difficulty swallowing or breathing, loss of consciousness or collapse (child pale or floppy), or cessation of breathing.

Anaphylaxis: A severe, rapid and potentially fatal allergic reaction that involves the major body systems, particularly breathing or circulation systems.

Anaphylaxis action plan: A medical management plan prepared and signed by a doctor providing the child's name and allergies, with clear instructions on treating an anaphylactic episode. A sample form will be included at the end of this policy.

Anaphylaxis management training: Training provided at the Russell County School District yearly by the registered nurse. Training includes but is not limited to return demonstration, Powerpoint presentation sent to each staff member for review, confidential health history summary for staff in each building including a section for students with epi pens.

Children at risk of anaphylaxis: Those children whose allergies have been medically diagnosed and who are at risk of anaphylaxis.

EpiPen®: A device containing a single dose of adrenaline, delivered via a spring-activated needle, which is concealed until administered.

EpiPen® kit: An insulated container, for example an insulated lunch pack. The kit should contain a current EpiPen®, a copy of the child's anaphylaxis action plan, and telephone contact details for the child's parents/guardians, the doctor/medical service and the person to be notified in the event of a reaction if the parents/ guardians cannot be contacted.

Intolerance: Often confused with allergy, intolerance is a reproducible reaction to a substance that is not due to the immune system. (i.e. lactose intolerance)

No food sharing: The practice where the child at risk of anaphylaxis eats only that food that is supplied or permitted by the parents/guardians, and does not share food with, or accept other food from any other person.

Nominated staff member: The nurse in each building is responsible for obtaining EpiPen®'s and keeping them current.

Risk minimization: A practice of reducing risks to a child at risk of anaphylaxis by removing, as far as is practicable, major sources of the allergen from the school and developing strategies to help reduce risk of an anaphylactic reaction.

Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP): A plan specific to the school that specifies each child's allergies, the ways that each child at risk of anaphylaxis could be accidentally exposed to the allergen while in the care of the school, practical strategies to minimize those risks, and who is responsible for implementing the strategies. The risk minimization plan should be developed by families of children at risk of anaphylaxis and staff at the school and should be reviewed at least annually, but always upon the enrollment or diagnosis of each child who is at risk of anaphylaxis.

Pathophysiology and Treatment:

Signs and Symptoms of Anaphylaxis Include:

Anaphylaxis can affect any part of the body and cause various symptoms. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which are potentially fatal. Other signs and symptoms are hives, itching, red water eyes, runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, change of voice, coughing, wheezing, throat tightness or closing, difficulty swallowing, difficulty breathing, sense of doom, dizziness, fainting or loss of conscience, change of skin color.

Medications:

- Epinephrine
- Antihistamines (Benadryl)

Treatment is centered on treating the rapidly progressing effects of histamine release in the body with epinephrine. The allergen should also be removed immediately.

The health offices will have standing orders written by the student's physician to administer **EpiPen®** in the event of unsuspected anaphylaxis and those students who we are aware of.

EpiPen® Administration Protocol

If student is known to be allergic, follow protocol as per physician order. **If no instructions are on file and/or this is a previously undiagnosed student:**

1. **If signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis – Notify school nurse or medical designee, instruct someone to call 911, then parent. If no one else is around, administer to the student first. Remain with the student and monitor him/ her until other health care persons arrive**
2. Inject EpiPen® into fatty part of outer thigh (through clothes is fine). HOLD FOR 10 SECONDS. A child weighing between 30-60 pounds will be given EpiPen® Jr. A child weighing over 60 pounds will be given EpiPen®.

3. Immediate evacuation to the nearest medical facility Piedmont Columbus Regional Midtown Hospital, unless otherwise specified by the parent. A copy of the student's emergency record should be sent with the EMS.
4. A repeat injection may be given in 15-20 minutes if symptoms do not improve or before medical assistance arrives by a licensed health care provider only.
5. Monitor blood pressure. Elevate legs if the blood pressure is low.
6. Cover with blankets if necessary to keep warm; don't allow blankets to interfere with handling or observation.
7. Notify parents/guardians again if necessary.

The general standing order must be renewed each school year by the Nurse's Office.

Action Steps for Anaphylaxis Management

Nursing Obligations

- Identify students at risk.
- Nurse is responsible to check for outdated EpiPen®s each quarter.
- The Confidential Food list will be prepared for Dietary Staff when appropriate, along with MD documentation of allergy
- Communicate with all staff members. Including bus drivers.
- When identified with children at risk, only specific buses will get EpiPen®s.
- Train all staff in recognizing anaphylaxis and administering EpiPen®s. This will be done on the first day of school in each building.
- Open line of communication between staff and parents especially with the School Nurse.
- Parents are responsible to provide their child's **EpiPen®**. *Each School Nurse will have an EpiPen® on hand for each student who cannot provide one.
- Have Individual Healthcare Plans (IHP) completed per each student who has a Medical Provider documented anaphylaxis. Overseen by each nurse.
- Collaborate with Dietary Staff and provide necessary documentation regarding students and food allergies.
- In the high school setting - allow self-directed students, as assessed by the school nurse, to carry lifesaving medication with prior approval by the medical provider, and according to health practice and procedures, as long as duplicate lifesaving medication is also maintained in the health office in the event that the self-carrying student misplaces his/her medicine(s).
- At recess staff members will have a walkie-talkie and an EpiPen® for recess. The school staff will initiate this for safety until the nurse can get out to the playground.
- Each Nursing office will have a walkie-talkie while recess and outside Physical Education classes are occurring. As well as the staff that this affects.
- For Physical Education classes that occur in the 'upper field', the teacher will be provided with an EpiPen® and 'walkie-talkie'.
- In the event that an EpiPen® is used, all children will be transported to Piedmont Columbus Regional Midtown Hospital if there is an emergency, otherwise, the student will be transported to the hospital chosen by the parent.

Dietary Staff

- Ensure that foods are stored in separate containers
- Minimize cross contamination of foods
- Tables are wiped down in between meals with disinfectant
- Confidential food list will be obtained from school nurse by first day of school
- Students will be supervised during eating
- Students will be reminded of ‘no food sharing’

Teachers

- Obtain confidential health history lists from the nurse pertaining to all important health issues
- Teachers will also collaborate with parents to create a safe environment at school
- Teachers can specify a range of foods that parents/guardians may send for snack or parties and note particular foods and ingredients that should **not** be sent
- Will make sure that they have a ‘walkie-talkie’ and EpiPen® at recess

Maintenance

- Regular inspection of play areas to eliminate bees/wasps, etc.
- Eliminate shrubs/plants that draw bees at doorways into buildings

Bus Drivers

- Ensure safety on the bus, ensure that an EpiPen® is readily available and a copy of the Anaphylaxis plan of care (or IHP) is available and that it has been reviewed
- Collaborate as needed with each school nurse, lead nurse, or trained designee

Resources

- Student Health History
- Individualized Healthcare Plan and School District Plan for Anaphylaxis
- Online training course at www.schoolhealthservicesny.com to be emailed to each staff member
- Confidential Health History to be completed for the first day of school and submitted to the appropriate staff; a full list to main office and teachers; food/emergency list to all other personnel.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Policy Purpose

1. The Russell County School District acknowledges that maintaining a school environment conducive to school learning requires that the environment be orderly and safe. Accordingly, physical restraint of a student may sometimes be necessary in order to protect the student or other individuals.
2. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that physical restraint is administered only when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from imminent, serious physical harm, and to prevent or minimize any harm to a student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

3. The Russell County School District places an emphasis under this policy on the prevention and de-escalation of inappropriate behavior, which reduces the risk of injury to both students and program staff, as well as the care, safety, and welfare of our students.

Definitions

1. Physical restraint is direct physical contact from an adult that prevents or significantly restricts a student's movement. The term physical restraint does not include mechanical restraint or chemical restraint. Additionally, physical restraint does not include: providing limited physical contact and/or redirection to a student in order to promote safety or to prevent self-injurious behavior; providing physical guidance or prompting to a student when teaching a skill; redirecting attention; providing guidance to a location; providing comfort; or providing limited physical contact as reasonably needed to prevent imminent destruction to school or another person's property.
2. Chemical restraint is any medication that is used to control violent physical behavior or to restrict the student's freedom of movement that is not a prescribed treatment for a medical or psychiatric condition of the student.
3. Mechanical restraint is the use of any device or material attached to or adjacent to a student's body that is intended to restrict the normal freedom of movement and which cannot be easily removed by the student. The term does not include an adaptive or protective device recommended by a physician or therapist when used as recommended by the physician or therapist to promote normative body positioning and physical functioning, and/or to prevent self-injurious behavior. The term also does not include seatbelts and other safety equipment when used to secure students during transportation.
4. Seclusion is a procedure that isolates and confines the student in a separate, locked area until he or she is no longer an immediate danger to himself/herself or others. Seclusion occurs in a specifically constructed or designated room or space that is physically isolated from common areas and from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include situations in which a staff member trained in the use of de-escalation techniques or restraint is physically present in the same unlocked room as the student; time-out as defined herein; in-school suspension; detention; or a student-requested break in a different location in the room or in a separate room.
5. Time-out is a behavioral intervention in which the student is temporarily removed from the learning activity. Time-out is appropriately used and is not seclusion when:
 - (a) The non-locking setting used for time-out is appropriately lighted, ventilated, and heated or cooled.
 - (b) The duration of the time-out is reasonable in light of the purpose of the time-out and the age of the child; however, each time-out should not exceed 45 minutes.
 - (c) The student is reasonably monitored by an attending adult who is in reasonable physical proximity of the student and has sight of the student while in time-out.
 - (d) The time-out space is free of objects that unreasonably expose the student or others to harm.

Prohibitions

1. The use of physical restraint is prohibited in the Russell County School District and its educational programs except in those situations in which the student is an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions, including verbal directives

or other de-escalation techniques. Physical restraint is prohibited when used as a form of discipline or punishment.

2. All physical restraint must be immediately terminated when the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others or if the student is observed to be in severe distress during the restraint. Any method of physical restraint in which physical pressure is applied to the student's body that restricts the flow of air into the student's lungs is prohibited in the Russell County School District and its educational programs.
3. The use of chemical restraint is prohibited in the Russell County School District and its educational programs.
4. The use of mechanical restraint is prohibited in the Russell County School District and its educational programs.
5. The use of seclusion is prohibited in the Russell County School District and its educational programs.

Requirements

1. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program of the School System that utilize physical restraint under this policy will provide staff with guidelines and procedural information regarding physical restraint and will arrange for the appropriate training of those designated staff members that may be called upon to physically restrain a student. This training of designated staff members shall be provided as a part of a program which addresses prevention and de-escalation techniques as well as positive behavioral intervention strategies. The training of designated staff members will be based on evidence-based techniques and strategies when possible. Each local school's principal or his/her designee or program coordinator shall be responsible for providing periodic reviews.
2. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program that utilize physical restraint will maintain written or electronic documentation on training provided at the local school regarding physical restraint and the list of participants in each training session. Records of such training will be made available to the Alabama Department of Education or any member of the public upon request.
3. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program that utilize physical restraint is responsible for generating and maintaining incident and debriefing reports of the use of restraint as well as reports of any prohibited use of seclusion and chemical, mechanical, or physical restraint at the local school and for gathering/reporting data to the Russell County Board of Education and to the Alabama Department of Education annually. The use of physical restraint will be monitored by each local school's principal or his/her designee or program's coordinator on an on-going basis to ensure fidelity of implementation. Follow-up training will be provided following any situations in which procedures are not being followed.
4. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program that utilizes physical restraint shall ensure that following an incident of restraint all school personnel involved in the incident and appropriate administrative staff participate in a debriefing session for the purpose of planning to prevent or reduce the reoccurrence of the use of restraint. A student's parent or legal guardian will be provided notification of this debriefing session and afforded the opportunity to attend or to request that the debriefing session be rescheduled.

The debriefing session shall occur no later than five school days following the imposition of physical restraint unless the debriefing session is delayed, at the request of a student's parent or legal guardian, so that the parent or legal guardian may attend.

5. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program that utilize physical restraint will provide written notification to a student's parent or legal guardian when physical restraint is used on a student within a reasonable time following the restraint not to exceed one school day from the use of restraint.
6. Each local school's principal or his/her designee and each educational program will provide written notification to a student's parent or legal guardian when their child is removed from his/her school or program setting by emergency, medical, or law enforcement personnel within a reasonable time following the removal not to exceed one school day from the removal.
7. Each student's parent or legal guardian will be provided information regarding the school or program's policies governing the use of physical restraint. This information will be provided to parents at the beginning of each school year or upon the student's enrollment if the student enrolls after school has started. To effectuate this requirement, the School System's website and student handbook/code of conduct will contain the following statement:

As a part of the policies and procedures of the Russell County School District, the use of physical restraint is prohibited in the Russell County School District and its educational programs except in those situations in which the student is an immediate danger to himself or others and the student is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions including verbal directives or other de-escalation techniques. Physical restraint is expressly prohibited when used as a form of discipline or punishment. The use of other physical restraint, chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, or seclusion is prohibited in the Russell County School District and its educational programs.

The use of restraint may occur along with other emergency actions such as the school seeking assistance from law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel which could result in a removal of the student by such personnel. Significant violations of the law including assaults on students and staff will be reported to the police. As soon as possible after the restraint or removal of a student (and no longer than one school day following the occurrence), the parent or legal guardian will be provided written notification.

Clarifications

1. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to interfere with the School System's or school personnel's authority to utilize time-out as defined herein or to utilize any other classroom management technique or approach, including a student's removal from the classroom that is not specifically addressed as part of this policy.
2. Nothing in this policy modifies the rights of school personnel to use reasonable force as permitted under the Code of Alabama, 1975, §16-1-14 or modifies the rules and procedures governing discipline under the Code of Alabama, 1975, §16-28-12.
3. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit the School System's or school personnel's right to take reasonable action to diffuse or break up a student fight or altercation.

4. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit the School System or school personnel from taking reasonable action to obtain possession of a weapon or other dangerous objects on a student or within the control of a student.
5. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to eliminate or restrict the ability of school personnel to use his or her discretion in the use of physical restraint as provided in this policy to protect students or others from imminent harm or bodily injury.
6. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to create a criminal offense or a private cause of action against any local board of education or program or its agents or employees.
7. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to interfere with the duties of law enforcement or emergency medical personnel or to interfere with the rights the School System or school personnel from seeking assistance from law enforcement and/or emergency medical personnel.

Political Activities

The Russell County School District is a nonpartisan entity, and its employees are prohibited from using their official positions or system resources to engage in political activities or support candidates for public office.

Employees are encouraged to exercise their right to register and vote. There are, however, certain types of political activities prohibited for school system's employees. These restrictions protect employees from political pressure in the performance of their jobs.

There are NO restrictions on the following political activities:

*Voting

*Expressing opinions as private citizens *Attending political rallies as spectators

*Lawful, voluntary political contributions

*Seeking public office since all political activities are conducted on their personal time

School System personnel are forbidden from soliciting funds or contributions for political purposes from subordinate employees at any time. (Policy 4.4)

Relationship with Media

The primary district spokesperson is the Superintendent. At the request or absence of the Superintendent, the Director of Community Education will serve in that capacity. The spokesperson will provide broad, general information in response to inquiries.

Directors, principals, faculty, and staff will not respond to inquiries from the media concerning matters such as personnel issues, sensitive student information, crisis management, emergencies, board policies and fiscal operations. Instead, such inquiries should immediately be directed to the respective Superintendent or Director of Community Education, who will respond accordingly.

Directors, principals, faculty, and staff may respond directly to media inquiries on ordinary, day-to-day matters such as course information, awards, special events, scholarships, and publications, etc.

However, all inquiries should be reported immediately to the Director of Community Education by telephone (334-408-4970, ext. 89937).

Bullying, Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence

While students are under the supervision of Russell County School District our employees will serve as their number one advocate for safety and well-being. As such, it is expected that each employee be aware of, understand, and follow the Russell County School District Bullying Policy (Policy 6.18).

Prohibition - No student or employee shall engage in nor should any be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation by any student/employee that is based on any of the specific characteristics set forth in this policy. Students who violate this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions as specified in the Student Code of Conduct, subject to the investigating school administrator's authority and decision. Employees who violate this policy will be subjected to disciplinary sanctions as specified by the Superintendent of Russell County School District and the State Board of Education.

Definitions:

a. The term "bullying" means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior that takes place on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one, but not limited to, the categories of personal characteristics set forth below. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may:

1. Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
2. Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student.
3. Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school.
4. Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function.
5. Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

b. The term "hostile environment" as used in this policy means the perception by an affected student that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, would agree that the conduct constitutes bullying, threat of assault, or assault.

c. The term "violence" as used in this policy means the infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.

d. The term "threat" as used in this policy means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear of harm. The intention may be communicated through an

electronic, written, verbal, or physical act to cause fear, mental distress, or interference in the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied and the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry out the threat.

e. The term “threat of violence” as used in this policy means an expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.

f. The term “intimidation” as used in this policy means a threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student, especially for the purpose of coercing or deterring the student from participating in or taking advantage of any school program, benefit, activity or opportunity for which the student is or would be eligible.

g. The term “student” as used in this policy means a person who is enrolled in the Russell County School District.

Description of Behavior Expected of Students:

a. Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting harassment, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student; and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.

b. Violence, threats of violence, bullying, and intimidation are prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary consequences and sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the victim of such conduct:

1. The student’s race/color/ethnicity;
2. The student’s gender/gender identity;
3. The student’s sexual preference;
4. The student’s religion;
5. The student’s socioeconomic status; 6. The student’s national origin; or 7. The student’s disability.

Consequences for Violations:

A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.

Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures:

Complaints alleging violations of this policy may be made on a form readily available in the student handbook, on the website, or at the school’s office. The complaint must be signed by the student alleging the violation or by the student’s parent or legal guardian and delivered to the principal or the

principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally.

The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee is authorized to inform the student's parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal's designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will, in their sole discretion, determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake an investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence and will be conducted in a reasonably prompt time period considering the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions may be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violation(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.

Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee will inform the student's parent or guardian of the report.

Suicide Prevention:

To the extent that the legislature appropriates funds or the Board provides funds from other sources, the Superintendent is authorized to develop a program to implement the following statutory requirements of the Jason Flatt Act in an effort to prevent student suicide:

- a. Foster individual, family, and group counseling services related to suicide prevention.
- b. Make referral, crisis intervention, and other related information available for students, parents, and school personnel.
- c. Foster training for school personnel who are responsible for counseling and supervising students.
- d. Increase student awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and suicide.
- e. Educate students in recognizing signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of suicide.
- f. Inform students of available community suicide prevention services.

- g. Promote cooperative efforts between school personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel.
- h. Foster school-based or community-based, or both, alternative programs outside of the classroom.
- i. Develop a strategy to assist survivors of attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the death of a student, and healing.
- j. Engage in any other program or activity which the Board determines is appropriate and prudent in the efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide.
- k. Provide training for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the Board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence.
- l. Develop a process for discussing local board policies relating to the prevention of student suicide and to the prevention of harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence with students.
- m. Provide annual training for all certificated school employees in suicide awareness and prevention. This training may be provided within the framework of existing in-service training programs or as a part of required professional development offered by the school system.

Students may be required to participate in curricular activities developed to implement the statutory requirements of the Jason Flatt Act and are encouraged to participate in any other activities or strategies developed by the Board for that purpose.

Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms – This policy and any procedures, rules, and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published on the website of each local board of education and school, shall be available at each school office, and shall be included in the handbook that is distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year.

Technology Acceptable Use Contract Summary and Policies

Introduction

All use of Russell County School District (RCSD) network resources, including the Internet, shall be consistent with the System's goal of promoting excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication. Russell County Schools relies on its computer network to enhance education outcomes. To ensure that RCSD's computer resources are used properly by its employees, students, independent contractors, agents, vendors, and other computer users, the Russell County Board of Education has approved and given authority to the Superintendent to develop a Responsible Use Contract.

The rules and obligations described in the contract apply to all users of RCSD's computer network or computer resources, wherever they may be located in RCSD's policies. Specific policies against

discrimination and harassment (sexual or otherwise) apply fully to RCSD's computer resources, and any violation of these protocols serves as grounds for discipline up to and including termination.

Students who violate the contract are subject to disciplinary action consistent with Board policy and the Student Handbook. Vendors, consultants, and all other third-party guest users must adhere to the protocols outlined in the contract and are subject to losing their right to access RCSD's computer resources for violations of the contract.

By complying with the provisions in this Responsible Use Contract and in alignment with the District's Data Governance and Use policy, users consent to monitoring as a condition of access under the Electronic Communications Privacy Act (1986). All users should be aware that RCSD's computer resource uses including all its components are subject to monitoring in order to comply with the Alabama Supercomputer Authority and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Employees, students, and other users should not have any expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the RCSD's computer resources. The main goal of this aspect of the Responsible Use Policy is to ensure our children's safety and protection while using technology for educational purposes.

All technology resource use will be governed by the requirement that it must add to the standards-based educational experience and growth of the user and not disrupt the educational process in anyway.

Policy Statements

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is a federal law that addresses concerns about access in schools and libraries to the Internet and other information. Under CIPA, schools and libraries are required to certify that they have certain Internet safety measures in place. These include measures to block or filter pictures that: (a) are obscene, (b) contain child pornography, or (c) when computers with Internet access are used by minors, are harmful to minors. Schools subject to CIPA are required to adopt a policy to monitor online activities of minors i.e. (a) access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and the Web; (b) the safety and security of minors when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications, including but not limited to social networking sites; (c) unauthorized access, including so-called "hacking," and other unlawful activities by minors online; (d) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and (e) restricting minors' access to materials harmful to them.

Schools will annually provide for the educating of minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, cyberbullying awareness, and response.

All activities performed on any district-owned computer, related equipment, network, or electronic communication device, including Student Google Accounts, which are owned, leased or otherwise maintained by RCSD and their related content, including all files and data, (herein collectively referred to as "technology resources") will be continuously monitored, inspected, searched, examined, and accessed by RSCD school authorities, for the safe and efficient operation or administration of the RCSD and in connection with its policies and procedures. Users of RCSD's technology resources have no personal right of privacy or confidentiality with respect to the use or content of such technology resources.

Technology Acceptable Use

Access to the district's network resources, including the Internet, must be for the purpose of education or research and be consistent with the educational objectives of the district. Transmission of any material in violation of United States or state statute or regulation is strictly prohibited. This includes but is not limited to copyright or trade secret material, threatening or obscene material, and criminal activity. The use of the network resources for commercial activities, product solicitations, or political lobbying is also prohibited. Inappropriate use will be reported to the responsible authorities.

No warranties - The district makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The district will not be responsible for any damages. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence or user errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the authorized user's own risk. The district specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

Technology Unacceptable Use

The taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or otherwise (commonly called texting, sexting, emailing, etc.) may constitute a CRIME under state and/or federal law. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs will be reported to law enforcement and/or other appropriate state or federal agencies, which may result in arrest, criminal prosecution, and LIFETIME inclusion on sexual offender registries.

Some examples of unacceptable uses are:

- Using the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts, or transmitting any material in violation of any U.S. or State Law
- Unauthorized installation of software, regardless of whether it is copyrighted or de-licensed including the unauthorized installation of software
- Downloading copyrighted material for other than personal use
- Using the network for private financial or commercial gain
- Wastefully using resources, such as file space
- Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities
- Invading the privacy of individuals
- Using another user's account or password
- Posting material authorized or created by another without his/her consent
- Posting anonymous messages
- Using the network for commercial or private advertising
- Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, harassing, or illegal material
- Using the network while access privileges are suspended or revoked

Any user who violates the Board policy or Technology Acceptable Use Contract may have computer/Internet privileges revoked at any time and without prior notice. Employee violations may also result in administrative leave, suspension, and possible termination. Student users are also subject to discipline according to the Russell County Student Code of Conduct. Any illegal use will also result in civil and/or criminal liability.

Social Media

Russell County School District (RCSD) recognizes the value of social media, both for personal and professional use. However, there are some guidelines that should be addressed when educators use social media. The guidelines and reminders below have been developed to better protect (and inform) RCSD employees from charges of inappropriate use. Teachers should not “friend” students on personal social media. Teachers should also be judicious about "friending" students' parents on social media.

Unacceptable Social Media Use Includes:

- Updating social media or posting non-instructional content during school hours
- Posting pictures with students in them without permission of parents or guardians
- Using social media as the sole means of classroom communication
- Posting disruptive content, which harms the goodwill and reputation of the students, teachers, school, and system

Communication between teachers, parents, and students should be of an educational/extra-curricular nature and support the vision, mission, and beliefs of RCSD. Other types of personal communication between teachers and students must be avoided.

Definitions

“Computer resources” as used here in refers to RCSD’s entire computer, electronic and communications network.

“Users” include employees, substitutes, students, and guests, using technology, including, but not limited to computers, networks, Internet, email, chat rooms, and other forms of technology services and products.

“Network” is wired and wireless technology networks, including school and district networks, cellular networks, commercial, community or home-based wireless networks accessible to students.

“Equipment” includes cellular phones, smart phones, PDAs, MP3 players, iPod-type devices, and portable computers such as laptops, iPads, Nooks, Chromebooks, desktops, tablets and netbooks, as well as portable storage devices. (Policies 4.10 and 4.11)

Teacher Bill of Rights

The teacher bill of Rights, Act Number 2024-409, SB-157, provides specific guidelines and procedures for school districts to ensure teachers are able to teach and students are able to learn free of disruptive behavior.

For more information visit:

<https://arc-sos.state.al.us/cgi/actdetail.mbr/detail?page=act&year=2024&act=409>

Section VII: Discipline and Grievance Procedures

Disciplinary Actions

The purpose of disciplinary action is to communicate to an employee that certain actions are inappropriate or are in violation of Board policies and procedures.

Employees have the obligation to keep themselves informed of all policies, rules and regulations by which they are governed. Employees are expected to meet standards of conduct and performance expectations and to adhere to applicable state and federal laws and regulations, as well as applicable school board policies and directives from the system's Superintendent or designee. Failure to meet such standards, adhere to rules, regulations, policies and directives may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination at the discretion of the Superintendent. Any actions by employees which reflect discredit on their employer or the state or which hinder the effective performance of the Board's functions may also be cause for disciplinary actions, up to and including termination, all at the discretion of the Superintendent.

An employee may be suspended with or without pay or may be dismissed from employment. Examples of reasons for suspension or dismissal include, but are not limited to: misuse of funds or property, insubordination, incompetence, unsatisfactory performance, intemperance, willful neglect of duty, job abandonment, immorality, cruelty, violation of the policy relating to alcohol/weapons/drugs in the workplace, fraud, the conviction or guilty pleas or a plea of nolo contendere to a felony charge. Suspension or dismissal may be effective immediately without regard to implementation of an improvement plan at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Suspension and/or Dismissal

As circumstances require, an employee may be suspended for disciplinary purposes by the Superintendent. Due process shall be a part of the procedure. If an employee is found guilty of policy violation(s), the employee may be reprimanded or suspended by the Superintendent. Further action may be taken to the Board depending on the investigation to determine if the employee's contract needs to be terminated. (Students First Act)

Grievance

Definition: A "Grievance" shall be defined as a complaint by an employee or group of employees based upon an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or inequitable application of any existing policies, rules, regulations, or orders of the Russell County School District or a complaint regarding the equity of policies, rules, regulations or orders.

The Board is committed to the task of maintaining the highest possible level of professional relations among members of the staff of the Russell County School District and of maintaining good morale among employees. Consequently, grievance procedures should provide for sincere efforts by all persons concerned in working together on constructive solutions in an atmosphere of courtesy and cooperation.

Before requesting corrective action or relief from the Superintendent, designee or the Board, the person with such complaints, grievances, or requests should present them for resolution to the employee, supervisor, or administrator at the lowest administrative level who has the authority and ability to address the problem or to implement the requested action.

Time Limits: A grievance shall be processed as rapidly as possible. The number of days stated at each level shall be considered as a maximum, and every effort shall be made to expedite the process. However, when mutually agreed upon, the time limit may be extended. In all cases, the informal procedures and discussions must be initiated by the grievant within fifteen (15) days of the occurrence of the cause giving rise to the grievance.

Procedures:

1. **Informal Procedure:** An employee with a complaint is expected to have made reasonable efforts to resolve the complaint or problem informally through discussions or other communications with the employee's immediate supervisor or other persons whose actions led to the complaint.
2. **Formal Procedure:** Level One: If the informal discussion does not resolve the grievance, if the grievant wishes, he or she shall within five (5) days of the discussion date file the grievance in writing with the principal or immediate supervisor. The principal or immediate supervisor shall within five (5) days of receipt of the written grievance transmit his/her written decision to the grievant.
3. **Formal Procedure:** Level Two: If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at Level One, he/she may file the grievance in writing with the Superintendent within five (5) days after the decision at Level One. The Superintendent or designee shall hold a discussion with the grievant within five (5) days and communicate his/her written decision to the grievant within five (5) days after the discussion.
4. **Formal Procedure:** Level Three: If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the disposition of his/her grievance at Level Two, he/she may appeal to the Board by filing a written request with the Superintendent within five (5) days after the decision at Level Two. (Policy 4.7)

Section VIII: Separations

A separation from employment occurs when an employee resigns, retires, is terminated or there is a reduction in force.

Reduction in Force

In the event it becomes necessary to reduce the number of certified staff employed by the Russell County School District due to a decrease in student enrollment, financial crisis, changes in curriculum, consolidation or reorganization, the following procedure shall be followed to determine staff members to be affected:

Procedure:

1. Attrition by resignation, retirement or voluntary leaves of absence shall be the first method used to reduce the force.
2. For the purpose of reduction in force, the following terms are defined:
 - a. Grade Level – Kindergarten, elementary grades 1-5, secondary grades 6-12, administration and supervision, special education, counseling and guidance, media specialist, career-technical, and federal programs.
 - b. Discipline Area Certified endorsement areas(s) and current major teaching or administration/supervisory assignment(s) with the Russell County School District.
3. Following the identification of the grade level(s) and discipline area(s), the number of staff to be reduced from each area will be determined by the Board, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent. All staff members within the identified area(s) will be rank ordered from greatest to least amount of service time within the Russell County School District. The least will be the first to be reduced in force.

It is understood that reduction in force constitutes termination of employment, and all benefits provided by the Russell County School District cease on the effective date. (Policy 5.15)

Resignation

Certified personnel shall resign in accordance with the provision of the Code of Alabama, Student's First Act Amended S16-24C-11: SB14. The Code states:

No teacher shall be permitted to terminate his or her employment within 30 calendar days before the first day of the next school term for students unless mutually agreed upon. A teacher may terminate his or her employment at any other time by giving 30 days written notice to the employing board of education. Any teacher terminating his or her employment in violation of this section is guilty of unprofessional conduct, and the State Superintendent of Education may revoke or suspend the certificate of the violating teacher.

Retirement

Personnel shall be subject to and retired in accordance with Alabama Law pertaining to retirement (See the Code of Alabama, 16-25-14). By state law there is no mandatory retirement age; however, the Russell County School District encourages retirement by age 70. In accordance with state law, employees 70 years of age and older may be required to make an annual application, to include

evidence of physical and mental fitness, to the Russell County School District for review and approval. In addition, the Board reserves the right to require physical and/or mental examination of any employee, regardless of age, to determine fitness for assigned responsibilities.

The Russell County School District requests written notice to the superintendent concerning retirement plans 30 days prior to the effective date.

All personnel employed by the Russell County School District shall be covered by the Social Security Program. All Employees shall be eligible for benefits in accordance with the rules and regulations as may be developed by said agency.

Termination

Non-tenured certified employees may have their contract non-renewed, based upon the recommendation of the Superintendent and a majority vote of the Board, by written notice on or before the last day of the school term. Tenured employees shall be terminated from employment in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Alabama, Title 16, Chapter 24; Students First Act.

A classified employee who wishes to terminate his/her service with the Board shall, at least 15 days prior to date of termination, notify in writing his/her immediate supervisor, who shall notify the Superintendent or his/her designated representative.

A classified probationary employee whose service is to be terminated by the Board shall be notified in writing 15 days prior to the date of termination. Classified employees on permanent status shall be terminated from employment in accordance with the procedures outlined in The Code of Alabama, 3626-100 to 108.

Section IX: Grading

All grades should be completed using the state-adopted student information system. All grades are given by classroom teachers as assigned. Grades are reported quarterly on progress reports and report cards as specified on our school district's approved calendar. Parents may access their child's grades using the parent portal system or by contacting the school's guidance counselor. Therefore, all grades are to be posted in a timely manner.

Minimum Grading Requirements

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students receive a standards based report card. Performance on standards must be entered each grading period

Elementary 1-5 Grade Teachers

All 1st-5th grade teachers are required to give a **minimum** of 5 tests, 5 classwork assignments, and 5 homework assignments (may include projects) per grading period.

Secondary 6-12 Grade Teachers

All 6th-12th grade teachers are required to give and grade a minimum of 5 performance-based assessments (tests, CTE labs, and/or projects), 5 classwork assignments, and 5 homework assignments per grading period.

All grades entered by classroom teachers should reflect student progress toward mastering the standards outlined by the Alabama State Department of Education. Grading based on compliance, behavior, or effort (to include bonus or extra credit) is not permitted.

All assignments should be graded and posted within one week of completing the test/project/assignment.

Report Card Grade Determination

Grades will be determined for the Russell County School District based on the following percentages:

GRADE BANDS	1 – 2	3 – 5	6 – 8	9 – 12
Tests	50 %	60 %	60 %	60 %
Classwork	40 %	30 %	30 %	30 %
Homework	10 %	10 %	10 %	10 %

Kindergarten students will receive an S, N, or U as a grade in each subject which will notate mastery of grade level standards. This includes Physical Education classes

- S-Satisfactory
- N-Needs Improvement
- U-Unsatisfactory

Physical Education Classes in Grades 1 – 5 will be based on a 10-point scale

- 90-100=A
- 80-89=B
- 70-79=C
- 60-69=D
- 0-59=F

Physical Education and/or Career-Tech Classes in Grades 6 – 12 will be based on the following percentages:

- Projects and Tests = 20 %
- Daily Performances/Class Work/ Daily Participation = 80 %

Alternative Learning Programs

Warrior Inspirational Academy/Virtual School/In-School Suspension

Teachers are required to ensure that students assigned to alternative programs to include, but not limited to the Warrior Inspirational Academy (WIA), Virtual School or In-School Suspension (ISS) receive current assignments in a timely manner. Teachers are required to provide instruction, monitor progress, collect student work, provide feedback and grade assignments in the same manner as students in the regular class. Teachers who submit assignments to students are also required to grade assignments in a timely manner not to exceed one week after completed assignments are submitted.

Any students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 Plan assigned to the Warrior Inspiration Academy (WIA) or in In School Suspension (ISS) must receive services as indicated in their IEP.