

Employee Handbook 2025-26

Equipping and
Empowering
Excellence Everyday



One District. One Goal. Every Child.

ABOUT APS... OUR LEGACY AND COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS



Atlanta Public Schools (APS) has a long and proud history rooted in the pursuit of educational equity and excellence. Established by ordinance of the Atlanta City Council, the district officially opened its first three grammar schools and two high schools in 1872. These schools joined two earlier institutions founded in 1866 by the Freedmen’s Bureau to serve Black children, bringing the total number of public schools to seven and laying the foundation for a system dedicated to providing free education to the children of Atlanta.

More than 150 years later, that founding purpose endures. While the landscape of education has evolved, our commitment remains steadfast: to ensure every student is prepared for the future and equipped to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

As an APS employee, you are a steward of this legacy. Your role—whether in the classroom, an office, or out in the community, has a direct impact on student achievement, school culture, and district progress. Our collective mission is rooted in providing rigorous academic opportunities, real-world relevance, and meaningful relationships that nurture the whole child.

We believe student success is a shared responsibility. That’s why we actively engage families, staff, students, and the community in the educational journey. As part of Team APS, you contribute to an environment where excellence, innovation, and equity are not just goals, they are daily practices.

Together, we honor our past and shape the future.



Photo: West Manor Elementary School 2024-25 School Year



Atlanta Board of Education

The Atlanta Board of Education is an elected, nine-member body charged with overseeing the management of the Atlanta Public Schools. The Board has many responsibilities; however, its main functions are to approve the budget, to adopt policy, and to hire and evaluate the performance of the superintendent.



**JESSICA JOHNSON, BOARD CHAIR
AT-LARGE SEAT 9**



**DR. KEN ZEFF, BOARD VICE CHAIR
DISTRICT 3**



**KATIE HOWARD
DISTRICT 1**



**TONY MITCHELL, JR.
DISTRICT 2**



**JENNIFER MCDONALD
DISTRICT 4**



**ERIKA MITCHELL
DISTRICT 5**



**PATREECE HUTCHERSON
DISTRICT 6**



**ALFRED SHIVY BROOKS
AT-LARGE SEAT 7**



**DR. KAYCEE BROCK
AT-LARGE SEAT 8**

MEET THE APS SUPERINTENDENT

With nearly two decades dedicated to public education, Superintendent Dr. Bryan Johnson has served as a teacher, school administrator, and district executive. He brings extensive experience in educational leadership, workforce development, business strategy, change management, and collaborative leadership.

Currently serving as Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools, Dr. Johnson is leading the district through a bold and student-centered transformation. In 2025, he launched a refreshed strategic vision grounded in academic excellence, operational efficiency, and community trust. Under his leadership, APS unveiled a modernized brand identity that honors Atlanta's legacy while positioning the district for a new era of innovation and resurgence. He also prioritized employee engagement, spearheaded improvements in teacher retention, and expanded access to early literacy and career-connected learning.

Prior to his work in Atlanta, Dr. Johnson served as Chief Transformation Officer for U.S. Xpress Enterprises, Inc., where he supported cross-functional leadership across technology and operations. From 2017 to 2021, he served as Superintendent of Hamilton County Schools in Tennessee, which educates 45,000 students across 78 schools. Under his leadership, Hamilton County Schools became the fastest-improving district in the state. He launched the Future Ready Institutes—career-themed high school academies—which earned national recognition from Education Week in 2020, naming him a “Leader to Learn From.”

Dr. Johnson also contributes his expertise to higher education as a strategic advisor to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC), where he supports the university's current and upcoming 2025–2030 strategic plan.

Dr. Johnson has received numerous accolades for his leadership, including being named the 2021 Tennessee Superintendent of the Year by the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents and being a finalist for National Superintendent of the Year. He was also listed as a Superintendent to Watch by the National School Public Relations Association and recognized as a 2020 Outstanding Young Alumnus by Austin Peay State University. He serves on numerous boards and is actively engaged in the Chattanooga community.



Dr. Bryan Johnson

Superintendent

Welcome & Introduction



Felecia Lester

Chief Human Resources Officer (Interim)

On behalf of Atlanta Public Schools (APS), I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you. As Interim Chief Human Resources Officer, it is my pleasure to introduce you to our esteemed organization and provide you with our comprehensive Employee Handbook.

First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude for choosing Atlanta Public Schools as your place of employment. We value your commitment, skills, and dedication to the education and development of our students. Together, we play a vital role in shaping the future of our community and empowering young minds.

Our Employee Handbook serves as a guide to ensure a productive and harmonious work environment for all employees. It outlines the policies, procedures, and expectations that govern our interactions and sets the standards for professional conduct. By familiarizing yourself with this handbook, you will gain a clear understanding of our organization's values, culture, and practices.

Please take the time to review the Employee Handbook carefully. It is essential that we all adhere to its guidelines and regulations, as they are designed to ensure fairness, equity, and respect for all members of our team.

We understand that every employee's journey is unique, and we encourage you to seek clarification or guidance from your supervisor or the Human Resources department if you have any questions or concerns. We are here to support you throughout your employment and assist you in maximizing your potential within Atlanta Public Schools. Throughout this document, you will find underlined hyperlinks to the [online policy manual](#) and other useful information sources. Follow the links to learn more.

If there is a conflict between the information in this handbook and any law, rule, policy, or regulation of the United States, state of Georgia, Georgia Department of Education, Atlanta Board of Education or Atlanta Public Schools, the law, rule, policy, or regulation is the controlling authority.

Thank you for your commitment to Atlanta Public Schools and for the invaluable contributions you make to our students' lives. Your dedication and passion for education are truly appreciated. Together, let us continue to make a positive difference in the lives of our students and our community.

Contents

Overview	8
Administration and Organizational Structure	9
Online Mandatory Ethics Training for All Employees	9
District Policies and Procedures Overview	9
<i>Ethics Policy</i>	9
<i>Reporting Ethics Violations and Whistleblower Protection</i>	10
<i>Corporal Punishment</i>	10
<i>Smoking</i>	10
<i>Falsification of Records</i>	11
<i>Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation</i>	11
<i>Sexual Misconduct & Harassment Policy</i>	11
<i>Child Abuse and Neglect – Mandatory Reporter</i>	12
<i>Supervision of Students</i>	13
<i>Employee Organizations</i>	13
<i>Equal Employment Opportunity</i>	13
<i>Complaint and Grievance Policy</i>	13
Work Year	13
<i>Workday Schedules & Punctuality</i>	14
<i>Remote Work for Eligible Staff</i>	14
<i>Emergency Closings</i>	14
Dress Code	15
Records Management/Retention	15
<i>Retention Schedule</i>	15
<i>Access to Records - Open Records and Parents’ Bill of Rights</i>	15
<i>Subpoenas</i>	16
<i>Legal Holds</i>	16
Weapons	16
Communications	17
<i>Electronic Media Usage</i>	17
<i>E-mail</i>	17
<i>Social Media Usage</i>	17
<i>Unauthorized Tape Recordings</i>	18
Payroll Administration & Benefits	18
<i>Pay Dates</i>	18
<i>Paid Holidays</i>	18
<i>Direct Deposit</i>	18
<i>Social Security Exemption</i>	18
<i>Payroll Deductions</i>	19
<i>Summer Salary</i>	19
<i>Enrollment of Your Children in APS</i>	19
<i>Credit Unions</i>	20
<i>Medical and Flexible Benefit Plan</i>	20
<i>Employee Assistance Program (EAP)</i>	21
<i>Supplemental Retirement Savings</i>	21
<i>Open Enrollment</i>	21
<i>Workers’ Compensation</i>	22
Safety and Security	22
<i>Office of Safety and Security</i>	22
<i>Identification and Badges</i>	22
<i>Emergency Response</i>	22
<i>Criminal Background Check</i>	23
Health and Absence Management	23
<i>Infectious Diseases</i>	23

Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook **2025-26**

<i>Cleanliness</i>	23
Leaves of Absence	23
<i>COVID 19 Reporting and Sick Leave Procedures</i>	23
<i>Sick Leave</i>	24
<i>Timeshare Sick Leave Bank</i>	25
<i>Employee Sick Leave Donation Program</i>	25
<i>Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)</i>	26
<i>Paid Parental Leave</i>	26
<i>Period of Leave</i>	27
<i>Workplace Accommodations</i>	27
<i>Personal Leave</i>	27
<i>Annual Leave/Vacation</i>	28
<i>Bereavement Leave</i>	28
<i>Educational Leave</i>	29
<i>Military, Government Service & Political Campaign Leave</i>	29
<i>Jury Duty</i>	30
<i>Leave for Employee Peer Advisory Representatives</i>	30
<i>Wellness Days</i>	30
<i>Disputes Regarding Leave Balances</i>	30
Employment and Total Rewards/Compensation	31
<i>Hiring</i>	31
<i>Transfer</i>	31
<i>Employee Classifications and Probationary Period</i>	31
<i>Required Documents</i>	32
<i>Overtime</i>	32
<i>Compensation Time</i>	32
<i>Drug-free Workplace</i>	32
<i>Salary Level</i>	33
<i>Reduction in Force</i>	33
<i>Staff Conflict of Interest</i>	33
<i>Reporting an Arrest</i>	33
<i>Annual Evaluation</i>	34
<i>Teacher Evaluation Appeals</i>	34
<i>Professional Growth and Evaluation</i>	34
<i>Changes in Employee Information</i>	35
<i>Access to Personnel Records</i>	35
<i>Employment Verification</i>	35
Ending Employment with APS	36
<i>Voluntary Retirement</i>	36
<i>Voluntary Resignation</i>	36
<i>Ineligible for Rehire</i>	36
<i>Termination</i>	37
<i>Separation Process</i>	37
Appendix	38
<i>Sexual Harassment and Misconduct</i>	38
Complaints and Grievances	40
<i>What is a Complaint/Grievance?</i>	40
<i>Before Filing a Formal Complaint/Grievance</i>	40
<i>Policy Exclusions</i>	41
Records Retention Schedule	41
Teacher Evaluation Appeals Procedure	42

Overview

The *Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook* summarizes Human Resources policies, practices, benefits, and services at the time of its publication. The most current version of the *Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook* can be found in PDF format on the district website. This Employee Handbook supersedes any and all previous handbooks and is current as of the date noted in the lower left-hand corner of each page.

THIS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK IS PROVIDED FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY AND IS NOT A CONTRACT BETWEEN APS AND ITS EMPLOYEES, AND ITS CONTENTS SHALL NOT BE CONSTRUED AS PROMISES FROM APS TO ITS EMPLOYEES OR AS OTHERWISE CREATING BINDING LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OWED BY APS TO ITS EMPLOYEES.

APS may change or withdraw any policy or procedure referred to, described, or summarized in this Employee Handbook as well as any other condition of employment (including wages and benefits) without any employee's agreement and with or without any advance notice to employees.

APS uses several resources to create this handbook. Resources include federal and state laws, Georgia Board of Education rules, Atlanta Board of Education policies and the administrative regulations of the APS superintendent. Throughout this document, you will find blue, underlined hyperlinks to the [online policy manual](#) and other useful information sources. Follow the links to learn more.

If you have questions:

- Ask your immediate supervisor.
- Follow the hyperlinks to the online policy manual throughout this handbook.
- Visit <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/PolicyListing.aspx?S=36031014> for the online policy manual.
- Contact the Office of Employee Relations at (404) 802-2345.

The Employee Handbook does not cover every aspect of APS policy or procedure that may apply to employees. No handbook can include or anticipate every issue, question, or concern that may arise. Each employee is required to be knowledgeable about the policies and regulations of APS and implement them in a spirit of good faith. When in doubt, please ask *before* you make a decision that could violate a law or policy and endanger your employment with the district.

The contents of this handbook are intended to provide a brief overview of the most referenced policies—it may not include every piece of information you need to know. APS reserves the right to revise, expand, or discontinue this information at any time. Only the superintendent and the Board may approve changes to Atlanta Public Schools policies and administrative regulations.

If there is a conflict between the information in this handbook and any law, rule, policy, or regulation of the United States, State of Georgia, Georgia Board of Education, Atlanta Board of Education or Atlanta Public Schools, the law, rule, policy, or regulation shall be the controlling authority.

Administration and Organizational Structure

The Superintendent is the APS Chief Executive Officer and implements the policies and vision set by the Atlanta Board of Education. The senior leadership team of the district provides strategic direction for each division of the district.

The senior leadership team is as follows:

- Chief Communications Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Human Resources Officer
- Chief of Policy
- Chief of Schools
- Chief of Teaching and Learning
- Chief Performance Officer
- Chief Strategy Officer
- Deputy Superintendent of Operations
- General Counsel

The superintendent and senior leadership team are in the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Learning and Leadership (CLL) at 130 Trinity Ave SW, Atlanta, GA 30303. Please refer to the [APS District Leadership](#) website for the latest updates.

Online Mandatory Ethics Training for All Employees

Notice

All full-time active daily, active hourly, and seasonal employees are required to complete the annual online training on ethics and professional standards at APS. The course, *"Building a Culture of Ethics"*, orients and provides APS employees with the 'tools' needed to make ethical decisions. **Training must be completed within thirty (30) business days for all new hires. All other employees must complete their annual Ethics Training by Monday, December 1, 2025, as a condition of employment.**

Employees will be automatically enrolled for this course and should check their APS email for a link to access the course. Failure to complete the training by the deadline will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Please submit any questions about the Ethics training to Ethicstraining@atlanta.k12.ga.us.

District Policies and Procedures Overview

Ethics Policy

An effective school system requires employees of integrity, high ideals and expectations, and sensitivity to others in the school environment. Employees are responsible for understanding APS' ethical standards and applying them in daily activities. All employees are expected to:

- Make decisions based on what is best for students in all cases.
- Maintain honest, equitable, professional relationships with students, parents, and other staff members.
- Observe local, state, and federal laws, policies, rules, and regulations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of research and competence in state-of-the-art practices in your field of expertise.

- Maintain confidentiality of privileged information.
- Support cooperation between the school and the community.
- Avoid conflicts of interest (see [policy GAG Staff Conflict of Interest](#)).
- Avoid giving and receiving improper gifts (see [policy GAG Staff Conflict of Interest](#)).
- Refrain from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views or propaganda of any kind.
- Safeguard school property, equipment, and materials.
- Implement board policies in a spirit of good faith.
- Comply with appropriate professional ethical standards.

See [policy GAGC Employee Ethics](#) for more details. Educators and other certificated employees should also refer to the Code of Ethics for Georgia Educators from the [Professional Standards Commission](#) for additional ethical expectations.

Reporting Ethics Violations and Whistleblower Protection

If a potential ethical violation arises, notify your immediate supervisor, the Office of Employee Relations at (404) 802-2345 or the Executive Director in the Office of Internal Compliance at (404) 802-2732. You will not suffer any punishment if you make a report in good faith.

Ethical violations can also be reported anonymously, including suspected instances of fraud, waste, and abuse through the APS independent hotline: **1-877-801-7754** or via [Ethics Tip Webpage](#). See [policy GAGC Employee Ethics](#) for more details.

Corporal Punishment

APS prohibits the use of corporal punishment by all employees. Corporal punishment includes any consequence that results in physical pain or harm to students. On rare occasions, physical force may be necessary to restrain a person or to prevent injury in accordance with [policy JGF \(2\) Seclusion or Restraint of Students](#) and related administrative regulations. When such force is used, it should be applied without anger and as a restraint rather than retaliation. Employees who find it necessary to use physical force with students should immediately provide a written report of the details to the principal of the school.

For details, please refer to policies [JCDA Student Behavior Code](#) & [JGF \(2\) Seclusion or Restraint of Students](#).

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on any property owned or leased by the Atlanta Public Schools as well as in any vehicle owned or insured by APS. All employees, students, and visitors are prohibited from smoking on District property and in District vehicles. APS discourages using tobacco or nicotine in any form.

For details, please refer to [policy GAMA Safe and Drug-free Workplace](#).

Falsification of Records

As with your job application, if an employee willfully submits false information on any records including, but not limited to, attendance records for an employee or student, records related to leave or workers' compensation, experience verification forms, and registration/enrollment records for a child or another student, employees will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Atlanta Public Schools prohibits discrimination, including harassment, based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, or any legally protected status. Acts of discrimination or harassment committed by any APS employees are violations of this policy and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Atlanta Public Schools prohibits retaliation against any person who has reported in good faith and/or cooperated with an investigation of discrimination or harassment. Acts of retaliation in violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action being taken against any offending employee up to and including termination.

For details, please refer to [policy GAEB Harassment](#).

Sexual Misconduct & Harassment Policy

Atlanta Public Schools is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from distractions caused by sexual harassment and all other forms of discrimination, or inappropriate or offensive conduct. It is expected that all personnel conduct themselves in a highly professional manner and respect coworkers, students, parents, and others who interact with district personnel. APS prohibits sexual harassment and all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex in its education program and activities. Such requirements to not discriminate extend to admission and employment. APS prohibits all unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation in any employment decision, admissions determination, education program or educational activity. Sexual harassment in the school environment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated or condoned.

Sexual Harassment is a specific form of sexual misconduct and is defined in policy GAEB as conduct that involves unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other physical, verbal, or graphic behavior or comments of a sexual nature, when:

- a. The person who is the subject of the harassment believes that he or she must accept the advances, favors or behavior to keep his/her job or access an educational program or activity; to receive a reward such as a raise, transfer, selection for training, performance evaluation, benefit, a promotion; or, in the case of students, to receive a grade, award, position or access to an educational program or activity; or
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions about employment, promotion, transfer, selection for training, performance evaluations, benefits, or other terms and conditions of employment; or
- c. The harassing conduct creates or is intended to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive

environment; or

- d. The harassing conduct unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance or a student's educational performance.

Examples of sexual harassment may include but are not limited to the following:

- Engaging in or threatening any act of sexual violence, including any act of aggression or intimidation of a sexual or sexually suggestive nature.
- Unwanted, intentional physical contact of a sexual or sexually suggestive nature, including stroking, patting or similar physical contact.
- Offensive sexual comments, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, lewd or sexually suggestive comments, gestures or actions; off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature; graphic or degrading comments or gestures about an individual's body.
- Displaying offensive writings, pictures, drawings, posters, reading materials, calendars, photographs, or other physical objects, that are pornographic, sexual in nature, sexually suggestive, or sexually demeaning.
- Punishing or threatening to punish an individual for refusing to consent to requests for sexual favors.
- Disciplining or retaliating against any individual in any way because he or she has resisted, reported or complained about sexual harassment.
- Preferential treatment or the promise of preferential treatment for engaging in sexual conduct.

Any employee receiving a report of possible sexual misconduct or harassment must *immediately* report the offenses to the Office of Employee Relations at 404-802-2345. Employee Relations will review concerns appropriately and recommend appropriate disciplinary or corrective action for sexual harassment incidents, consistent with law and policy. Retaliation against a complainant for reporting a sexual harassment incident is prohibited.

Harassment [policy GAEB Harassment](#) and guidance on reporting sexual harassment or misconduct are found in the ABOE policy manual.

Child Abuse and Neglect – Mandatory Reporter

APS strictly prohibits all forms of child abuse by employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, or partners in connection with the performance of their duties for the district. To protect the welfare for all APS students, all employees and other persons working with students on behalf of the Atlanta Public Schools, *including contractors, consultants, volunteers and partners* must promptly report all cases of suspected child abuse and neglect on behalf of children under age 18. Reporters are immune from any civil or criminal liability that might result when reporting these cases. The school social worker or school principal can assist with filing a report.

Any person – including teacher, administrator, support personnel and other district and school personnel – who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child or a student has been abused, abandoned, or neglected shall report such knowledge immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. An Atlanta Public Schools employee who suspects

physical or sexual child abuse shall report this suspicion to their principal, supervisor, counselor, or school social worker.

For more information, see [policy JGI Child Abuse or Neglect](#).

Supervision of Students

Students should be under assigned adult responsibility when they are in school, traveling under school auspices or engaging in school-sponsored activities. Employees assigned to students are expected to make decisions based on what is best for students, including providing for the safety of students in their charge. For more information, see [policy GAGC Employee Ethics](#).

Employee Organizations

All employees have the right to freely organize, join and participate in any professional association or labor organization of the employees' choice. The district does not discriminate against employees with respect to wages, hours, or any terms and conditions of employment because of participation in any professional association or labor organization. The Board also does not discriminate against any institution for participation in any grievance, complaint or proceeding.

For details, refer to [policy GBS Professional Organizations](#).

Equal Employment Opportunity

APS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, medical status, military status, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, ancestry, or any legally protected status in any of its employment practices, educational programs, services, or activities. For details, please refer to [policy GAAA Equal Employment Opportunity](#).

Complaint and Grievance Policy

The Atlanta Board of Education has an established procedure intended to provide resolution to employee complaints and grievances at the supervisory level closest to the employee. The policies and regulations providing guidance in filing and resolving a complaint may be found in the district [complaints and grievance policy \(GAE\)](#).

Taking prompt action to resolve the concern improves employee morale, enhances job performance, and improves overall service to students and staff. This section and the Appendix includes general information about this policy. Please contact the school's main office or call the APS Office of Employee Relations at **(404) 802-2345** for complaint forms and other details.

Work Year

All regular, full-time APS employees work either 189 days, 197 days, 201 days, 202 days, 211 days, 231 days or annual duty (252/261 days). The official, contractual academic year (or work year) and payroll schedule for each of these schedules is as follows: **189 Days, 197 Days, 201 Days, 202 Days, 211 Days, and 231 Days**

Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook 2025-26

The required working dates for each work year are based on the board-approved student calendar and are posted each year on the [Compensation website](#). The annual salary for each of these work calendars is divided evenly into 24 payments over 12 months. The first paycheck is deposited on or before August 31.

Annual Duty (252/261 Days)

The work year begins July 1 and goes through June 30 of the following year. This schedule coincides with the Board's fiscal year. The annual salary is divided evenly into 24 payments over 12 months. The first pay period is July 1 – 15, and the first paycheck is deposited on or before July 31.

Workday Schedules & Punctuality

The *minimum* on-premises workday for all full-time employees is 7.5 hours. The 7.5-hour workday for teachers and paraprofessionals includes lunch. The 7.5-hour workday for all other employees does *not* include lunch. Each employee's work schedule is set by the supervisor based on the needs of the work site.

It is expected that every employee arrives to work on time and is ready to start work upon arrival. Being on time is critical to the safety and success of students and for the smooth operations of the school district. See [policy GARB Employee Time Schedules](#) and [regulation GARB-R\(1\)](#) for details.

Remote Work for Eligible Staff

Eligible APS staff are allowed to work remotely at the discretion of their supervisor during designated APS Flex periods. During APS Flex periods eligible employees have the opportunity to designate an appropriate alternate place of work. Human Resources determines which positions are eligible for remote work options and when this option may be utilized. Remote work is not an entitlement or district-wide perk. Not all positions are suitable for remote work.

Remote work is a voluntary arrangement granted by an employee's immediate supervisor and approved by Human Resources. It allows eligible employees to perform their duties offsite, within the State of Georgia, during regular work hours. Flexible hybrid models may be short-term, long-term, or recurring. These are approved on a case-by-case basis at the supervisor's discretion, require HR approval, and must be supported by a completed APS Remote Work Agreement. For more information, visit the [website](#).

Emergency Closings

APS cooperates fully with local emergency management preparedness authorities for natural and man-made disasters. The superintendent may close individual schools or all schools in the event of abnormal conditions, hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the safety, welfare, or health of students or employees. In cases of emergency closures, some critical employees, primarily in the Operations Division, may be required to report to work.

Tune in to [WSB-TV \(Channel 2\)](#), [WSB-AM 750](#) and [WABE-FM 90.1](#) or access the [APS Web site](#), [Twitter @apsupdate](#) or [APS Facebook page](#) for news about emergency closings.

Dress Code

All employees must dress in a professional manner that is appropriate for their job responsibilities and adhere to the established dress code rules. The managing supervisor determines appropriate and inappropriate dress for work activities and work site.

The minimum standards of professional appearance for employees shall be as follows:

1. Professional Attire: During the workday and at work-related activities, employees shall exhibit a professional appearance. Acceptable clothing includes, but is not limited to, collared shirts, dress slacks, dress coordinates, suits, dresses, ties, sweaters, blouses, knit tops, sweatshirts and tee shirts with school-related insignia, jackets, jeans (when appropriate), shoes (including athletic sneakers) and sports coats. Exceptions include positions with separate dress expectations such as Food Service, Transportation, and Maintenance.
2. Casual Days: Designated days like "Casual Friday" "College Spirit Day" or "Spirit Day" allow for jeans, wind suits, logo shirts, athletic shoes, and other appropriate items as deemed by local administration.
3. Activity-Specific Dress: Laboratory experiences, field trips, and special job assignments may necessitate different attire. Employees should consult their supervisor for acceptable dress.

For additional details, please refer to [regulation GBRL-R Employee Dress Code](#).

Records Management/Retention

Each employee is responsible for maintaining, managing, and producing public records related to his/her work according to state and federal laws and APS policy. Records may be maintained electronically or in hard copy. When no longer needed, employees must destroy records in an appropriate manner—records containing sensitive information must be shredded, and we encourage recycling whenever possible. Records destruction must be logged, and these logs must be maintained according to the retention schedule.

Retention Schedule

APS generally follows the rules designated by the Georgia Secretary of State for the retention and destruction of records. In a few instances, APS retains records for longer than the state required period. For example, APS retains leave status records of separated employees through retirement to ensure that former employees receive full benefits from the Teachers' Retirement System. The complete records retention schedule is in the Appendix. See the [APS Retention Schedule](#) website for full details about what must be retained and for how long.

Access to Records - Open Records and Parents' Bill of Rights

The Georgia Open Records Act requires that most public records be subject to inspection by the public upon request. The Parents' Bill of Rights provides parents the right to review certain instructional and student information. In general, we must produce all available records within a three-day time frame. If an

employee receives a request from a member of the public or parent, contact [Open Records](#) at **(404) 802-2811** *immediately*. If an employee receives a request for records from the Open Records office, follow all instructions and produce all records by the deadline. The Open Records office will determine if portions of the records should not be released and communicate with the requester on behalf of the district.

Subpoenas

A subpoena is an enforceable court order requiring a person to appear at a certain time and place to provide testimony in court or by deposition. Some subpoenas require the production of records and other tangible things. *If an employee fails to comply with a proper subpoena, they could be held in contempt of court: employees should make subpoena compliance a top priority.* If an employee receives a subpoena related to APS business (e.g., students, personnel, etc.), they should immediately inform their building or worksite administrator and work with the administrator to determine (1) what information is being sought by the subpoena, (2) whether any student/family or employee privacy rights are at issue, and (3) the type and duration of leave that may be required to comply with the subpoena. Contact the Legal Department at **(404) 802-2801** with questions.

Legal Holds

When APS receives a notice from certain governmental agencies (e.g., Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Office for Civil Rights) and when it involves a litigation matter, we are required to preserve records associated with the matter until final disposition. If this applies to you, you will receive a notice from the Office of the General Counsel detailing the records that must be preserved. If you receive this notice, it is important that you not destroy any records, even if those records would not be required to be maintained under the district's record retention schedule. "Records" means all paper and electronic files including Microsoft Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, memoranda, letters, emails, charts, handwritten notes, notebooks, meeting notes, logs and agendas, appointment books, telephone notepads and logs, notes of conversations, existing drafts, files inherited from other employees, archives, calendars, file folders and jackets in which documents are contained, information contained in a mobile phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), smart phone or any other external hard drive, USB drive, thumb drive, flash drive, memory stick, DVD or CD. When in doubt, preserve and direct all questions to **the Legal Department at (404) 802-2801**.

Weapons

The Board prohibits the possession of weapons on APS property, in the school safety zone, and at school-sponsored activities. The Board shall act forcefully to control anyone who possesses weapons of any kind to school or school/APS-sponsored activities, while traveling on a school bus or any other APS vehicle, at school bus stops, in any APS facility, or in any school safety zone. Anyone who unlawfully brings weapons to school or school sponsored functions shall be subject to prosecution under the provisions of state and federal laws. APS employees who violate this policy are also subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. For details, please refer to [policy GAMA Safe and Drug-Free Workplace](#).

Communications

Electronic Media Usage

Any electronic activity conducted via the APS network or using APS computers—including the APS e-mail account—is subject to inspection and monitoring. There should not be any expectation of privacy. Electronic systems should primarily be used for instruction and to administer the business of the district. **Limited** personal use is permitted. Use of APS Internet and technology resources is a privilege that may be revoked at any time.

All data accessed, stored, or transmitted via APS electronic resources shall be used in a responsible, ethical, and lawful manner. Any unauthorized use or any failure to comply with applicable law, policy and rules relating to the use of electronic resources will result in the loss of electronic network access and/or the imposition of disciplinary actions. Unauthorized use includes but is not limited to programming vandalism or “hacking” activities; access, transmission, storage, or display of offensive materials or messages including, but not limited to, those that contain sexually explicit information; ethnic/racial slurs; defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane or threatening language; encouragement of the use of controlled substances; or illegal material. For details, please refer to [policy IFBG Internet Acceptable Use](#).

E-mail

All APS employees are assigned an e-mail account. It is each employee’s responsibility to check e-mail on a regular basis and to maintain and archive e-mail records as required by the [APS Records Retention Schedule](#). See Records Management/Retention, p. 14-15. For details, please contact Client Support at clientsupport@atlantapublicschools.us or **(404) 802-1000**.

Social Media Usage

Social media is a useful tool for effectively communicating with stakeholders about the work of the district. “Social Media” is defined as all social media activities by district employees, including but not limited to the use of blogs, forums, social networking sites and any other web-based communications on publicly available sites. Social media activities related to the work of the district are encouraged to take place in a classroom or district office setting so long as such activities do not detract from the employee’s effectiveness or other job duties.

The use of social media, even off duty and off premises, must not violate any Board policies or otherwise interfere with the employee’s performance of duties. The Board expects all employees to exercise professionalism and good judgment in any social media activities, district related as well as non-district related. Furthermore, any social media activities must comply with all applicable laws including, but not limited to, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), copyright, trademark, defamation, privacy, securities, and any other applicable laws and regulations.

Employees are not permitted to have a social media handle with “APS”, “Atlanta Public Schools”, or “APS Department or School Name” included. Employees that have “APS” or the aforementioned in their social media handles, such as “@JaneDoeAtlantaPublicSchools or @APSJane”, must remove APS-affiliated language. If an employee’s profile identifies them as affiliated with APS in the bio section, they must include the following disclaimer: “Opinions are my own and not the views of my employer”. Please

remember that inclusion of the disclaimer does not release the employee from complying with APS' Social Media Acceptable Usage Policy.

Any communication which is unprofessional or prohibited in any other form is also unprofessional or prohibited on social media. Employees should be mindful that any social media post, even from an employee's personal, non-district account, may be interpreted as being made on behalf of the district. For details, please refer to [Policy GAHC Social Media](#).

Unauthorized Tape Recordings

Conversations and communications generally should be free and open among employees. Employees and/or anyone acting on their behalf are prohibited from recording or reproducing, via any audio or video means, any conversation between employees while on APS premises and/or while conducting APS business without the expressed, written consent of all persons engaged in the conversation or communication. APS may record public presentations, board meetings, hearings, grievances, procurement activities and official investigations. Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of your employment. For details, please refer to [policy GAGC Employee Ethics](#).

Payroll Administration & Benefits

Pay Dates

All APS employees are paid on the 15th and the last day of each month. If the 15th or the last day of the month fall on a weekend, employees are paid on the Friday prior to the weekend.

Paid Holidays

As a benefit of employment, all full-time employees of APS receive holiday pay. 201-day, 202-day, 211-day and 231-day employees receive 11 paid holidays each year. Annual duty employees receive 13 paid holidays per year. School Nutrition employees receive 4 paid holidays each year. Duty (work) days and paid holidays are provided annually on the work schedule posted on the [APS Human Resources Employee Services Webpage](#).

Direct Deposit

All payroll checks are directly deposited into employees' bank accounts. APS does not issue paper checks or pay stubs. Payment information is delivered electronically through the [e-APS employee portal](#) under "Employee Self Service." Log in using your Employee (Lawson) ID number and your APS password.

Social Security Exemption

Your earnings from this job are not covered under Social Security (i.e. you do not pay Social Security taxes). This means that you do not earn credits for Social Security retirement or disability benefits in this job. If you retire or become disabled, and you are eligible for a Social Security benefit based on other work, your earnings from this job will not be used to compute your Social Security benefit. In addition, we will not consider these non-covered earnings for the future potential calculation of survivor benefits based on your earnings. Your earnings from this job are subject to Medicare taxes and will count for the

purposes of the Medicare program. For information on how you may qualify for Social Security benefits, visit www.ssa.gov.

Payroll Deductions

The Payroll Department must deduct the following items from your paycheck:

- Federal and state income taxes.
- Medicare tax of 1.45 percent of your earnings if APS hired you after March 31, 1986, or if you work part time (daily or hourly); and
- Pension contributions, depending upon your employment status.

Other deductions that have been approved by the Board may be taken directly from your paycheck, such as a parking fee for employees with assigned spaces in the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Learning and Leadership deck and any voluntary contributions you choose to make to the APS Employee Consolidated Giving Campaign.

Summer Salary

The pay for full-time employees on 201, 202, 211, and 231 day schedules who are present for the full work year is divided into 24 installments paid throughout the year including the summer months. Summer pay will be prorated for 201, 202, 211, and 231 day employees who are present for at least one-quarter of the school year if they are:

- Employed after the beginning of the regular school year.
- Separated from the school system after the regular school year ends; or
- Absent from duty without pay during any part of the required period of employment.

Enrollment of Your Children in APS

All regular, full-time employees may enroll their children in APS tuition-free as a benefit of their employment. All enrollment of APS employees' children in APS schools must be processed through the [Office of Student Assignment & Records](#) *unless* you are a bona fide resident of the city of Atlanta *and* you are enrolling your child in your zoned school.

School-based employees with children in grades and programs available at their schools may apply for a work site transfer (for their children), regardless of available transfer spaces at your school. For a transfer to any other school besides your work site and for all transfers for employees who are not based at a single school/site campus, you must apply for a transfer to a school with space available through the Office of Student Assignment and records.

Contact **Office of Student Assignment & Records** at ceedwards@apsk12.org or 404-802-2233 for details.

Credit Unions

Credit unions are members-only, not-for-profit financial institutions that use their earnings to pay dividends to their members and to offer them lower loan rates, higher savings rates, and fewer service fees than for-profit banks. As an APS employee, you are eligible to join these credit unions:

- **Family First Credit Union** – 3604 Atlanta Avenue, Hapeville, GA 30354 **(404) 768-4980**, <https://www.ffcuga.org>
- **Peach State Federal Credit Union** – North Decatur Square, 2899 North Decatur Road, Suite F, **(678) 889-4328** <https://www.peachstatefcu.org/PinnacleCU>
- **Credit Union of Atlanta** – 245 Pryor St SW, Atlanta, GA 30303 **(404) 671-4020** <https://www.cuatlanta.org>

Medical and Flexible Benefit Plan

Atlanta Public Schools (APS) offers a variety of insurance and fringe benefit options to meet the diverse needs of our employees and their families. These include:

- Health Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Care Insurance
- Life Insurance and Dependent Life Insurance
- Disability Insurance and Additional Voluntary Disability Insurance
- Supplemental Plans
- Dependent Daycare Accounts
- Medical Spending Accounts

If you are a full-time, benefit-eligible employee, you have the option to pay for certain medical and flexible plan benefits on a pre-tax basis through payroll deduction. Participation in these programs is voluntary and allows you to reduce your taxable income by the amount of premiums you pay for eligible benefits, such as:

- Health Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Retirement Savings

Please note: If you participate in a tax-deferred supplemental retirement plan, your maximum payroll deduction for retirement savings may be affected. For more information, please contact your Lincoln Financial Group representative or the Employee Benefits Department.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Atlanta Public Schools provides all employees, and their families access to the TELUS Health Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a confidential resource designed to support your overall wellbeing. The EAP is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year at no cost to you.

Services Offered:

- Short-term, solution-focused counseling (sessions determined by clinical need)
- Support for work, health, and life concerns
- Assistance with relationships and family matters
- Guidance for workplace challenges
- Legal consultation (one telephonic or one 30-minute, in-person session per legal matter)
- Financial consultation (one telephonic session per financial matter)

How to Access TELUS Health EAP:

- Phone: 800-455-2780 (APS dedicated number)
- Online: one.telushealth.com
 - Username: APS
 - Password: eap (*case-sensitive*)

All interactions with the EAP are confidential. APS does not receive information about individual use of services.

Supplemental Retirement Savings

APS encourages employees to save for retirement by offering a variety of options for 403(b) and 457(b) savings accounts through the Lincoln Financial Group. Participation in these plans is voluntary and designed to help you prepare financially for the future.

For details and assistance, please contact the Employee Benefits Department via the website or by calling (404) 802-0020.

Open Enrollment

All benefit-eligible employees have the opportunity to elect or make changes to their medical and flexible benefits each year during the Open Enrollment period. Some benefit elections require action each year; failure to complete enrollment may result in a loss of coverage for the following calendar year.

The Employee Benefits Department will announce the Open Enrollment dates and provide detailed instructions on how to complete your enrollment. Open Enrollment is typically held each October, and informational sessions will be available to assist employees in making their elections.

For questions or assistance, please contact the Employee Benefits Department via the website or at (404) 802-0020.

Workers' Compensation

If you are injured on the job, you must report the injury immediately to your immediate supervisor.

The supervisor will file a detailed injury report. Risk Management must receive this report within forty-eight (48) hours of the injury.

If the State Workers' Compensation Act covers your injury, you are eligible for income benefits if the injury causes you to miss seven (7) or more calendar days. If you are disabled for 21 consecutive days following an injury, compensation shall be paid for the first seven days of incapacity. You can use your earned sick days or annual leave during your seven-day absence. Whenever workers' compensation income benefits are payable, the amount will meet the state workers' compensation guidelines.

For details, please refer to [policy EGAA Workers' Compensation](#) and [regulation EGAA-R \(1\) Workers' Compensation: On-the-job Injuries](#).

Safety and Security

Office of Safety and Security

With a student-centered focus, Atlanta Public Schools launched in-house Office of Safety and Security in the 2016-2017 school year. That bold new step included a new Police Department, Emergency Management as well as a Security Operations department. Since its inception, APSPD has hired individuals who philosophically align with the district's social emotional learning approach, and a national TRIAD model that involves law enforcement officers serving as informal counselors and educators to accomplish this mission.

Campus Emergency Contact Number to Dispatch 24/7: (404) 802-2000

Identification and Badges

All employees are provided a district name badge with picture identification. The ID badge is to be worn at all times while fulfilling assigned duties. The identification badge also is an access key to assigned facilities during specified times appropriate to the employee's position. If an ID badge is lost or damaged contact the Office of Safety and Security for a replacement badge. An employee may be charged a fee for each replacement badge. The employee badge is district property and should be returned upon separation of employment or at the request of an employee's supervisor.

Crisis alert badges allow any staff member to request help for a minor need or to place the school in lockdown due to a threat. All employees will receive training on appropriate use of the crises alert badge. If the alert badge is lost, contact the Office of Safety and Security immediately so that the crisis badge can be deactivated. An employee may be charged for each replacement crisis badge due to the badge being lost or physically damaged.

Emergency Response

Each APS Facility maintains a Safety and Security Plan for emergency response to safety threats within the school, neighborhood, and community. The emergency plan and the employees' responsibilities within the

plan will be shared by the site or department captain. Each employee must ensure awareness of duties related to emergency response. Contact the Office of Safety and Security for more information.

Criminal Background Check

All personnel must be fingerprinted and successfully complete a criminal records check at time of hire. All certified staff will also complete a background check each time their certificate is renewed through the Professional Standards Commission's certificate renewal application process. Non-certified staff will be fingerprinted on a periodic basis within the final year of each five-years of employment based on most recent hire date as described in Policy [GAK \(1\)](#). For Fingerprinting and Badging support, contact (404) 802-2020 or fingerprinting@apsk12.org.

Health and Absence Management

Infectious Diseases

If an employee has a medical condition that poses a substantial health or safety threat to your school or workplace, they must leave the premises until their attendance on duty no longer poses such a threat. APS relies upon public health and medical experts' advice to determine when to require your removal and permit your return to work. For details, please refer to [policy GARA Employee Health Examinations](#).

Cleanliness

Please follow these guidelines from the Facilities Services department to help maintain the cleanliness and safety of your workspace.

- Refrain from dragging furniture and file cabinets across floors. Please request assistance or use dollies.
- Use only wall mounting tape and tabs to affix materials to the walls. Avoid using masking, packing or duct tape, staples, and glue in direct contact with all wall surfaces.
- Windows in classrooms should only be opened in emergency situations.
- Exterior doors should never be propped or left open.
- Breakfast in the classroom: ensure that all debris is placed in the appropriate container and placed in the hallway after breakfast. Custodians will not enter the classroom once the school day has begun to discard breakfast trash.
- Refrain from storing food items and/or food containers in desks and closets. This reduces the need for pest control services in the building.
- Refrain from disposing of any food items in classroom sinks.
- Recycling: separate all debris from paper and cardboard and place in the appropriate containers. Break down all empty boxes and place them in the designated recycle areas.

If you have questions, please contact your immediate supervisor.

Leaves of Absence

COVID 19 Reporting and Sick Leave Procedures

Atlanta Public Schools has discontinued the Covid-19 Paid leave incentive. Employees that contract COVID-19, should follow the Atlanta Public Schools Sick Leave policy and protocol while they recuperate.

COVID-19 Updates and Reporting Protocol

- Masks will remain optional in all APS facilities and school buses.
- APS **no longer** offers COVID-19 testing at any APS buildings or schools.
- APS employees are **no longer** required to participate in COVID-19 surveillance testing.
- APS will continue to follow DPH Isolation and Close Contact guidelines. APS isolation and quarantine guidelines can be found here: [COVID-19 Updates and Alerts webpage](#)
 - Individuals who test positive for a Communicable Disease will need to follow isolation guidelines.
 - Individuals exposed to a positive Communicable Disease do not need to quarantine at home. Individuals may continue to report to work or school if they remain without symptoms. Please refer to the Close Contact guidelines for more information.
 - Students and staff who test positive or have a Communicable Disease exposure must complete a self-report form found at the following link: [COVID-19 Self Report form](#).

For general health services questions, you may email HealthServices@atlanta.k12.ga.us, and a team member will address your concern within 24 hours. See policy [GARH](#) and [GARH-R\(1\)](#) for further explanation of rights and responsibilities related to Sick Leave.

Sick Leave

All full-time employees earn sick leave. Details about the amount of leave you currently have accrued can be found in the [e-APS employee portal](#) in the "Employee Space" section under "Leave Balances" Information about the amount of time you accrue each pay period and the total amount you can accrue is found on the [Absence Management website](#).

See policy [GARH](#) and [GARH-R\(1\)](#) for further explanation of rights and responsibilities related to Sick Leave.

Employees may use sick leave when they miss work due to the following reasons:

1. Personal illness
2. Pregnancy and maternity/paternity leave
3. Adoption of a child or placement of a foster child
4. Incapacity because of bodily injury
5. Exposure to infectious disease that might endanger the health of others
6. Illness or death in the immediate family that necessitates your supervision and care. Immediate family includes your spouse, father, mother, brother, sister, child, or any other relative by blood, marriage, or adoption who lives with you.
7. Medical or dental appointments when it is not possible to arrange such appointments during non-working hours
8. Absences that are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act

See [regulation GARH-R \(3\) Leaves and Absences: Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#)

Employees must inform your supervisor as soon as possible when they know of the need to be absent for one of the above reasons. In situations of three (3) or more consecutive sick leave absences, a doctor's note or bereavement related documents will be required upon your return from leave. Sick leaves of more

than five (5) consecutive days should be referred to the Absence Management Department and may be approved under the Family and Medical Leave Act (see below). *Failure to follow your worksite's reporting procedures may result in unauthorized, unpaid absences and discipline, up to and including termination.* Calling in sick excessively, without physician certification and/or without proper cause may also result in discipline, up to and including termination. See [regulation GARH-R \(2\) Progressive Discipline for Absenteeism and Tardiness](#) for details.

If an employee has been employed by the district for at least a year and have worked a minimum of 1,250 hours in the preceding year, they may qualify for the federal Family and Medical Leave Act for extended absences of up to 12 weeks for personal illness/injury, the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care (Both mothers and fathers qualify), or to care for a sick spouse, parent, or child. For leaves in the first year of a child's life, in cases where both parents are APS employees, the parents may use a total of twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave combined.

Accrued sick leave must be used for the duration of your Family and Medical Leave. If an employee experience unpaid leave during the school year for 20 days or more, your salary for the remainder of the year will be recalculated based on the number of days you will work until the end of the school year. *This means that your salary after returning from unpaid leave will be less per pay period than before your leave began.* The Compensation Team will notify you of the change once you return to active duty. For details about FMLA, see [regulation GARH-R \(3\) Leaves and Absences: Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#) or contact the Absence Management department [via their Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2309**.

Timeshare Sick Leave Bank

The Timeshare Sick Leave Bank allows eligible employees to donate two (2) days of sick leave to the bank. This sick leave can be withdrawn by any member of the sick leave bank if they experience a catastrophic illness or injury and have exhausted all other accrued sick leave. A member of the sick leave bank must have the Sick Leave Bank Withdrawal Application completed by their physician then submitted to Absence Management. To receive a copy of the Sick Leave Bank Withdrawal Application, the employee should contact the Absence Management Office to request an application. Once Absence Management receives the withdrawal application, the Sick Leave Bank Committee will meet and review the application. The committee will then vote to either approve or deny the withdrawal request.

Employee Sick Leave Donation Program

Under specific circumstances, a District employee may donate up to ten (10) Sick Leave days to another District employee with a catastrophic illness or injury. No other donations of Sick Leave are allowed by the District.

- a. Both employees must be active-full-time employees and both must participate in the Catastrophic Illness Leave Bank.
- b. The receiving employee must have exhausted all available leave options before being eligible for the donation from another employee.
- c. The receiving employee must be able to provide medical certification or other appropriate documentation of the need if required.
- d. The maximum amount of days a district employee can receive via donation is ten (10) Sick Leave Days.

See policy [GARH](#) and [GARH-R\(10\)](#) for further explanation related to the Sick Leave Bank and Employee Donation Program.

Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

The FMLA gives eligible employees the right to take up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave (or up to 26 weeks in the case of military caregiver leave) with continued benefits for immediate family or medical reasons.

APS employees who work at a qualifying site, have been employed continuously for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1250 hours during the 12-month period immediately prior to requesting leave are eligible to take up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period under the FMLA. Employees are required to use any accrued paid leave (sick, personal and/or annual leave) while on approved FMLA leave. When paid leave is exhausted, the leave becomes unpaid.

Eligible employees may take reasonable leaves of absence for the birth, adoption, or placement of a foster child (both parents qualify); for the care of a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition or a covered service member with an injury or illness; or because the employee is unable to perform the functions of his/her position due to a serious health condition. For leaves in the first year of a child's life, in cases where both parents are APS employees, the parents may use a total of twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave combined.

For details about FMLA, see [regulation GARH-R \(3\) Leaves and Absences: Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#) or contact the Absence Management department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2309**.

Paid Parental Leave

Paid Parental Leave (PPL) gives eligible full-time employees the right to take up to 120 hours of paid parental leave over a twelve (12) month period. An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for paid parental leave (PPL) qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:

- The employee is classified as full-time by the district and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System of Georgia) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and
- The employee has six (6) continuous months of employment with the District, regardless of whether the employee is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee paid on an hourly basis must have also worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.

A qualifying life event means:

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

Period of Leave

The maximum amount of PPL that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling twelve (12) month period is 120 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur during such period.

- a. The rolling twelve (12) month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave.
- b. PPL may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of less than seven and a half hours per day. The smallest increment of parental leave that may be taken is four (4) hours in a workday.
- c. Any unused PPL that remains twelve (12) months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use.
- d. Unused PPL shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education.
- e. PPL under state law shall run concurrently with any other leave provided under federal law, such as FMLA.
- f. Parents who work for the district are entitled equally to parental leave. Shared parental leave is not required under state law, and as such, PPL shall be equally available for all eligible employees.

See regulation [GAHR-R\(11\): Employee Leaves and Absences -Paid Parental Leave](#)

Workplace Accommodations

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as applicable, this District will not discriminate against applicants and individuals on the basis of disabilities, and when needed, will provide reasonable workplace accommodations to employees and applicants who are qualified for a job, with or without reasonable accommodation, so that they may perform the essential duties of the position as long as the reasonable accommodation does not create a hardship to the District.

When an employee with a qualified disability requests an accommodation and can be reasonably accommodated without creating an undue hardship or causing a direct threat to workplace safety, the individual and the district will engage in the interactive accommodation process to determine what, if any, accommodations may be provided.

The employee should contact the Absence Management Department to request the appropriate forms to complete. Please see regulation [GARA-R \(2\) Employee Health Examinations – Reasonable Accommodations.](#)

Personal Leave

In July of every school year, up to three (3) days of your accumulated sick leave will be transferred into your personal leave accrual. You must have more than three (3) days of accumulated sick leave on June 30 to be able to transfer sick leave into personal leave. You may use this leave to be absent from duties for personal reasons. There is a three (3) day maximum accrual/usage of personal leave each school year.

For planned absences, you must complete and submit your time off request through UKG-Ready to your Principal or supervisor as soon as possible. Keep in mind that if your leave coincides with a critical workday,

your supervisor may deny the leave request. For unplanned emergencies, such as car trouble or a burst pipe at home, you must inform your supervisor as soon as possible when you know that you need to be tardy or absent. Your supervisor may ask for documentation of your emergency upon your return. *Failure to follow your worksite's reporting procedures may result in unauthorized, unpaid absences and disciplinary action, up to termination.* Please see [regulation GARH-R \(9\) Leaves and Absences: Personal and Annual Leave](#) for details.

Annual Leave/Vacation

Annual duty (252/261-day) employees and employees who worked a 220-day assignment before May 13, 1986, and continue to do so without interruption, are eligible to accrue annual leave up to 30 days. School-based employees may have restricted times when annual leave will be approved due to school schedules. Non-school-based employees may use annual leave at any time during the year if your supervisor and division or department head approves it. You must complete and submit your time off request through UKG-Ready to your principal or supervisor as soon as possible. Keep in mind that if your leave request coincides with a critical workday, your supervisor may deny the leave request.

Information about the amount of annual leave you accrue each pay period can be found in [regulation GARH-R \(9\) Leaves and Absences: Personal and Annual Leave](#). Details about the amount of leave you currently have accrued can be found in the [e-APS employee portal](#) in the "Employee Space" section under "Leave Balance"

Upon your separation from APS employment, APS will pay you for your accumulated, unused annual leave. See [policy GAO Employee Resignation](#). APS will also pay you for your accumulated leave when you change from a position earning annual leave to a position ineligible to earn or use annual leave.

Bereavement Leave

If an immediate family member or a relative who lives with you dies, your principal or Supervisor may authorize the use of sick leave for a maximum of three (3) accumulated sick leave days per bereavement episode. Immediate family means a spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild and corresponding step and in-law relations. If you wish to be absent for more than the allowed sick leave, you must request personal or annual leave.

To request sick leave for bereavement, you must submit your time off request through UKG-Ready to your principal or supervisor for approval and follow normal leave protocol. Written bereavement documentation is necessary, as prescribed by sick leave regulation, when the absence is three (3) or more consecutive workdays. Documentation is provided to your supervisor.

For more information, see [regulation GARH-R \(4\) Leaves and Absences: Bereavement Leave](#) or contact the Absence Management department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2309**.

Educational Leave

To take an unpaid leave of absence for work-related or other study, employees must meet the following conditions:

- Be a regular, full-time employee with at least three years of continuous service.
- Request the leave in writing to the Absence Management team with an explanation of the manner in which the study will enhance your work with the district.
- Provide proof of enrollment from the accredited postsecondary institution.
- Provide proof of successful completion for each term you are on approved educational leave.

When the employee returns from educational leave, the superintendent may assign them to a position that is similar in nature, but not necessarily the same in title or status, as the one they previously held, provided a suitable position is available. Reemployment is not guaranteed if no similar position is available. If an employee goes on an unpaid leave during the school year for 20 days or more, their salary for the remainder of the year will be recalculated based on the number of days they will work until the end of the school year. This means that their salary after returning from unpaid leave will be less per pay period than before your leave began. The HR Employee Services team will notify you of the change once you return to active duty.

For more information, see [regulation GARH-R \(8\) Leaves and Absences: Educational Leave](#) or contact the Absence Management department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2309**.

Military, Government Service & Political Campaign Leave

Military Service

Employees ordered to annual tours of duty for the reserves or National Guard during their work year are granted paid leaves up to 18 days per year. Longer military leaves without pay are granted any time the service of an employee is required by the U.S. Armed Forces for an extended period. Upon satisfactory completion of the military service, the employee will be restored to a similar position and status as the previously held position, if the employee applies to return within 90 days of being relieved from duty. Proper evidence of official orders must be presented to the Absence Management team at least two (2) weeks in advance of the requested leave.

Government Service

Government service leave allows you to serve up to 12 months at one time, without loss of status, in the governments of the city of Atlanta, the state of Georgia or the federal government. When you return from government service leave, the superintendent may assign you to a similar, but not necessarily identical, position and status as your previously held position.

For employees who have been with APS for at least three (3) years, unpaid leaves of one semester or one year may be granted to qualify and campaign for a public office. For details, see [regulation GARH-R \(5\) Leaves and Absences: Government and Military Service Leave](#) or contact the Absence Management department [via the Web site](#) or at **(404) 802-2309**.

Jury Duty

APS encourages all employees to serve when called for jury duty. APS will not excuse employees from jury duty under normal circumstances. You must complete and submit your time off request through UKG-Ready to your principal or supervisor as soon as possible.

When you are summoned for jury duty, APS will:

- Pay your regular salary for the days served. You lose no pay due to jury duty.
- Consider your jury duty pay as payment for extra expenses incurred.

If the court subpoenas you as a witness for personal reasons (e.g. divorce, personal injury, etc.), you must use your personal or annual leave and you must request through UKG-Ready to your supervisor for approved leave for the day(s) involved. If the subpoena is related to official APS business; you may be granted administrative leave to appear before the court. For details, please refer to [regulation GARH-R \(6\) Leaves and Absences: Jury Duty/Legal Leave](#).

Leave for Employee Peer Advisory Representatives

Employees may act as Peer Advisory representatives of other employees during the grievance process. An employee may be absent with regular pay for the purpose of processing grievances and attending grievance meetings and formal disciplinary hearings for himself/herself and/or for others for a maximum of four (4) hours in any one-week period. An employee representative may be granted permission for an additional absence in the same week without pay. If permission is denied, the supervisor must state the reason in writing to the employee. An employee representative who misses work without first obtaining permission will not be paid for the absence. For details, see [policy GAE Complaints and Grievances](#).

Wellness Days

In an effort to retain educators and staff and respond to concerns about burnout, full-time employees will be granted **two (2) wellness days** per school/fiscal year for use at their discretion. Wellness days will come from the employee's accumulation of sick days, but there is no requirement that employees present a doctor's note or any other documentation to use wellness days. Similar to personal leave, employees will be afforded reasonable discretion over the use of wellness days.

Employees must secure approval of their principal/supervisor prior to using wellness days. If the employee has no accumulated sick leave, they will not be paid for the wellness days absent. Unused wellness days do not carry over from year to year.

Employees are not allowed to use wellness days on critical days. Critical days for non-school-based, non-instructional employees are designated in advance by the director or other appropriate supervisor. For details, please refer to [Regulation GARH-R\(12\): Employee Leaves and Absences - Wellness Days](#)

Disputes Regarding Leave Balances

An employee who believes his/her leave balances contain an error must submit a written request for review to the Payroll Office. Requests must be made within one calendar year of the pay period(s) in question. The Executive Director of Payroll or his/her designee shall issue all final determinations regarding corrections. Employees may contact Payroll at **(404) 802-2209**.

Employment and Total Rewards/Compensation

Hiring

The Atlanta Board of Education recognizes that Atlanta Public Schools' employees are the district's most valued assets. Because all employees are responsible for the academic success of our students, the board wishes to support the superintendent in recruiting, selecting and retaining highly effective employees. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent or his/her designee to determine the personnel needs of the school system and to make all personnel recommendations with the consent of the board.

The Atlanta Board of Education also recognizes and acknowledges that, in order for the superintendent to carry out and implement its policies and directives on an efficient and effective basis, the superintendent needs to have the services at the highest levels of the school administration of persons in whom the superintendent has the greatest personal confidence and with whom he/she has an excellent working relationship. The board further acknowledges and recognizes that, without the superintendent having such a high level of confidence in such persons, he/she may be hampered in fulfilling the mission of the board effectively and efficiently. For details, see [policy GARD: Employee Hiring](#)

Transfer

The superintendent and his/her designated school and department administrators may assign and reassign personnel as required by the needs of the district within the area(s) of an employee's qualifications. The involuntary reassignment of certified personnel will be kept to a minimum and based upon student enrollment and program needs. See policy [GARE: Employment Assignment](#)

Employee Classifications and Probationary Period

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Classified: A classified employee is any person who is hired by the District in a non-exempt position and does not hold a certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission or receives an employment contract. Probationary Period: First full six (6) months of service in a position to which a new or existing employee has been assigned including promotions, demotions, and reassignments/transfers. See policy regulation GCB-R(1) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Certified: A certified employee is any person who is hired by the district in a job that requires a professional educator certificate for teaching, service, or leadership field and receives an annual contract for employment. Probationary Period: First ninety (90) working days or one (1) semester in a position, whichever comes first. See policy regulation GARD-R(1) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At-Will: An at-will employee is any person who is hired by the District in an exempt position and does not receive an employment contract, except confidential employees of the law department and those employees in positions specifically exempted from the classified employee classification by the Atlanta Board of Education. |

Required Documents

The Office of Human Resources (HR) requires the following documents from all employees prior to the first date of employment:

- An Employment Eligibility Verification Form from Human Resources to establish your right to work in the U.S. based on the [Department of Homeland Security](#) Employment Eligibility Verification process.
- A photo ID.
- A medical checklist (HR provides this form).
- Appropriate certificates/licenses; and
- A signed loyalty oath, pledged once during your career. Human Resources provides this form during onboarding.

If you are assigned to a position that requires certification or licensure, you must secure and maintain a valid certificate or license from the appropriate authority. For details, please contact the [Georgia Professional Standards Commission](#) at www.gapsc.com or **(404) 232-2500**.

Overtime

Atlanta Public Schools complies with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) that establishes a 40-hour work week for non-exempt (hourly pay) employees. The work week is defined as the time period from Monday to Sunday. Time worked beyond 40 hours will be paid at 1½ times the regular hourly rate of pay. Overtime is calculated on actual hours worked. Work weeks in which an employee uses leave or does not work due to a holiday may record more than 40 hours for pay purposes but not be paid overtime because actual time worked was not over 40 hours.

Supervisors strive to maintain a 37.5 hour work week for each full-time, non-exempt employee, utilizing a typical 7.5-hour, 5-day work week. Any employee whose time worked for a week may result in overtime hours must notify his/her supervisor for a possible schedule adjustment.

Visit the [Atlanta Public Employee Services webpage](#) to review job descriptions for FLSA designation.

Compensation Time

Atlanta Public Schools does not allow the accumulation of compensation time for overtime in one week for use during future work weeks.

Drug-free Workplace

APS is a drug-free environment. Drugs, other than prescription medications in their original containers are prohibited on District property. In accordance with the federal Drug-Free School and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 and Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, it is unlawful for any APS employee to manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use alcohol or a controlled substance, marijuana, or dangerous drug in the workplace at any time. Additionally, employees who seek treatment for a work-related injury through the district's workers' compensation insurance will be subject to a drug and alcohol test.

You have a duty to report to your immediate supervisor anyone who possesses or uses a controlled substance in violation of policy GAMA. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. For details, please refer to [policy GAMA Safe and Drug-free Workplace](#).

Salary Level

Employees will be placed on the appropriate salary schedule based on their years of creditable and verified experience and degree level where applicable. Please refer to the [APS Human Resources Employee Services Webpage](#) for information about salary schedules, job descriptions, and compensation guidelines.

Reduction in Force

Reductions in force may be necessary as a result of consequence, including but not limited to declining student enrollment, cancellation of programs, reductions or shortfalls in funding, closing or mergers of schools, or district-wide reorganization. For more details about how APS creates plans for reductions in force, when necessary, please refer to [policy GAKA Reduction in Force](#).

Staff Conflict of Interest

The Atlanta Board of Education desires that Atlanta Public Schools operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible and herein stipulates provisions and requirements that are applicable to all APS employees. All employees shall avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict with their professional responsibilities. The board provides the policy written below with the full knowledge that the good judgment of each employee is essential, and that no list of rules or guidelines can provide direction for all circumstances that arise. Employees who have questions about a potential conflict of interest must discuss the situation with the immediate supervisor, the Office of Employee Relations and/or the Ethics Officer in the Law Department. The board authorizes the superintendent to develop administrative regulations to implement this policy. See policy [GAG: Staff Conflict of Interest](#) for more information.

Reporting an Arrest

An employee who is arrested for any offense must report the arrest to their immediate supervisor and the Office of Employee Relations, within twenty-four (24) hours or the next business day, whichever is sooner. This self-disclosure is required and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination based on the nature of the offense.

An APS employee must report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to pre-trial diversion intervention program, or entering a plea of guilty or Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense, other than a minor traffic violation (driving under the influence (DUI) is not minor and must be reported). Failure to appropriately report any arrest or conviction will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Contact the Office of Employee Relations for more information at (404) 802-2300.

Annual Evaluation

APS annually evaluates all employees' job performance. Your supervisor should also share your annual evaluation with you. Your evaluation is considered confidential under Georgia state statute and will not be released without appropriate approval or legal authority. See policy [GARI: Employee Evaluation](#)

Teacher Evaluation Appeals

In accordance with state law, teachers who have accepted a full-time, full school year contract with the Atlanta Independent School System for the fourth or subsequent consecutive school year and who are evaluated by the state-mandated evaluation tool, Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) or Georgia Leader and Educator Acceleration and Development System (GaLEADS) shall have the right to appeal (1) summative performance ratings of "Unsatisfactory" or "Ineffective", (2) procedural deficiencies on the part of the District in conducting an evaluation pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-210, and (3) job performance. See regulation [GARI-R\(1\) Employee Evaluation - Teacher Evaluation Appeals](#).

Professional Growth and Evaluation

To support the professional growth of all employees, each regular, full-time staff member shall complete professional learning each year according to a learning plan which is aligned to the employee's performance goals, school or departmental areas of focus, and/or future goals and aspirations that benefit the district. Such training may include approved courses required for professional certification.

Training Categories

Mandatory/Compliance Training: Mandatory training refers to essential training sessions that all employees are required to complete as a condition of their employment. These sessions typically cover critical topics related to compliance, safety, legal requirements, and district policies. Attendance and completion of mandatory training are compulsory for all staff members, and failure to participate may result in disciplinary actions. **The following training courses are considered mandatory: Ethics, Active Shooter, Emergency Response, and Cyber Security Training must be completed by December 1, 2025, as a condition of employment.** *APS reserves the right to add additional compliance training based on the needs of the district at any given point in the school year.*

Pre-requisite Training: Pre-requisite training is training that must be completed before employees can participate in certain advanced or specialized professional development programs or gain access to program or privilege. It acts as a foundation, providing necessary knowledge and skills for employees to fully benefit from subsequent training opportunities. Pre-requisite training ensures that participants have the required background and understanding before proceeding to more advanced topics. **(Example: P-card program, Travel card, or Timekeeper Training)**

Professional Growth Training: Professional growth training focuses on enhancing employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies to improve job performance and effectiveness in their current roles. This type of training is aligned with employees' career goals and the district's strategic objectives. Professional growth training may cover instructional methodologies, leadership development, technology integration, and other relevant areas to foster continuous improvement and growth. **(Example: Any training tied to Evaluation Professional Learning Goals)**

Exploratory Training: Exploratory training offers employees the opportunity to explore new areas of interest and acquire knowledge beyond their primary job responsibilities. This training is not directly

related to their current role but allows employees to broaden their horizons, develop new interests, and potentially explore career advancement opportunities within the district. Exploratory training is voluntary and encourages lifelong learning.

Changes in Employee Information

It is critically important to report changes in employee information to the Human Resources department as soon as possible. Typical information changes that affect the district's ability to appropriately follow-up with an employee include address, telephone number, name*, direct deposit account, and emergency contact(s). Employees should promptly report changes in employee information via [e-APS employee portal](#) via the "Employee Space" section. Contact the Human Resources Division for assistance at **(404) 802-2300**.

**The district must report an employee's name based on the name printed on a Social Security card. A name change will not be made for payroll, e-mail, ID Badge, AESOP, or Infinite Campus without verification of the name on a new Social Security Card. A marriage license, divorce decree, or court order is not an acceptable document (although such documents may be required for benefits changes and onboarding)*

Access to Personnel Records

Human Resources and your local worksite maintain both publicly available and confidential files about each employee. Some information about your employment with APS is subject to release to the public if requested under the Georgia Open Records Act, such as your application for employment, salary information and disciplinary records. Confidential information is not released, such as social security numbers, home addresses, phone numbers, transcripts, medical forms, and evaluations.

Only the employee themselves may view their entire unredacted file unless a court order or other legal mandate requires. The law protects certain information, including pre-employment information, letters of recommendations and medical records. Therefore, these items are not available for review. You may request a copy of your personnel file [Open Records Center](#). For information about the Georgia Open Records Act, contact Open Records [via the Website](#) or at **(404) 802-2811**.

Employment Verification

Atlanta Public Schools (APS) Human Resources Department will use **Verifent** to provide employment verifications for mortgage lenders, banks, apartment complexes, and others who may need proof of your employment or income. The service is easy to use and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week both online and by phone. APS' Corporate Code is 4196EB.

Requesting Student Loan Forgiveness

To request verification of Student Loan Forgiveness forms with Atlanta Public Schools, submit your request via email to loanforgive@apsk12.org. Submissions will be returned to the requestor within 5-7 business days.

Requesting Prior Years of Experience with APS

Atlanta Public Schools utilize Verifent to respond to Experience Verification requests to streamline responses and for data security purposes. See [APS Employment and Experience Request Webpage](#) for more information.

Ending Employment with APS

Voluntary Retirement

The [Teacher Retirement System \(TRS\) of Georgia](#) and the city of Atlanta provide retirement plans for all employees. If you are a certified employee who retires from your position, APS will—

- Pay you for your accumulated, unused annual leave.
- Pay you for your accumulated, unused sick leave, as set out in [GARH-R\(1\): Employee Leaves and Absences – Sick Leave](#).

For details, please call the Employee Benefits department at **(404) 802-0020**.

Voluntary Resignation

The Atlanta Board of Education authorizes the superintendent or his/her designee to accept, on behalf of the Board, resignation from employment by any employee. The Board shall be notified of the action no later than the regular legislative meeting in the month after the resignation has been tendered and accepted in writing. Written resignations shall be tendered as soon as possible prior to the proposed effective date. Failure to provide adequate notice of separation or resignation may constitute ineligibility for rehire with APS.

A resignation request submitted with less than two (2) weeks' notice is considered inadequate notice and may constitute ineligibility for rehire. Additionally, contracted employees may be subject to liquidated damages and Professional Standards Commission sanctions in cases of breach of contract. Contracted employees may seek approval for resignation requests during a contract period for medical reasons, promotion, or spouse relocation for employment. For annual-duty employees, upon your departure, APS will pay you for your accumulated, unused annual leave. See [policy GAO Employee Resignation](#).

Ineligible for Rehire

The district reserves the right to designate employees as ineligible for rehire, based on resignation in lieu of termination, termination for cause, lack of appropriate notification time (less than two weeks), breach of contract, or other extenuating circumstances. Employees are expected to physically work on their last day unless prior approval from Human Resources is provided. After employees give notice, they must still follow the district's leave policy and the last day worked must be a workday (i.e., last day worked cannot be a weekend, paid holiday, non-workday for less than annual employees).

A two-week notice of separation is required for all classified and at-will staff. Failure to provide a minimum of two weeks' notice will result in a status of ineligible for rehire for Atlanta Public Schools. Contracted employees may require contract release by the Division of Human Resources prior to separation approval. Failure to secure proper approval may result in a report to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission for breach of contract – Job Abandonment.

Termination

A termination occurs when APS chooses to end an employee's working relationship with the district. An employee may be terminated for violation of district policy and/or issues related to performance, attendance, behavior, reduction-in-force, or with/without cause. For At-Will staff, either the employee or the employer may terminate employment of "at-will" personnel at any time with or without cause. See policy Certified staff: [GAO Employee Resignation](#) Classified Staff: [GCB-R\(1\)](#)

Separation Process

Employees should follow the formal separation process to submit their intent to resign from Atlanta Public Schools. Failure to follow the appropriate steps may result in a delay of final payment. Written resignations to Human Resources may also be accepted in special, pre-approved circumstances. Official separation request must be tendered through the [e-APS employee portal](#) under "Employee Self Service."

Appendix

Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

Atlanta Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in its education program and activities. APS prohibits all unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation in any employment decision, admissions determination, education program or educational activity.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 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. ”

Title IX is applicable to schools, local and state agencies, and other institutions that receive federal assistance from the United States Department of Education.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#).

No person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, its regulation, or the formal grievance process, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding. “Intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or this formal grievance process, constitutes retaliation.”

Sexual Misconduct is any unlawful sexual act, any solicitation of any unlawful sexual act, whether written, verbal or physical; any act of child abuse based on sex, as defined by law; any solicitation, encouragement or consummation of a romantic or physical relationship with a student; or any sexual contact with a student. “Romantic relationship” includes dating a student, engaging in an inappropriate social relationship, or committing any act of unlawful sexual harassment as defined by law.

Sexual Harassment is a specific form of sexual misconduct and is defined in policy GAEB as conduct that involves unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other physical, verbal, or graphic behavior or comments of a sexual nature, when:

- a. The person who is the subject of the harassment believes that he or she must accept the advances, favors or behavior to keep his/her job or access an educational program or activity; to receive a reward such as a raise, transfer, selection for training, performance evaluation, benefit, a promotion; or, in the case of students, to receive a grade, award,

Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook **2025-26**

- position or access to an educational program or activity; or
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions about employment, promotion, transfer, selection for training, performance evaluations, benefits, or other terms and conditions of employment; or
 - c. The harassing conduct creates or is intended to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; or
 - d. The harassing conduct unreasonably interferes with an employee's work performance or a student's educational performance.

Examples of sexual harassment may include but are not limited to the following:

- Engaging in or threatening any act of sexual violence, including any act of aggression or intimidation of a sexual or sexually suggestive nature.
- Unwanted, intentional physical contact of a sexual or sexually suggestive nature, including stroking, patting or similar physical contact.
- Offensive sexual comments, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, lewd or sexually suggestive comments, gestures or actions; off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature; graphic or degrading comments or gestures about an individual's body.
- Displaying offensive writings, pictures, drawings, posters, reading materials, calendars, photographs, or other physical objects that are pornographic, sexual in nature, sexually suggestive, or sexually demeaning.
- Punishing or threatening to punish an individual for refusing to consent to requests for sexual favors.
- Disciplining or retaliating against any individual in any way because he or she has resisted, reported or complained about sexual harassment.
- Preferential treatment or the promise of preferential treatment for engaging in sexual conduct.

In compliance with Title IX, the APS Title IX Grievance Process defines "sexual harassment" as conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following: 1. An APS employee conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct; 2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to APS' education program or activity; or 3. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking. A. "Sexual assault" has the same definition contained in 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f)(6)(A)(v). 1 B. "Dating violence" has the same definition contained in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(10).2 C. "Domestic violence" has the same definition contained in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(8).3 D. "Stalking" has the same definition contained in 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)(30).4

Such conduct is unacceptable in APS, violating Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Any employee, contractor, or consultant who believes that he or she has been exposed to unwelcome sexual or sex-based misconduct should report the alleged act immediately to a principal, assistant principal, director, executive director, another senior level administrator or directly to the Office of Employee Relations.

Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook **2025-26**

Any employee receiving a report of possible sexual misconduct or harassment must *immediately* report the offenses to the Office of Employee Relations at 404-802-2345. Employee Relations will review concerns appropriately and recommend appropriate disciplinary or corrective action for sexual harassment incidents, consistent with law and policy. Retaliation against a complainant for reporting a sexual harassment incident is prohibited.

If a school district has actual knowledge of sexual harassment in an education program or activity of the school district against a person, it must respond promptly in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent.

For details, please refer to [policy GAEB Harassment](#).

Additionally, every APS employee has important reporting responsibilities under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Both employees and students may be victims (or perpetrators) of sexual harassment. Any APS employees who are aware of "sexual harassment," as that term is defined by Title IX, and as set forth above, **MUST** report it. You may report it directly to the APS Title IX Coordinator or to your supervisor, who will ensure that it is reported to the Title IX Coordinator. To learn more about Title IX and its requirements, you can review policy GAEB Harassment, policy JCAC Harassment, and the APS Title IX Grievance Process, all available on the APS Title IX webpage.

Complaints and Grievances

What is a Complaint/Grievance?

A complaint is any claim by an employee of the school system who is affected in his or her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of laws, policies, rules, regulations or written agreements with which the school system is required to comply.

A grievance is a complaint that can be resolved at the lowest possible administrative level through APS' grievance process.

Before Filing a Formal Complaint/Grievance

Consider discussing any concern with your immediate supervisor before filing a formal complaint or grievance. Grievances must be filed in writing within 10 days of the alleged act or from the date of the most recent incident.

If this is not feasible, contact the APS Office of Employee Relations at **(404) 802-2345** with your on-the-job concern and details about filing a complaint or grievance.

Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook **2025-26**

Policy Exclusions

Policies [GAE Complaints and Grievances](#) and [GCB Classified Personnel Positions](#) do not cover complaints regarding:

- Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluations.
- Professional development plans or work improvement plans.
- Adverse personnel actions against employees, such as termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension without pay, or written reprimand from the superintendent.
- Allegations of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under policy GAEB, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.
- Allegations of sexual misconduct under [policy GAEB, Harassment](#).
- Allegations of retaliation or violations of whistleblower protections.
- Allegations under investigation by the Office of Internal Compliance.
- Matters of local school law or controversy appealed directly to the board under O.C.G.A. §20-2-1160.

As noted above, policy GAEB Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation follows a separate grievance procedure.

Records Retention Schedule

Type of Record	Retention Period
E-mail	Retention period is determined based on the <i>content</i> , not the format of records. Many emails need only be maintained for the useful life of the information contained, but if the email documents a decision or other type of record that must be retained, it must be kept according to the schedule.
General correspondence	5 years
Visitors logs and sign-in sheets	2 years
Accident reports (student or visitor)	5 years
Class rolls	3 years
Teacher lesson plans	2 years
Employee work schedules, time records and leave records	3 years
Daily/monthly activity reports	2 years

Atlanta Public Schools Employee Handbook **2025-26**

Type of Record	Retention Period
Publications (newsletters, handbooks, brochures, etc.)	Permanent
Travel authorizations and reimbursements	3 years
Records documenting the destruction of records	7 years

Teacher Evaluation Appeals Procedure

Level One: Within five (5) business days after the summative evaluation conference, a teacher shall provide a **written** notice of appeal to the responsible evaluator detailing the evaluation record and their statement of appeal.

The principal as the responsible evaluator shall respond in writing within ten (10) business days after the receipt of appeal.

Level Two: If the teacher is dissatisfied with the principal's response, within seven (7) business days after service of the Level One decision, a Level Two review via the District's appeal form may be filed with the Office of Employee Relations, Executive Director, who will then assign the review to a TKES certified and trained administrator in the central office, or in the discretion of the superintendent, by an independent third party appointed to hear the teacher's Level Two appeal.

A written response shall be provided to the teacher within ten (10) business days after receipt by the designated administrator. The Level Two decision will be final.

A teacher shall not be the subject of any retaliation as a result of filing an appeal under this regulation.

See regulation [GARI-R\(1\)](#) Employee Evaluation - Teacher Evaluation Appeals.



Contact Information



404-802-3500



hrdiv@atlanta.k12.ga.us



130 Trinity Avenue, SW Atlanta, GA 30303



www.atlantapublicschools.us



ATLANTA
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS