COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK
2025-2026

June 9, 2025

COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

OUR VISION

The Columbus Municipal School District will build bridges among students, parents, community, and all district employees to provide students the skills necessary to be college, work force, or enlistment ready.

OUR MISSION

"Students Centered; Excellence Driven"

The Columbus Municipal School District is committed to upholding and implementing the requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) formerly the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Columbus Municipal School District complies with all federal and state laws and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, marital status or age in admission or access to, or treatment of employment in, its programs or activities. It is the intent of the Columbus Municipal School District to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law in making certain discrimination does not exist in its policies, regulations, and operations. Grievance procedures have been established for anyone who feels discrimination has been shown by the Columbus Municipal School District. Inquiries regarding grievance procedures or the application of policies of nondiscrimination can be obtained by contacting the Assistant Superintendent of Operations at 662-241-7400. Inquires associated with the Title VI, Title IX, and/or accommodations for the disabled employees, the public and accessibility of facilities and programs should be directed to Human Resources at 662-241-7400. Inquiries regarding the application of 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (concerning students with disabilities who are not eligible for Special Education) American with Disability Act should be directed to the Director of Special Education at 662-241-7400. Inquiries may also be directed to the Superintendent at the Columbus Municipal School District Administrative Offices at 2630 McArthur Drive, Columbus MS 39703 or by calling (662) 241-7400.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER

Handbooks issued to employees of the Columbus Municipal School District shall not be viewed as a contract of employment. This does not create substantive or procedural rights for any employee, It is provided for the purposes of guidance only and is subject to amendment by the Columbus Municipal School Board of Trustees at any time without prior notification to any employee.

AVAILABILITY OF PERSONNEL POLICIES (Moved from page 25)

This handbook presents in compact form selected personnel policies and administrative regulations governing certified and classified employees. Any employee who desires to review the complete policy manual may present such request to his/her supervisor or the Human Resources Office to review the district policy handbook. Personnel policies are also available for review on the Columbus Municipal School District website (https://columbus.msba

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Mr. Sam McDowell, Maintenance Supervisor	
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I. GENERAL FOUNDATION

CODE OF ETHICS FOR TEACHERS/PERSONNEL/CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

All employees and contract workers of the Columbus Municipal School District are required to read the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct and acknowledge that he/she have read and understand the meaning of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct. They also agree to abide by these guidelines. Employees are to be trained annually on the Standards of Conduct. Any violations of the Standards are to be reported immediately to the Office of the Superintendent. The Standards of Conduct are:

Standard 1: An educator/non-educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.

Standard 2: An educator/non-educator should exemplify honesty and integrity during professional practice and does not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or educational institution.

Standard 3: An educator/non-educator shall abide by federal state, and local laws and statutes and local school board policies.

Standard 4: An educator/non-educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom and the district.

Standard 5: An educator/non-educator should always maintain a professional relationship with colleagues, both in and outside the classroom and the district.

Standard 6: An educator/non-educator should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or tobacco during professional practice and should never use illegal or unauthorized drugs.

Standard 7: An educator/non-educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use funds, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

Standard 8: An educator/non-educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.

Standard 9: An educator/non-educator shall comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements

Standard 10: An educator/non-educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the employment contract or at-will agreement with the local school board or educational agency for the duration of the contracts/agreements.

A complete version of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct shall be made available to all employees by posting a full version on the district website.

TECHNOLOGY/NETWORK AND INTERNET PERSONNEL USAGE POLICY (IFBGA)

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY OF COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NETWORK – ALL USERS
Access to the resources on Columbus Municipal School District (CMSD) Network, hereafter referred to as the "CMSD Network" or the "district network," and the Internet is provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the Columbus Municipal School District's educational mission and goals.

User Defined
A. "user" shall be defined as, but not limited to:

1. An employee of the Columbus Municipal School District or contracted to work for/with/in the Columbus Municipal School District.
2. A student.
3. A parent.
4. A visitor on school district property.
5. A person-adult or youth – off campus, connected to the district network, either wired or wireless.
6. A person—adult or youth—not on school district property, using hardware or software belonging to the Columbus Municipal School District or.
7. A person—adult or youth—on district property connecting to the Internet by any other means.

Resources Defined
The "resources on the district network" shall be described in part, but not limited to:

1. CPUs, monitors, and all attached peripherals, such as keyboards and speakers.
2. Servers.
3. Routers.
4. Storage devices, such as flash drives, discs, and tapes.
5. Local area networks.
6. Telecommunication lines.
7. Telecommunication services.
8. Cables, switches, and hubs.
9. Wireless systems; and/or
10. All software purchased or acquired by, though, or as a result of a connection with the Columbus Municipal School District.

The Internet is a fluid, global environment in which information is constantly changing, thereby making it impossible to predict, with certainty, what information users might locate. Availability of information to users on the internet does not imply endorsement by this school district. This board makes no assurances of any kind whether expressed or implied, regarding any internet services provided. Neither the individual school nor school district is responsible for any damages the user incurs. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. This board and school district specifically deny any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information or software obtained through its services. The district network is a filtered network that seeks to limit the access of users to inappropriate content.

Use of the district network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use may result in cancellation of that privilege as well as appropriate personnel action in accordance with CMSD school board policy, which may include suspension or termination of employment, payment for damages, or other remedies applicable under school district policy and state or federal laws. At the discretion of the district, law enforcement authorities may be involved, and any violations of state and/or federal law may result in criminal or civil prosecution. The superintendent, or his/her designee(s) shall make all decisions regarding whether a user has violated these procedures, and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time. Although the Columbus Municipal School District provides age-appropriate education of minors regarding appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response, it is ultimately the parents'/guardians' responsibility to ensure appropriate behavior by their minor child. The Columbus Municipal School District is CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act) and COPPA (Children's On-Line Privacy Protection Act) compliant.

Unacceptable Use and the Reporting of Unacceptable Use
All communications and information accessible via the district network and the Internet are not private property and, in fact, usage is monitored and logged from time to time. In addition, access to the Internet while on school district property or connected through equipment on school property by any device is governed by this policy. Users will immediately report to Columbus Municipal School District authorities any attempt by other district network users and any other persons while on District property

to engage in inappropriate conversations or personal contact and accidental access of inappropriate information so that proper steps can be taken to filter such material.

Unacceptable Use Described

All persons are responsible for all of their actions and activities involving the district network and the Internet while on District property or connected to district resources or using district resources. Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Accessing materials or communications that are:
    A. Damaging to another's reputation
    B. Abusive
    C. Obscene
    D. Sexually oriented
    E. Threatening
    F. Harassing or contrary to the school/district policy on harassment
    G. Illegal
    H. Promoting Violence
    I. Destructive to Persons or Property
    J. Inappropriate to minors

2. Sending or posting materials or communications (to include e-mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications) that are:
    A. Damaging to another's reputation
    B. Abusive
    C. Obscene
    D. Sexually oriented
    E. Threatening
    F. Harassing or contrary to the school/district policy on harassment
    G. Illegal
    H. Promoting Violence
    I. Destructive to Persons or Property
    J. Inappropriate to minors
3. Using the Internet for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts or transmitting any material in violation of U.S., State of Mississippi, and local regulations.
4. Using computers or the internet for gambling, gaming, or accessing online casinos and gambling related websites.
5. Copying or downloading copyrighted material on any system connected to the school or district systems hardware/software without the owner's permission. Only the owners or individuals specifically authorized by the owner(s) may copy or download copyrighted material to the system.
6. Copying or downloading copyrighted material for the user's own use without the owner's permission. Users May redistribute copyrighted programs only with owner's permission. Such permission must be specified in the copyright laws, school board policies, and administrative procedures.
7. Using the Internet for provide financial or commercial gain.
8. Wastefully using resources including "spamming"
9. Utilizing any software having the purpose of damaging the school/district system or other user's system.
10. Downloading or installing software on the district network. The MIS department is responsible for determining if a product is compatible with the network and installing it after purchase.
11. Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities.
12. Invading the privacy of individuals.
13. Using another user's password.
14. Posting material authorized or created by another person without his/her consent.
15. Posting anonymous messages.
16. Using the Internet for commercial or private advertising.

17. Forging of electronic mail (email) messages.
18. Attempting to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users and deliberately interfering with the ability of other system users to send/receive mail.
19. Using the network while access privileges are suspended or revoked.
20. Using the network in a manner inconsistent with directions from a supervisor and other staff and generally accepted network etiquette.
21. Revealing personal address, telephone numbers, or e-mail addresses, social security number of other personal information about students (COPPA)
22. Revealing personal addresses, telephone numbers, or other confidential information of self, or other users, without that person's permission.
23. Illegally installed copyrighted software for use on personal computers.
24. Not conforming to the "Acceptable Use" policies of other sources accessed beyond the district network.

Compensation

By using the district network user agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the school district from any claims, losses, cost, damages, and liability incurred by district relating to, or arising out, of any user's violation of these procedures.

Secure

Network security is a high priority. If a user identifies or perceives a security problem or breach of these responsibilities on the Internet, the user must immediately notify his/her supervisor, designee, or other identified staff. The user must not demonstrate the problem to other users.

Employee Usage

Employee usage of any kind is only permitted after the employee signs the Acceptable Use Policy Agreement form ensuring that they will abide by the terms and conditions in this Acceptable use Policy as stated.

Student Usage

Student usage of any kind is only permitted after the student signs the Acceptable Use Policy agreement form ensuring that he/she will abide by the terms and conditions in this Acceptable Use Policy as stated.

Visitor Usage

Visitor usage of any kind, including under an employee's username, is only permitted after the visitor signs off indicating that he/she will abide by this policy.

Other Usage

District resource usage of any kind, including under an employee's username, student username or otherwise, is only permitted after the person or persons sign off indicating that he/she will abide by this policy.

SMOKING AND OTHER USES OF TOBACCO (GBRM)

No person shall use any tobacco product on any education property owned or operated by this school district. Tobacco products are defined as any substance that contains tobacco, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, smoking tobacco, smokeless tobacco, or electronic cigarettes.

Educational property is defined as any public-school building or bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field, or other property owned, used, or operated by any local school board, school, or directors for the administration of any public educational institution or during a school-related activity.

Any adult who violates this section shall be subject to a fine and shall be liable as follows:

(a) For the first conviction, a warning.
(b) For a second conviction, a fine of Seventy-Five Dollars ($75.00); and
(c) For all subsequent convictions, a fine not to exceed One Hundred Fifty Dollars ($150.00) shall be imposed.

Issuance of Citation

Any adult found in violation of this section shall be issued a citation by a law enforcement officer, which citation shall include notice of the date, time, and location for hearing before the justice court having jurisdiction where the violation is alleged to have occurred. For this section, subsequent convictions are violations committed on any educational property within the State of Mississippi.

Anyone convicted under this act shall be recorded as being fined for a civil violation of the act and not for violating a criminal statute.

It is the responsibility of all law enforcement officers and law enforcement agencies of this state to ensure that the provisions of this act are enforced element.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING POLICY (Board Policy GBRM-2)

The following is Columbus Municipal School District's Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy enacted pursuant to the MS Drug and Alcohol testing law, MS Code Annotated Sections 71-7-1 et seq. Supp. (1994). This policy is effective August 1, 2019. After this date, the district will begin testing personnel if it reasonably suspects that an employee is under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol. In addition, the district will begin conducting random testing of all bus drivers, and school resource officers. This policy will be enforced uniformly with respect to all personnel. All the district's personnel, including administrators, will be subject to testing.

The purposes of this policy are as follows,

A. to maintain a safe, healthy working environment for all employees.
B. to maintain the highest quality educational program for our students by ensuring that no personnel of the district are users of illegal drugs or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
C. to reduce the number of accidental injuries to person or property; and
D. to reduce absenteeism and tardiness and improve the quality of educational services.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The following are rules representing the district's policy concerning substance abuse.

1. All employees are prohibited from being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on duty or on district premises. All employees are prohibited from using illegal drugs, or prescription medication for which they do not have a proper prescription.

2. The sale, possession, transfer, or purchase of illegal drugs on district property or while performing district business is strictly prohibited. Such action will be reported to appropriate law enforcement officials.
3. The use, sale, or possession of an illegal or non-prescription drug or controlled substance while on duty is cause for immediate termination.
4. No alcoholic beverages will be brought or consumed on district premises.
5. No prescription drug will be brought on district premises by any person other than the person for whom the drug is prescribed. Prescription drugs will be used only in the manner, combination, and quantity prescribed.
6. Any employee whose off-duty use of alcohol, illegal, or non-prescription drugs results in excessive absenteeism, tardiness, poor work, or an accident will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.
7. Any employee involved in an accident while driving a school-owned vehicle shall immediately submit to drug and alcohol testing.
8. Any employee who has an on-the-job accident shall immediately submit to drug and alcohol testing.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

1. Effective August 1, 2019, the Columbus Municipal School District began reasonable suspicion testing of all personnel and random testing of bus drivers.
2. An employee will be allowed to provide notice to the Columbus Municipal School District of currently or recently used prescription or non-prescription drugs prior to the time of the test.
3. Random testing of bus drivers will be implemented using a neutral selection basis. Columbus Municipal School District will not waive the selection of any employee chosen pursuant to the random selection procedures.
4. Reasonable suspicion is defined under this policy as the belief by Columbus Municipal School District that an employee is using or has used drugs or alcohol in violation of Columbus Municipal School District's policy. Reasonable suspicion may be based upon, among other things:

   i. Observable phenomena, such as direct observation of drug use and/or the physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug or alcohol

   ii. Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work, absenteeism, tardiness, or deterioration in work performance;

iii. A report of drug use provided by reliable and credible sources, and which has been independently corroborated;

iv. Evidence that an individual has tampered with a drug and alcohol test during his employment with the current employer;

v. Information that an employee has caused or contributed to an accident while at work; and

vi. Evidence that an employee participates in the use, possession, sale, solicitation, or transfer of drugs while working or while on school premises or while operating one of the school's vehicles, its machinery, or its equipment. If there is reasonable suspicion that an employee is using or has used drugs or consumed alcohol in violation of CMSD's policy, that employee will be required to submit to a drug and/or alcohol test. The superintendent (or in his or her absence an appointed replacement) must approve in advance all reasonable suspicion testing. If the test result is confirmed positive for drugs or alcohol in violation of CMSD's drug and alcohol policy, the employee will be subject to immediate termination of his or her employment with the district or maybe subject to lesser discipline, in discretion of the Superintendent.

Any employee who refuses to take a drug and alcohol test will be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination of employment. Interference or attempted interference with sample collection for a screening test is prohibited. The ingesting, possession, or distribution of any substance designed primarily for masking, defeating or in any manner frustrating alcohol and controlled or illegal substance tests is prohibited. Applicants or employees who attempt to tamper with, dilute, adulterated, or substitute samples violate this policy and are subject to the same consequences as refusing to test or having a confirmed positive result. The following are drugs for which the district may test alcohol, opiates, amphetamines, phencyclidine (PCP), marijuana, cocaine, and any other controlled or illegal substance.

A negative-diluted result in a drug test will require a retest to be scheduled a time to be determined by the district. A second negative-diluted result will be recognized by the school district in the same manner as a positive result and will be grounds for retracting employment offers or taking disciplinary action against a current employee.

An employee who receives a positive confirmation drug and alcohol test result may contest the accuracy of the result or explain the results within ten days of the date of such result by filing a written statement with the superintendent. An employee, at his or her own cost, also may request that the specimen be retested at a certified laboratory of his or her own choosing.

An employee who receives a positive confirmation test result and who fails to present a satisfactory contest or explanation to such result, or a contrary result from a certified laboratory of the employee's own choosing, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

If the district determines that discipline and/or discharge are not necessary or appropriate in a case where an employee is in violation of Columbus Municipal School District's Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy, the employee as a condition of continued employment must complete a certified substance abuse rehabilitation program at the employee's own cost and expense. The employee may be allowed to work for the district while undergoing the treatment, but the employee must provide evidence of continued treatment and/or rehabilitation upon request. The employee must also agree to submit to random testing for three years after the date of the positive confirmation drug and alcohol test result.

DRUG FREE SCHOOLS AND WORKPLACE (Board Policy **GBRL**)

No employee engaged in work in connection with the Columbus Municipal School District shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, or use on or in the workplace any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, or any other controlled substance, as defined in schedules I through V of section 202 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812) and as further defined by regulation at 21 CFR 1300.11 through 1300.15.

"Workplace" is defined to mean the site for the performance of work done in connection with the Columbus Municipal School District. That includes any school building or any school premises; any school-owned vehicle or any other school approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities; off school property during any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event or function, such as a field trip or athletic event, where students are under the jurisdiction of the school district.
As a condition of employment in the Columbus Municipal School District, each employee shall notify his or her supervisor of his or her arrest for any criminal drug statute violation occurring in the workplace as defined above, no later than two (2) days after such arrest and shall notify supervisor within two (2) days of any conviction.

The district reserves the right to require drug and alcohol testing of any employee for reasonable suspicion as defined in policy GBRM.

Any employee involved in an accident while driving a school-owned vehicle shall immediately submit to drug and alcohol testing.

Any employee who has an on-the-job accident shall immediately submit to alcohol and drug testing.

An employee aware of a fellow employee's on-the-job use of prohibited substances is required to notify the immediate supervisor of the employee.

The school district will notify any federal agency from which it receives a grant of any conviction within 10 days of receiving notice of the conviction. Within 30 days of receiving notice; with respect to any employee involved with federal grant program who is convicted of a drug statute violation occurring in the workplace, the school district will:

1. Take appropriate personnel action against the employee, up to and including termination, or
2. Require the employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug-abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for that purpose by a federal, state, or local, health, law enforcement, or another appropriate agency.

Sanctions against employees, including non-renewal, suspension, and termination shall be in accordance with prescribed school district administrative regulations and procedures. Employees may be suspended without pay for up to 30 days or dismissed for the first occurrence of any of the above acts.

As a condition of employment in the Columbus Municipal School District, each employee shall abide by the terms of the school district policy respecting a drug-free workplace.

An employee who violates the terms of this policy may be non-renewed or other discipline imposed by the Superintendent pursuant to CMSD policy and state law with any review being governed by policy and state law.

DENIAL OF LICENSE

The State Board of Education, acting through the commission, may deny an application for any teacher or administrator license if the applicant is actively addicted to or actively dependent on alcohol or other habit-forming drugs or is a habitual user of narcotics, barbiturates, amphetamines, hallucinogens, or other drugs having a similar effect, at the time of application for a license. ' 37-3-2 (11) (c)

SUSPENSION OF LICENSE

The State Board of Education, acting on the recommendation of the commission, may revoke or suspend any teacher or administrator license for specified periods of time if the teacher or administrator has been convicted, has pled guilty or entered a plea of nolo contendere to a felony, as defined by federal or state law. ' 37-3-2 (12) (d)
Dismissal or suspension of a licensed employee by a local school board pursuant to Section 37-9-59 may result in the suspension or revocation of a license for a length of time which shall be determined by the commission and based upon the severity of the offense. ' 37-3-2 (13) (a)

TITLE IX – EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT (Board Policy GAAA)

Pursuant to Title IX and the requirements therein for the dissemination of policy, notice is hereby given that the Columbus Municipal School District does not discriminate based on sex in the educational programs and activities operated by the district. This policy extends to admissions and to employment of personnel by the district.

Designated employee

The responsible designated employee to coordinate the district's efforts to comply with Title IX requirements shall be:

Human Resource Director, Title IX Coordinator
Columbus Municipal School District
2630 McArthur Drive
Columbus, MS 39703
Telephone: 662-241-7400

The following personnel will serve as Title IX contact persons and/or monitors:

Columbus Success Academy – Guidance Counselor..... Phone: 662-241-7250
Columbus High School – Guidance Counselor..... Phone: 662-241-7200
Columbus Middle School – Guidance Counselor..... Phone: 662-241-7300
Hunt Intermediate School-Guidance Counselor ……. Phone: 662-241-
Sale Elementary School – Guidance Counselor ..... Phone: 662-241-7260
Cook Elementary – Guidance Counselor..... Phone: 662-241-7180
Fairview Elementary – Guidance Counselor ..... Phone: 662-241-7140
McKellar – Guidance Counselor ..... Phone: 662-241-7290
Stokes-Beard – Guidance Counselor..... Phone: 662-241-7270

All students and employees are hereby notified of the above designated employees.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT (Board Policy GBR-Revised 06/13/22)

The policy of the board of education forbids discrimination against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of sex. The board of education will not tolerate sexual harassment activity by any of its employees. This policy similarly applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities.

This school district affirms employee protection provided under Title VII, and therefore "shall not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee, male or female, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment."

It is the intent of the school board to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment of any kind. Therefore, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature amounting to or constituting harassment are prohibited.

GENERAL PROHIBITIONS

1. Unwelcome Conduct of a Sexual Nature

a. Conduct of a sexual nature may include verbal or physical sexual advances, including subtle pressure for sexual activity; touching, pinching, patting, or brushing against; comments regarding physical or personality characteristics of a sexual nature; and sexually oriented "kidding," "teasing," double-entendres, and jokes

b. Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may constitute sexual harassment when the allegedly harassed person has indicated, by his or her conduct, that it is unwelcome.

c. An employee who has initially welcomed such by active participation must give specific notice to the alleged harasser that such conduct is no longer welcome for any such subsequent conduct to be deemed unwelcome.

2. Sexual Harassment

Unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute Sexual harassment when certain criteria are met. The criteria are:

Submission to the conduct is made either an explicit or implicit condition of employment.

a. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed employee; or

b. The conduct substantially interferes with an employee's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

c. The conduct substantially interferes with an employee’s work performance, or creates an intimidation hostile, or offensive work environment.

SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS

1. Administrators and Supervisors

a. It is sexual harassment for an administrator or supervisor to use his or her authority to solicit sexual favors or attention from subordinates when the subordinate's failure to submit will result in adverse treatment, or when the subordinate's acquiescence will result in preferential treatment.

b. Administrators and supervisors who either engage in sexual harassment or tolerate such conduct by other employees shall be subject to sanctions, as described below.

2. Non-administrative and Non-Supervisory Employees

It is sexual harassment for a non-administrative and nonsupervisory employee to subject another such person to any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. Employees who engage in such conduct shall be subject to sanctions as described below.

REPORTING, INVESTIGATION, AND SANCTIONS

1. It is the express policy of the Board of Education to encourage victims of a sexual harassment to come forward with such claims. This may be done through the Employee Grievance Resolution Procedure.

a. Employees who feel that administrators or supervisors are conditioning promotions, increases in wages, continuation of employment, or other terms or conditions of employment upon sexual favors, are encouraged to report these conditions to the appropriate administrator. If the employee's direct administrator or supervisor is the offending person, the report shall be made to the next higher level of administration or supervision.

b. Employees are also urged to report any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature by supervisors or fellow employees if such conduct interferes with the individual's work performance or creates a hostile or offensive working environment.

c. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible, and no reprisals or retaliation will be allowed to occur because of the good faith reporting of charges of sexual harassment.

2. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. The Superintendent has the responsibility of investigating and resolving complaints of sexual harassment.

3. Any employee found to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to sanctions, including, but not limited to warning, suspension, or termination subject to applicable procedural requirements.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PROHIBITED

If any person eighteen (18) years or older who is employed by any public school district or private school in this state is accused of fondling or having any type of sexual involvement with any child under the age of eighteen (18) years who is enrolled in such school, the principal of such school and the superintendent of such school district shall timely notify the district attorney with jurisdiction where the school is located of such accusation, the Mississippi Department of Education and the Department of Human Services, provided that such accusation is reported to the principal and to the school superintendent and that there is a reasonable basis to believe that such accusation is true.

Any superintendent, or his designee, who fails to make a report required by this section shall be subject to the penalties provided in Section 37-11-35. Any superintendent, principal, teacher, or other school personnel participating in the making of a required report pursuant to this section or participating in any judicial proceeding resulting there from shall be presumed to be acting in good faith. Any person

reporting in good faith shall be immune from any civil liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. '97-5-24

If any teacher and any pupil under eighteen (18) years of age of such teacher, not being married to each other, shall have sexual intercourse, each with the other, they shall, for every such offense, be fined in any sum, not more than five hundred dollars ($500.00) each, and the teacher may be imprisoned not less than three (3) months nor more than six (6) months. ' 97-29-3 (1980)

HARASSMENT PROHIBITED

This school district affirms employee protection provided under Title VII, and therefore "shall not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any employee, male or female, which harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another's work performance or which creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment."

Further, this school district prohibits sexual harassment of or by any student. This policy applies to conduct during and relating to school and school-sponsored activities. Sexual harassment is inappropriate behavior and offensive. Any student who engages in the sexual harassment of anyone in the school setting may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

INDIVIDUALS AND CONDUCT COVERED

The policies apply to all students and employees of the Columbus Municipal School District, and third parties, persons hired to provide contracted services, and persons volunteering at school activities. Conduct prohibited by these policies is unacceptable in all academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs of the school, whether those programs occur on campus, on a bus, or at another location away from campus. Individuals who violate these policies will be subject to disciplinary action, up to an including suspension or expulsion (if a student) or suspension or termination of employment (is any employee), and in egregious situations, law enforcement officials will be notified as required by law. Further the Mississippi Department of Education will be notified as required with regard to any violations of Standard 4 of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct. It is also prohibited to knowingly make a false discrimination, harassment, or retaliation report or provide false information in an investigation. Individuals who knowingly file a false or misleading complaint alleging harassment, discrimination or retaliation or provide false information in an investigation are subject to appropriate disciplinary actions.

INVESTIGATON OR HARASSMENT

In accordance with its obligations under federal law, the District reserves the right to investigate reports of harassment occurring between employees and students or between employees, regardless of whether the alleged harassment occurred on or off school grounds; during or outside school hours; or using school-owned or personally-owned electronic devices (e.g., postings to digital media and electronic forums such as Twitter and Facebook or text messages).

RETALIATION IS PROHIBITED

The Columbus Municipal School District encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of discrimination or harassment. It is the policy of the district to investigate such reports. The Columbus Municipal School

District prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation or such reports.

Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participation in an investigation of a claim or harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will subject an individual to disciplinary action. Acts of retaliation should be reported immediately and be investigated, and corrective action taken promptly. Corrective action may include suspension, expulsion and in egregious situations, the involvement of law enforcement official.

OTHER REPORTING

Nothing in this policy or any other policy impedes or precludes a student, the student's parents, a school employee, or school officials from directly reporting to law enforcement officials any behavior that constitutes a violation of criminal law or any applicable laws.

STAFF AND STUDENT HEALTH (Board Policy GAGD)

The governing authorities of the Columbus Municipal School District may require any teacher, supervisor, custodian, or other employee of the school to submit to a thorough physical examination, deemed advisable to determine whether he/she has any infectious or communicable disease.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The Columbus Municipal School District will work cooperatively with the Mississippi Health Department to prevent, control, and contain communicable disease in schools.

A. Students are expected to follow the required immunization schedule. The building principal is required under (41-23-37) to exclude students from school attendance who are out of compliance with the immunizations required by this act. School personnel will cooperate with public health personnel in completing and coordinating all immunization data, waivers, and exclusions, including the necessary Immunization Assessment Program forms, to provide for preventable communicable disease control.

B. The Superintendent has the authority and obligation under the Mississippi State Board of Health Rules and Regulations Governing Reportable Diseases to exclude students or staff members from school when reliable evidence or information from a qualified source confirms his/her having a communicable disease or infection that is known to be spread by any form of casual contact and is considered a health threat to the school population. Such a student or staff member shall be excluded unless his/her physician approves school attendance, or the condition is no longer considered contagious.

C. When reliable evidence of information from a qualified source confirms that a student/staff member is known to have a communicable disease or infection that is known not to have been spread by casual contact, i.e. HIV infection, Hepatitis B, and other like diseases, the decision as to whether the affected person will remain in the school setting will be addressed on a case by case basis by a review panel to ensure due process. In each case risks and benefits to both the infected individual and to others in the setting shall be weighed. As conditions change, cases may be reevaluated.

D. Mandatory screening for communicable diseases that are known not to be spread by casual contact is not warranted as a condition for school entry or for employment or continued employment.

E. Irrespective of disease presence, routine procedures shall be used, and adequate sanitation facilities will be available for handling blood or other body fluids within a school setting or on school buses. School nurses and other relevant personnel will be trained in the proper procedures for handling blood and body fluids, and these procedures will be strictly adhered to by all school personnel.

F. All persons privileged with any medical information that pertains to students or staff members shall be required to treat all proceedings, discussions, and documents as confidential information. Before any medical information is shared with anyone in the school setting, a "Need to Know" review shall/should be made which includes that parent/guardian, student if over 18, employees, or his/her representative.

G. Instruction on the principal modes by which communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are spread and the best methods for the restriction and prevention of these diseases shall/should be taught to students with in-service education provided to all staff members.

STAFF/STUDENT NON-FRATERNIZATION (GABB- Revised 06/13/22)-Added Policy

Adults who have contact with children and adolescents through school activities have the responsibility not to betray or misuse their privileged position and shall never take advantage of students' vulnerability or of their confidence.

It is the policy of Columbus Municipal School District Board of Trustees to prohibit any sexual relationship, contact or sexually nuanced behavior or communication between a staff member and a student, while the student is enrolled in the school system. The prohibition extends to students of the opposite sex or the same sex as the staff member and applies regardless of whether the student or the staff member is the initiator of the behavior and whether or not the student welcomes or reciprocates the attention.

Staff Guidelines for Non-Fraternization

Staff members are expected to use good judgment in their relationships with students both inside and outside of the school context including, but not limited to, the following guidelines:

1. Staff members shall not make derogatory comments to students regarding the school and/or staff.
2. Staff members shall not exchange gifts with students.
3. Staff-sponsored parties, at which students are in attendance, unless they are a part of the school's extracurricular program and are properly supervised, are prohibited.
4. Staff members shall not fraternize, written or verbally, with students except on matters that pertain to school-related issues.

5. Staff members shall not text students nor participate in any student blogs. One exception to this policy is that any staff member with a need to communicate with a group of students on a school matter (i.e., a team, class etc.) may send a text to the group provided that the school administrator is included in the group text. The school administrator must be included in the text.
6. Staff members shall not friend, follow or otherwise link themselves with students on any social media platforms.
7. Staff members shall not associate with students at any time in any situation or activity which could be considered sexually suggestive or involve the presence or use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs.
8. Staff members shall not date students. Sexual relations with students, regardless of age and/or consent, are prohibited and will result in dismissal and criminal prosecution.
9. Staff members shall not use insults or sarcasm against students as a method of forcing compliance with requirements or expectations.
10. Staff members shall maintain a reasonable standard of care for the supervision, control, and protection of students commensurate with their assigned duties and responsibilities
11. Staff members shall not send students on personal errands.
12. Staff members shall, pursuant to law and Board policy, immediately report any suspected signs of child abuse or neglect.
13. Staff members shall not attempt to counsel, assess, diagnose, or treat a student's personal problem relating to sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental or physical health and/or family relationships but instead, should refer the student to appropriate school personnel or agency for assistance, pursuant to law and Board policy.
14. Staff members shall not disclose information concerning a student, other than directory information, to any person not authorized to receive such information. This includes, but is not limited to, information concerning assessments, ability scores, grades, behavior, mental or physical health and/or family background.

Reporting Violations

Students and/or parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal or other appropriate administrator if they believe a teacher or other staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates this policy.

Staff members are required to notify promptly the appropriate building administrator or superintendent if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of this policy.

Investigation

Upon receipt of a report, building staff must notify the principal immediately, without screening or

investigating the report. The principal or administrative designee may request, but may not insist upon, a written complaint. If the complaint involves the building principal, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction by the reporting party or complainant.

The building principal or designee, upon receipt of a report or complaint alleging violation of this policy shall immediately undertake or authorize an investigation. The investigation may be conducted by school district officials or by a third party designated by the school district. If the allegation is such that it would be a criminal violation of state or federal law, the building principal or designee shall immediately report to the superintendent or his designee who shall then immediately report the allegation to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The investigation may be conducted by school district officials or by a third party designated by the school district. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the district shall consider the circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationship between the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and circumstances. In addition, the district may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant or reporting party pending completion of an investigation of the alleged policy violation.

The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. The building principal or designee shall make a written report to the Superintendent or his designee upon completion of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy.

Disciplinary Action

Staff violations of this policy shall result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violations involving sexual or other abuse will also result in referral to the Department of Human Services and law enforcement in accordance with state law and District policy.

Reprisal

The District will discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil or staff member who retaliates against any person who reports an alleged violation of this policy or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, or who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such alleged violation. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.

Social Networking

All employees, faculty and staff of this school district who participate in social networking websites such as, but not limited to, Myspace and /or Facebook, shall not post any data, documents, photos, or inappropriate information on any website that might result in a disruption of classroom activity. The determination of appropriateness will be made by the Superintendent.

Employees, faculty, and staff are solely responsible for the content and the security of their social media websites and shall not give social networking website passwords to students.

Employees, faculty, and staff shall NEVER use their personal social media accounts in any way purporting to be or speaking for the Columbus Municipal School District.

Fraternization via the internet between employees, faculty or staff and students is prohibited and violation of any of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Access of social networking websites for individual use during school hours is prohibited.

Nothing in this policy prohibits employees, faculty, staff, or students from the use of educational websites.

Annual Reminder to Staff

The Superintendent and the school principals will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

1. Improper fraternization with students using Facebook and similar internet sites or social networks
2. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content
3. Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol
4. Examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as behavior to avoid
5. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
6. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

Periodical Searches

The Superintendent or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and/or websites is discovered, the school principals and/or Superintendent will download the offensive material and promptly take proper administrative action.

SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES (GABBA- Revised 06/13/22)-Added Policy

All employees, faculty, and staff shall observe the following while participating in any social media websites or applications including, but not limited to, Myspace, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and/or Instagram:

1. Access of social media websites for individual use during school hours is prohibited.
2. Employees, faculty, and staff shall not friend students on any social media platforms.
3. Employees, faculty, and staff shall not give social media passwords to students.
4. Employees, faculty, and staff are solely responsible for the security of their social media accounts.
5. Employees, faculty, and staff are solely responsible for the content that is always posted on their social media accounts.
6. Employees, faculty, and staff shall NEVER use their personal social media accounts in any way purporting to be or speaking for the Columbus Municipal School District.

All employees, faculty and staff of this school district who participate in social networking websites shall not post any data, documents, photos or inappropriate information on any website or application that might result in a disruption of classroom activity. This determination will be made by the Superintendent.

Fraternization via the internet between employees, faculty or staff and students is prohibited and violation of any of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Violation of any of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to an including termination.

Nothing in this policy prohibits employees, faculty, staff, or students from the use of educational websites since educational sites are used solely for educational purposes.

II. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

Staff members are expected to maintain the highest professional standards, to fulfill all responsibilities assigned to them and to follow procedures and regulations developed by the administration in accordance with policies established and approved by the Columbus Municipal Board of Education.

It shall be the responsibility of all employees to keep their address, telephone number, name changes, and any other pertinent information current with the Human Resources Office and the Payroll Department. Any request for change on the number of dependents on the income tax withholding forms should be made eight (8) working days before payroll is due.

PURCHASING (Board Policy DJE)

School/district personnel shall not purchase items in the name of the school or district without following purchasing procedures. A purchase requisition must be completed and signed by the principal or department manager and the purchase order approved by the Business Manager or his/her designee **BEFORE** purchases are made. **Personnel failing to comply with this procedure will be responsible for payment of the acquired bill.**

HANDLING MONEY (Board policy DK)

All money collected from students or parents must be receipted. **ALL MONEY FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES –** annual, organizations, school pictures, fees, fines, workbooks, field trips, insurance, etc., – is to be turned in to your building secretary and a written receipt will be given. Please try to turn in any monies by noon each day. **DO NOT LEAVE MONEY OR VALUABLES IN CLASSROOMS OVERNIGHT**. These funds are part of the required audit and sponsors may be held responsible for any discrepancies. Personnel may be responsible for any loss of funds. No school personnel may handle funds for school support groups (PTA, PTO, Band Boosters, etc.).

FUND RAISING (SEE STUDENT HANDBOOK) (Board Policy DK)

The principal must approve all activities designed to raise money using the school's name. All monies are to be turned in the office and receipted. Only approved fund raisers will be allowed. All students are prohibited from selling candy, food items, or drinks on campus for personal gain. Violators will receive disciplinary consequences.

USE OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES – MONIES (Board Policy DK)

Monies collected by and belonging to various school's organizations must be spent for group activities and not for individuals for gifts, etc. All projects designed to raise money must receive clearance from the principal's office. A written statement giving details (including estimated profit) and sponsor signature is required. Monies raised by various groups will be available for their use, if the expenditure is legitimate and approved.

PURCHASES MADE THROUGH STUDENT ACTIVITY FUND (Board Policy DK)

No purchases are to be made through the Student Activity Fund without the approval of the principal. The school will not be responsible for purchases made without the principal's approval. The following steps are to be followed when purchasing items through the school.

1. Submit your requisition to your building principal, who will determine the feasibility of the request.
2. A Purchase Order will be written for approved request(s).
3. When an item is received in the school office, proper verification will be completed. The invoice will be signed and returned to the Secretary/Bookkeeper.

EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT FUND (EEF PROCUREMENT CARD) (Board Policy DJEAB)

Certain eligible certified employees will receive an EEF procurement card from the State of Mississippi for the purchase of classroom supplies. Purchases made with these cards are an obligation of the State of Mississippi and should not be used to purchase items in the name or credit of the Columbus Municipal School District. Personnel should take great care in safeguarding the cards and retaining the required documentation related to all purchases. The individual employee is responsible for protecting the assigned card, maintaining any documentation regarding the purchases, as well as following all regulations and guidelines as established by the State of Mississippi.

HANDLING OF MATERIALS AND FIXED ASSETS

Teachers and other personnel employed by the district are responsible for care, maintenance and accounting of all materials, textbooks, fixed assets, and supplies assigned to their area of responsibility. Materials, textbooks, supplies, and equipment are maintained on an inventory in the school office. Persons responsible for care, maintenance, and accounting will be held responsible by the school administrator.

DUTY/SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

You are reminded that hall, campus, lunchroom, or any other duty that involves supervision of students is an important and vital part of our school program. These tasks, therefore, must be undertaken with a serious attitude. It is your task while on duty to do the following in compliance with District Policy.

1. Watch for unsafe acts or situations and correct them.
2. Do not allow improper display of affection by students.
3. Do not allow students to use abusive language.
4. Ask all visitors to report to the office.
5. Keep alert and report any unusual behavior.
6. Report any sign of smoking, dipping, or chewing tobacco, or alcohol or drugs.
7. Do not allow any student to be mistreated or abused.
8. Only release students through the office.
9. Compliance with rules and regulations in the current Parent/Student Handbook.

EXTRA DUTY

Staff members may be assigned extra responsibilities as deemed necessary to carry out the programs of the Columbus Municipal School District. Teachers/personnel will be expected to attend parent/teacher organization meetings and other school functions as they affect their building and the school or district.

Some of the duties you may be called upon to help with are as follows, but not limited to:

1. Sponsoring of a homeroom.
2. Sponsoring of a club.
3. Supervising a part of the campus before/after school, at recess or break, noon lunch periods, as students are loading and unloading the buses, and halls of schools.
4. Ball game duty.
5. Student Advisors (Advisor/Advisee).

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TEACHERS

Before the bell rings to end each class, teachers should have students pick up paper and trash around their desks. This will ensure a clean room for the next class, as each will have cleaned their own litter. This will aid our school in ensuring a safe, orderly climate conducive for learning in our schools and our custodians can
do a much better job. Before you leave your room for the day, please assume the following responsibilities as they apply to your room:

(Relevant to school sites)

1. Turn off all lights
2. Close and lock all windows
3. Check and adjust all blinds
4. Turn off all monitors and computers using the shutdown function
5. Check inventory of fixed assets
6. Close door

LESSON PLANS

Lesson plans must be completed and submitted as specified by the principal.

LEAVING SCHOOL

Do not give a student permission to leave school without checking through the office. If a student becomes ill at school, he or she must be checked out through the office before leaving. If possible, someone will be contacted to come for the student. If no one can be contacted to come for the student, some alternative will be worked out.

If a teacher must leave the campus, he/she should contact the principal or his/her designee. Every courtesy will be extended to those who need to leave, but the administration reserves the right to refuse permission for frivolous reasons.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

CMSD contracts with Kelly Services for the provision of substitute teachers. If you must be absent from school for any reason, you are to contact your principal in a timely manner. You will be expected to provide materials and instructions necessary for the substitute to carry on in your absence. A good lesson plan is an absolute necessity for a substitute teacher. Include information in your plans that will be meaningful to someone that is not familiar with what you are doing, so that a substitute may carry on with your work. Be sure and leave a time schedule and special schedules for students who go to special education, speech, band, music, or to the library.

TEACHERS ARE NOT TO CALL THEIR OWN SUBSTITUTES! Substitute teachers are to leave a report for the full-time teacher regarding class productivity.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

It is our recommendation that all professionals take membership in the professional organization related to their discipline and to become active in other organizations related to their profession.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Teachers/personnel are professionals and as such should seek to keep abreast of teaching methods, materials, innovations, etc., that will enable them to become as effective as possible. Our faculty will participate in a planned Staff Development program during the year that will be tailored to individual needs, special requests, etc. Staff Development is necessary for renewal of certification – no exceptions. It is the responsibility of personnel to complete requirements necessary for license renewal. Personnel are strongly encouraged to participate in activities that will not disrupt the normally scheduled school day to complete these requirements.

**** IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EMPLOYEE TO ATTEND ANY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO MEET CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS. ****

CLASS DECORUM

All teachers/personnel are to consider the importance of student respect and should establish principles to serve as guides for proper classroom behavior (tardiness to class, student movement within the room, personal matters, respect for property, etc.) The teacher's personal example is most critical in this area.

HALL PASSES

Students are not permitted in the halls during class periods unless they are accompanied by a teacher or have a hall pass in their possession. Do not violate this rule by giving a student permission to be out of class without a pass. This creates a stressful situation between the student, teacher, and administration. The student **MAY NOT** understand how he/she can be punished for something that he/she has permission to do and the teacher or administrator that checks for the hall pass does not know if the student has permission to be out of class. Students found in the hall without a pass must be escorted to the office.

GRADING SYSTEM

To ensure transparency in grading policies, this information is included within the current Parent/Student Handbook. This handbook is also posted on the district website.

FIELD TRIPS

A class may take a trip as a group on certain occasions only and related to the curriculum when approved by proper school officials. When doing so, the group involved must assume the cost of transportation. Students will be assessed a fee to cover the cost of admission, cost of trip (mileage) and bus driver's fee. All monies received from students for field trips must be turned in to the office. Teachers/personnel who are employed full-time and who drive buses on field trips during the instructional day will not receive additional compensation.

All trips must be justified based on an educational value and the educational objectives presented in writing at the time of the request. Classes planning field trips are encouraged to plan the trips early in the school year. Due to the number of requests and the number of spring sports, trips planned for the last part of the year may not be approved. The principal must approve all trips in advance. Pleasure trips will not be approved.

PARTIES

Parties are not allowed.

USE OF THE TELEPHONE

Teachers/personnel are not to use the office phones unless it is an emergency. Due to the tremendous amount of incoming and outgoing calls, please limit all calls to a minimum.

TEACHERS ARE NOT TO TALK, TEXT, DURING INSTRUCTIONAL TIME OR ON DUTY. Personal cell phone usage during the school day must be approved by the administration. In times of emergency, please discuss the need for access with the administration as soon as possible. NO cell phones are allowed during state mandated testing. Having a cell phone within the mandated testing session is a basis for disciplinary action and may result in the district requesting your teaching license to be revoked for a period.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

All employees shall have and be familiar with their job description. Job descriptions are available through your immediate supervisor/principal, the district human resource office, or the district website.

III. GENERAL SCHOOL OPERATION

WORKDAY (Board Policy GBRB)

All staff at school sites are required to use the time clock and/or daily sign-in form. Staff are to clock in and/or sign-in upon arrival and on departure at the close of the day. Staff are not allowed to "sign in or out" for other personnel. If this is done, it is a basis for disciplinary action and/or termination.

ATTENDANCE

Employees shall be at their post of duty in accordance with the time regulations set forth by the supervisors and approved by the Superintendent. All departments and schools shall maintain time sheets showing the hours worked by the employees. All time sheets must be submitted to the Business Office on Wednesday following a weekly payroll period ending on Friday.

FACULTY MEETINGS (Board Policy GBRD)

Building Principals will set meetings of faculty as the need arises. **Teachers/Staff are required to attend assigned meetings as directed by the principals/supervisor.**

EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Each employee has the responsibility to dress appropriately for the school environment. Apparel, hair, and general appearance shall not disrupt the classroom atmosphere, and shall not be unusually provocative or shall not violate health and safety rules of the school. The guidelines for dress and grooming are provided to assist employees as they choose their clothing. Employee dress and grooming shall be neat, clean, and follow the general guidelines below.

1. Shirts are to be worn tucked into pants or skirts unless the garment is designed to be worn on the outside.
2. The length of the skirts and jumpers shall come to at least the top of the kneecap.
3. Employees are prohibited from wearing:
    a. additional "patches," pins, tattoos, ornate or cumbersome earrings or jewelry, or any other item that may be considered lewd, profane, obscene, suggestive, or vulgar; or
    b. distractive items which may harass, threaten, intimidate, or demean other groups; or which display illegal merchandise or contraband; or any item which may distract from the educational process.
4. All clothing is to fit appropriately. Professional dress and/or business casual guidelines should be followed for all employees. Employees are always to follow the guidelines before entering the building and on campus, from arrival through departure. Additionally, employees are to be groomed and dressed neatly.

The principal/supervisor will determine what constitutes distracting influences in matters of dress and grooming and reserves the right to make modifications as needed. If a style of dress or appearance is, in the opinion of the administration, disruptive to the educational process, constitutes a potential threat to

the safety or health of the employee or other persons, or contradicts the intent of the policy, it shall not be permitted.

ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL

No student is to be enrolled or dropped from any role by a teacher. This procedure must originate in the office. All students must have parental permission to enroll or withdraw. The office staff will investigate the validity of all requests and issue the proper forms to complete the process.

CHILD NUTRITION

The Child Nutrition Department of the Columbus Municipal School District is committed to providing high quality, nutritious meals for our students, faculty, and staff members. We offer a variety of healthy choices to fuel students' bodies and to refresh their minds. Well-nourished students have higher test scores, increased school attendance, improved concentration, and improved classroom behavior. We are committed to providing healthy, fresh, and delicious meals in a safe and clean environment.

Columbus Municipal School District child nutrition programs are administered through the United States Department of Agriculture, the Mississippi Department of Education, and the local School Board. Comprehensive regulations must be followed for the school district to be eligible for federal funding.

All foods served at our schools meet state and federal nutritional requirements which are based on the United States Department of Agriculture USDA Dietary Guidelines. Current menus are available on the district official website.

If a student has a food allergy or requires a special diet, a medical statement signed by a doctor is required before the student's diet can be altered. This statement should give the diet suggestions and medical reasons for special diet requirements. Parents must contact the school nurse or Child Nutrition department to complete a form. This form must be completed at the beginning of each school year by the child's physician. If a student has a dietary restriction for any other reason the parent must contact the Office of Child Nutrition.

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP)

The Columbus Municipal School District will continue to participate in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for School Year 2025-2026. All enrolled students at Columbus Municipal School District are eligible to receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at school at **no charge** each day of the 2025-2026 school year. Children will be able to participate in these meal programs without having to pay a fee or apply.

ALLOWABLE FOOD IN THE CAFETERIA

Columbus Municipal School District participates in Offer versus Serve meal planning. Offer versus Serve or OVS is a concept that applies to menu planning and meal service. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste and to permit students to choose the foods they want to eat. Any meal served to students must only be consumed by the student. At no time can an adult/teacher eat any food from the student's tray.

Student behavior in the dining room should be based on courtesy and cleanliness. District policy requires teachers (including secondary) to be present in the cafeteria during mealtime to supervise student behavior.

For safety reasons and health department requirements, students and teachers are not allowed in the kitchen. Students and teachers should wait at the kitchen entrance for the manager to assist them. Everyone should be served from the serving line only.

Beverages other than milk, tea, juice, or water should not be consumed in the cafeteria during lunch and breakfast periods.

Vending machines and snack sales are prohibited one hour before breakfast, one hour before lunch and until the meal period has ended.

Under the provisions of the Healthy School Act, no carbonated drink can/bottles or food from commercial restaurants are allowed in the cafeteria in its original container. No student or adult may bring commercial restaurant food inside the cafeteria in a container that advertises the business where purchased. This food must be placed in a clear unmarked container or plain paper/plastic bag having no advertisement for it to be consumed in the cafeteria.

USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

For all other FNS nutrition assistance programs, State or local agencies, and their sub recipients, must post the following Nondiscrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

LUNCHROOM SCHEDULE

All sites will have a closed lunch. Faculty and staff are to remain on campus for lunch unless prior approval has been granted. A time schedule will be placed in each teacher's hands at a later date. Assigned teachers/personnel will supervise students during the lunch schedule. Once the lunch periods have been established, please be punctual so that others will not have to wait for you to finish.

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

During the instructional day, no visitors are permitted on campus or in classrooms without signing in and receiving a visitor's badge from the head office. It must be worn while on campus. Teachers/personnel should notify office personnel if someone is on campus without a visitor's badge.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Each building has a crisis management plan. Please refer to the crisis management plan at your site.

TEACHERS/PERSONNEL LEAVING CAMPUS

The administration realizes that an important situation may occur which would warrant a request to leave campus. These will be dealt with in a fair manner at the discretion of the building administrator. It is recommended that doctor and dental appointments occur after school hours.

COMMUNICATION

Personnel are responsible for complying with all directives, memorandums, and all other forms of in-district communication. Teachers/Staff are required to check their emails daily but not during instructional or duty time.

MEDICATION

School personnel shall not exceed the usual practice of competent first aid in emergency procedures when required. All students requiring medication must have a completed medication form on file in the Nurse's office. Only designated personnel shall administer medication of any kind. The principal shall be notified immediately in the event of an emergency.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

It is the duty and responsibility of each teacher/personnel to uphold and enforce each policy of the administration of the Columbus Municipal Schools and the Board of Education. Teachers/personnel should not turn their backs on discipline problems. Teachers/personnel must always apply the policies fairly and impartially to each student. The behavior of teachers/personnel should always be a good example to the students in the Columbus Municipal Schools.

Disciplinary Forms will be made available to the teacher for reporting the case in detail. Such written information will serve as a basis for action by the principal. The office will contact parents when, where, and time to meet with the students.

Specific information or details regarding discipline can be found in the Student/Parent Handbook**.**

REPRIMANDING OF STUDENTS

In reprimanding a child, please use good judgment. REFRAIN FROM USING SARCASM OR DEROGATORY LANGUAGE WHEN SPEAKING TO STUDENTS and/or RAISING YOUR VOICE. Do not use a method that you would not want used on your own child. Do not use methods that are cruel and unusual or that waste time, such a repetitive writing or standing in the hall. Do not let students take names.

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

Teachers/personnel are required to ensure that the students have a copy of the current Parent/Student Handbook and have been properly advised of the contents and its importance. Teachers are required to secure the signed student/parent statements to indicate that students/parents have read the Parent/Student handbook within one (1) week of the first day of school.

The teacher is required to devote enough time to cover the entire handbook with the students. Items concerning absences, tardiness and make-up work should be thoroughly discussed as well as the rules governing conduct and punishment that may be anticipated for the offenses.

Teachers/personnel are required to know the contents of and help enforce the Parent/Student Handbook fairly and impartially to all students.

TEACHERS/PERSONNEL SENDING FOR PUPILS

Teachers/personnel should not send for pupils in another teacher's class. If it becomes necessary for a teacher to see a pupil, the student should come to the class during a break. Students are not to be dismissed from a teacher's class for any reason without first obtaining permission from the Principal. A note signed by the Principal will be necessary before any student can be dismissed from a class.

USE OF CUSTODIANS

All requests for custodians are to be sent to the Principal's Office. Administrators give directions to custodial staff.

MEAL/TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

A travel form, which must be filled out by anyone who is to receive reimbursement for travel, meals, etc. These forms are in the Principal's Office. When forms are completed, please forward to the district office. A travel approval form signed by Principal, Director, or Supervisor must accompany the form requesting reimbursement.

Forms to be utilized include:

- Permission to Travel-**Leave Form** must be completed (either the Day Travel or Overnight Travel, as applicable) and signed by the Principal or Supervisor verifying their approval of the request.
- Overnight travel requires the approval of the Superintendent and the Board of Education.
- Upon return, the **Travel Reimbursement Form** must be completed for reimbursement.

IV. PERSONNEL POLICIES AND EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

PERSONNEL PROCEDURES

It is the policy of the Columbus Municipal Public-School District to hire, retain and promote as employees, those persons best qualified to fulfill the needs of the school without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, martial or veteran status, the presence of a non-job-related handicap or any other legally protected status. Further, it is the policy of the Columbus Municipal Public-School District to follow employment procedures, which are clear, objective, and non-discriminatory. Employment decisions will be based upon specific objective standards, which bear a direct relationship to the skills required by the position.

Announcement of vacancies for full-time professional and non-professional positions in the school district will be advertised on the district's website. To that end, all vacancies will be advertised publicly for fourteen (14) business days except in cases of extreme emergency as determined by the superintendent. Such advertisements must include the minimum qualifications for the position. Announcement of vacant professional positions may also be submitted to outside sources such as the Mississippi State Department of Education. In the event of an emergency need to fill a position, the superintendent may waive advertising procedures set forth. He/she shall be authorized to enter into an administrative contract with personnel until the board shall meet and consider his/her staffing recommendation.

Applications will be considered active for one (1) year after being filed unless the applicant either withdraws or renews the application.

Any demonstration, dismissal or non-renewal decision involving a certified employee will be based on specific, objective evidence that the employee is not fulfilling his or her duties satisfactorily. The reasons for any adverse personnel action against a certified and classified employee will be carefully documented in writing, all relevant evidence will be preserved, and if eligible, certified employees will be offered a reasonable hearing prior to final action by the Board of Education. All non-renewal and termination procedures will follow Mississippi statutory law and district policy.

LENGTH OF CONTRACT

Certified staff are under contract for a specified number of days (187, 192, 200, 207, 210, 215, 220, or 236). The district reserves the right to request teachers/personnel to report before the first official instructional day and to retain them after the last day of school until all official/contractual work has been completed, as required by the school district.

***A contract will not be issued to an educator whose license is expiring for the upcoming school year. ***

PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL RELEASE FROM CONTRACT (GBOA)

Any appointed superintendent, principal or licensed employee in any public-school district who is under contract to teach or perform other duties and who desires to be released from such contract shall make application in writing to the school board of the school district for release therefrom, in which application the reasons for such release shall be clearly stated. If the board acts favorably upon such application for release, such superintendent, principal, or licensed employee shall be released from his/her contract and said contract shall be null and void on the date specified in this school board's order. '37-9-55 (1997).

Release may be granted for the following reasons and under the following circumstances:

1. For reasons of ill health or physical disability of the teacher or a member of the immediate family.
2. To accept employment in another business or profession only when and if a suitable replacement shall have been obtained.
3. Relocation of family only when and if a suitable replacement has been obtained.
4. To accept employment which will be career advancement only if and when suitable replacement shall have been obtained. The new employment opportunity must provide a higher organizational position than that held in the Columbus Municipal School District. Simply a high salary does not meet the intent of this conditional circumstance.

The breach of an employment contract by any of the personnel of the District shall result in the District's withholding the payment of any monies which otherwise should have been paid to such person had he/she not broken the contract with the District. Such monies so withheld shall be treated as stipulated damages resulting to the District from such breach of contract. The District maintains the prerogative to submit written recommendation to the State Department of Education that the certificate of the employee be suspended for a period of one (1) year as provided in Section 37-3-2(8).

Please refer to CMSD Policy GBOA for further clarification.

PAY ADMINISTRATION

All employees will receive pay on the last working day of each month via direct deposit. It is the employee's responsibility to maintain accurate bank account information with the CMSD Business Office. No employee will pay a substitute. All substitutes are paid through **Kelly Services.**

The Business Manager and the Director of Human Resources will administer all changes in pay or grades at the beginning of each fiscal year. Each employee will be paid in accordance with The Columbus Municipal School District Salary Guide. The Columbus Municipal School Salary Guide is approved annually by the Columbus Municipal School District Board of Trustees.

RETIREMENT

All regular full-time employees must participate in the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi (PERS). Employees desiring specific information concerning their retirement should contact the CMSD Human Resources Office or the PERS Office.

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS/BENEFITS

Payroll deductions consist of both statutory deductions and optional deductions

1. Statutory deductions
   - Tax Withholding (Federal and State)
   - Retirement (for eligible employees)
   - Social Security
   - Medicare
2. Optional Deductions (for eligible employees)
   - Group Health Insurance
   - Group Life Insurance
   - Dental Insurance
   - Vision Insurance
   - Deferred Compensation/Retirement Annuities
   - Cancer Insurance
   - Hospital Gap
   - Long Term Disability
   - Medical Expense Flexible Spending Account
   - Critical Illness

LEAVE AND ABSENCE FROM DUTY (POLICY GBRI)

Section I: LEAVES AND ABSENCES

Accumulated leave may be used for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness
2. Illness of employee's immediate family (parents, spouse, or child)
3. Illness of any relative who is a permanent member of certified employee's household.
4. Death and funeral of a relative
5. Circumstance beyond the employee's control, subject to the approval of the Superintendent before or after the fact.

Section II: HOW DAYS ARE EARNED

Days for leaves and absences, sick and personal, shall be accumulated as follows (based on the number of scheduled workdays per fiscal year):

180 – 198 workdays: 9 leave days
199 – 217 workdays: 10 leave days
218 – 235 workdays: 11 leave days
236 or more workdays: 12 leave days

Every employee at the beginning of each fiscal/contract year shall be credited with the minimum leave allowance based on the number of scheduled workdays, i.e., an employee with 187 workdays is credited leave of nine (9) days.

In the event the employee terminates service before the contracted period is completed, the number of leave days shall be prorated to the ratio of days worked. If the employee has used more days than days

earned, the difference shall be deducted from the final paycheck.

Individuals employed in the course of a fiscal/contracted year shall earn leave days in ratio to the days worked.

Section III: CERTIFICATED STAFF / PERSONAL LEAVE

Certified employees may use up to five (5) days of earned leave for personal business each year subject to the immediate supervisor and Superintendent's approval.

Section IV: CLASSIFIED STAFF / PERSONAL LEAVE

Classified (Non-Certified) employees may use five (5) days of accumulated leave per year for personal business with the approval of the immediate supervisor and the Superintendent.

Section V: RULES & REGULATIONS GUIDING USE OF PERSONAL & SICK LEAVE

Mississippi statutes permit school districts to establish reasonable rules guiding the use of Sick and Personal Leave. The Columbus Municipal School District hereby establishes the following regulations:

An employee who is absent for reasons other than for personal leave shall furnish the certificate of a physician, dentist, or other medical practitioner as to the illness of the employee or someone covered under Section I, when the absence is four (4) or more consecutive days, or for two (2) consecutive school days immediately preceding or following a holiday. If leave is taken for the death or funeral of a relative, documentation of such must be presented upon the employee's return to work if duration of absence is same as stated above.

When reasonable suspicion exists, the district reserves the right to require a certificate of a physician, dentist, or other medical practitioner verifying the necessity of the absence from work of the employee.

The Superintendent may take such disciplinary action as is appropriate for any materially false statement by an employee as to cause of absence.

Personal leave shall not be taken on the first day students report, except in the event of death or a funeral of an immediate family member. (See HB572)

Absences to attend to school district business are not charged against accumulated leave.

Enlarging, increasing, or providing greater sick or personal leave allowances than the minimum standards established by this section is at the discretion of the school board.

Section VI: ABSENCES IN EXCESS OF ACCUMULATED APPROVED LEAVE / CERTIFIED STAFF

For the first ten (10) days of absence of a certificated employee because of illness or physical disability in any school year, in excess of the sick leave allowance credited to the certificated employee, the cost of substitute teacher's pay will be deducted from the absent employee's salary, whether a substitute is

secured.

For absences beyond the ten (10) days the pay of the absent certificated employee shall be withheld in its entirety.

Section VII: JURY DUTY

A person serving on jury duty will be paid his/her regular salary. Jury duty is not considered as part of an employee's approved leave. The time an employee is absent from work is not deducted from the employee's accumulated leave. Any fees or expense money collected for jury service may be retained by the employee.

Section VIII: VACATION LEAVE/PERSONAL LEAVE CONVERSION

Vacation leave granted to either licensed or unlicensed employees shall be synonymous with personnel leave. Unused vacation or personal leave accumulated by licensed employees in excess of the maximum five (5) days which may be carried over from one (1) year to the next may be converted to sick leave. The annual conversion of unused vacation or personal leave to sick leave for licensed or unlicensed employees shall not exceed the allowable number of personal leave days as provided in section 25-3-93. The annual total number of converted unused vacation and/or personal days added to the sick leave days for any employee shall not exceed the combined allowable number of days in Section 25-3-93 and 25-3-95.

Section IX. DONATION OF LEAVE

a. For the purposes of this subsection, the following words and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed in this paragraph unless the context requires otherwise:

i. "Catastrophic injury or illness" means a life-threatening injury or illness of an employee or a member of an employee's immediate family that totally incapacitates the employee from work, as verified by a licensed physician, and forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned by that employee, resulting in the loss of compensation from the state for the employee. Conditions that are short-term in nature, including, but not limited to, common illnesses such as influenza and the measles, and common injuries, are not catastrophic. Chronic illnesses or injuries, such as cancer or major surgery, which result in intermittent absences from work and that are long-term in nature and require long recuperation periods may be considered catastrophic.

ii. Immediate family means spouse, parent, stepparent, sibling, child, or stepchild.

b. Any school district employee may donate a portion of his or her unused accumulated personal leave or sick leave to another employee of the same school district who is suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness or who has a member of his or her immediate family suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness, in accordance with the following:

i. The employee donating the leave (the donor employee) shall designate the employee who is to receive the leave (the recipient employee) and the amount of unused accumulated personal leave

and sick leave that is to be donated and shall notify the school district superintendent or his designee of his or her designation.

ii. The maximum amount of unused accumulated personal leave that an employee may donate to any other employee may not exceed a number of days that would leave the donor employee with fewer than seven (7) days of personal leave remaining, and the maximum amount of unused accumulated sick leave that an employee may donate to any other employee may not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the unused accumulated sick leave of the donor employee.

iii. An employee must have exhausted all his or her available leave before he or she will be eligible to receive any leave donated by another employee. Eligibility for donated leave shall be based upon review and approval by the donor employee's supervisor.

iv. Before an employee may receive donated leave, he or she must provide the school district superintendent or his designee with a physician's statement that states that the illness meets the catastrophic criteria established under this section, the beginning date of the catastrophic injury or illness, and a prognosis for recovery and the anticipated date that the recipient employee will be able to return to work.

v. Before an employee may receive donated leave, the superintendent of education of the school district shall appoint a review committee to approve or disapprove the said donations of leave, including the determination that the illness is catastrophic within the meaning of this section.

vi. If the total amount of leave that is donated to any employee is not used by the recipient employee, the whole days of donated leave shall be returned to the donor employees on a pro rata basis, based on the ratio of the number of days of leave donated by each donor employee to the total number of days of leave donated by all donor employees.

vii. Donated leave shall not be used in lieu of disability retirement. 37-7-307

Section X: TERMINATION AND/OR RETIREMENT

Upon retirement from employment, each certified and non-certified employee shall be paid, at the option of the employee, for not more than thirty (30) days of unused accumulated leave earned while employed by the District. A certified employee shall be paid by the school district at a rate equal to the amount paid to substitute teachers, and non-certificated employees shall be paid at a rate equal to the federal minimum wage. The payment shall be treated in the same manner for retirement purposes as a lump sum payment for personal leaves as provided in §25-11-103 (e). Any remaining lawfully credited unused leave, for which payment has not been made, shall be certified to the Public Employees' Retirement System in the same manner and subject to the same limitations as otherwise provided by law for unused leave. If any employee's employment is terminated for any reason other than retirement, no payment for unused accumulated leave shall be made.

Section XI: FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

Under certain circumstances, employees may be eligible for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Policy adopted September 1993. This policy complies with the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. The Family Medical Leave Act is discussed more thoroughly later in this handbook.

Section XII: STATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE LEAVE

If an administrator of the District is appointed to a state or local board or committee and that person's service on that board or committee is likely to significantly benefit the District, either directly or indirectly, and the leave time required for that position would not adversely impact the normal process of school, then that person will be entitled to up to ten days of paid leave each year for that position. The approval of that administrator's service on such a board or committee must be obtained from the Superintendent before service begins and that person will be eligible for paid leave. The approval of the Superintendent's service on such a board or committee must be obtained from the President of the Board of Trustees before service begins and that person will be eligible for paid leave. A person approved for paid leave under this policy shall not receive any remuneration for service on that board or committee other than reimbursement of actual, out of pocket expenses of that person in attending meetings of that board or committee.

Section XIII. LEAVE DUE TO DECLARED EMERGENCY CLOSURES

The school board may, at its discretion, provide additional administrative leave with pay for all employees (professional, certified, and classified) in the event of declared emergency closures.

SOURCE: Columbus Municipal School District; Columbus, Mississippi

VACATION (Board Policy GBRK)

Section I: Who May Earn Vacation

As a result of severe budgets cuts from the Mississippi Governor and Mississippi Legislature, starting with the 2010 – 2011 school year the District is reducing the employment of certain certificated employees of the District to as low as 226 days, and therefore until the Columbus Municipal School Board amends this policy:

Employees become eligible for vacation benefits upon commencement of employment in a position requiring 226 or more working days. Benefits are accrued based on the anniversary date of Columbus Municipal School District employment. Beginning with the first full year of employment in 226 days or more position, the employee earns ten (10) vacation days each year.

Section II: Use of earned Vacation Days

Requests for use of vacation days must be made in writing on the approved vacation form and approved by the appropriate supervisor at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the beginning of the desired absence. Vacation leave may not exceed twelve (12) days in one fiscal year unless approved by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. All employees are urged and encouraged to use a minimum of five days annually and preferably when school is not in session.

Section III: Termination of employees prior to retirement

If an employee is separated from the school district, voluntarily or involuntarily, unused leave shall be counted as creditable service for the purpose of the Public Employees Retirement System of Mississippi (PERS).

Section IV: Termination of employee at retirement

Upon termination of employment, unused leave days for which the employee is entitled to full pay may be counted as creditable service for purposes of the retirement system to the extent provided in 25-11-103 of Mississippi Code and the policies of PERS.

NON-WORKING DAYS

Columbus Municipal School District employees have a scheduled number of workdays per fiscal year defined by district's annual calendar. Depending on a position's schedule, there are non-working days that often coincide with observed holidays. Employees are not expected to work on non-working days and unless alternate arrangements are made, no compensation is due to the employee for non-working days.

An employee who is absent without approval on the working day immediately preceding or following a holiday shall lose pay for the holiday.

ABSENT FROM WORK LEAVE PROCEDURES

To create consistency in the leave process within Columbus Municipal School District, the following procedures are to be followed.

District Administrators of the Brandon Central Office (BCO) and School Administrators leave requests must be presented to his or her immediate supervisor for approval:

1) Vacation/Personal leave – prior to leave, the proper paperwork must be submitted for approval.

2) Sick Leave – all appointments must be submitted in a timely manner. If you are ill and unable to report to work on any given day, please notify your immediate supervisor and once you return from leave, the proper paperwork must be submitted for approval.

3) Absent from BCO/School Buildings during normal business hours – if you are not attending to school business when you leave the office, please submit the proper paperwork for approval.

The same procedures are to be followed by the certified/classified staff; however, leave request paperwork must be submitted to their supervisor, director, or manager for approval.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Timely and regular attendance is an expectation of performance for all Columbus Municipal employees. To ensure adequate staffing, positive employee morale, and to meet expected productivity standards throughout the district, employees will be held accountable to adhering to their workplace schedule. In the event an employee is unable to meet this expectation, he/she must obtain approval from their principal or director in advance of any requested changes. This approval includes requests to use sick, vacation and/or personal time, as well as late arrivals to and/or departure from work. Principals or designee have discretion to evaluate extraordinary circumstances of a tardy, absence or failure to clock-in or clock-out and/or sign-in or sign-out and determine whether or not to count the incident as an occurrence. The Director of Human Resources is available to advise principals or directors regarding the evaluation of extenuating circumstances.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE INCENTIVE

Having all staff and support personnel available every day to perform their assigned duties contributes significantly to the Columbus Municipal School District reaching and sustaining a high level of efficiency and performance. As an incentive to staff and support personnel, the District intends to establish a predetermined incentive to be granted to those who have perfect attendance during predetermined periods of time.

Perfect attendance is defined as reporting to work as scheduled and remaining at work until the end of the workday and/or do not use a sick or personal day/time during the predetermined period (specified month or months as set out below). For perfect attendance during each predetermined period, an employee will be granted an additional sick day. All additional sick days accumulated pursuant to this incentive program will be added in June after the end of the academic year (example – June of 2021 for the 2020-2021 school year).

August = 1 day	February = 1 day
September = 1 day	March = 1 day
October = 1 day	April = 1 day
November/December = 1 day	May = 1 day
January = 1 day	

At the end of the academic year the Chief Financial Officer calculates the earning of days by going through each employees' timesheets for that academic year.

FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE (Updated Policy 5/09/2022)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to the complexity of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and because it involves consideration of your district's leaves and absences policy and your practices, along with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) and parts of the Internal Revenue Code relating to group health plans and cafeteria plans, all federal anti-discrimination laws and applicable state laws, it is not practical to attempt development of a

detailed policy for the administration of the FMLA. Each request for leave must be evaluated individually due to myriad combinations of circumstances and medical conditions one may have to consider. It is strongly recommended that the school district purchase a competent analysis of the rules, regulations, and guidelines of the FMLA to review while evaluating individual requests for leave under FMLA. The school district's attorney should always be consulted when there is uncertainty.

Of particular importance are the posting and notice requirements of the Act. You must conspicuously post and keep posted in all schools and offices where employees are employed and where applications for employment are taken a notice explaining the Act's provisions and providing information concerning the procedures for filing complaints of violations of the Act with the Wage and Hour Division. Copies of the required notice may be obtained from any local Wage and Hour Division Office. No reproductions of the notice may be any smaller than 8 x 11 inches and the text must be fully legible. Failure to post the required notice prohibits you from taking any adverse action against an employee as well as liability for payment of fines to the Department of Labor (DOL).

Information concerning FMLA entitlements and employee obligations must be included in any employee handbook or other documents providing written guidance explaining all the obligations and rights of an eligible employee whenever that employee requests leave under FMLA. A fact sheet is available from the nearest Wage and Hour Division Office that will provide this guidance.

Also, you must provide an employee who has given you notice of the need for FMLA leave a notice of your specific expectations and employee obligations. Such notice must detail all consequences for failing to meet these obligations. This notice must include the following information as is appropriate to the leave request being considered:

1. Whether the district will require a medical certificate of a serious health condition or recertification and what will happen if the employee fails to do so;

2. Whether the district will require the employee to furnish, prior to being restored to employment, a fitness for duty certificate;

3. That the taking of this leave will count against the employee's annual FMLA leave entitlement;

4. That the employee has a right to substitute paid leave (sick leave, vacation, personal days) for FMLA leave or whether the district will require the substitution of paid leave and any conditions related to substitution;

5. Whether the employee is a "key employee," and that restoration might possibly be denied after taking FMLA leave, explaining the condition required for you to deny restoration;

6. Whether the employee will be required to pay any health insurance premiums to maintain benefits while on leave and the arrangements for making the payments;

7. That if the employee fails to return to work after taking unpaid FMLA leave, he is potentially liable for payment of health insurance premiums paid by the school district;

8. That the employee has a right to restoration to the same or equivalent job* upon return from leave.

The school district is also expected to act in good faith in answering questions from employees about their rights and responsibilities under the FMLA.
FMLA provides that the school district shall make, keep and preserve records pertaining to its obligations under the Act in accordance with the record keeping requirements of section 11 C of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the FMLA. No particular order or form of records is required. No requirement exists that requires the school district to revise its computerized payroll or personnel records to comply; however, some items are required.

Leaves and Absences and The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-3)

I. GENERAL

1. Definition

1. "Eligible employee" means one who is employed at a school facility where at least 50 persons are employed, either there or within a 75-mile radius of that school facility as measured by road miles by the shortest route possible; and who has been employed for at least 12 months by the school district as of the date leave commences, and who has also provided at least 1250 hours of service during that 12-month period. Fifty-two (52) weeks of casual, intermittent, or occasional employment qualifies as "at least 12 months". School district employees exempt from FLSA requirements are presumed to have worked 1250 hours.

2. "Employee's spouse" as defined by Mississippi Law.

3. "Employee's son or daughter" means biological child, adopted child or foster child, legal ward, or the child for whom the employee is standing in loco parentis who is either under the age of 18 or above the age of 18 and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

4. "Employee's parent" means biological parent or an individual who stood (or now stands) in loco parentis to an employee when the employee was a child (not to include parents-in-law).

5. "Employee's immediate family member" means spouse, son or daughter or parent as defined hereinabove.

6. For the purposes of FMLA, "serious health condition" means an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves either in-patient care (overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider. *

2. Leave Provisions

1. An eligible employee is entitled to 12 unpaid work weeks of leave during any 12-month period for any one or more of the following reasons:

1. The birth of a son or daughter, and to care for the newborn child (within 12 months of the birth).

2. The placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care (within 12 months of the placement).

3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition (not parent "in-law").

4. Because of the employee's own serious health condition which makes the employee unable to perform the function of his/her job.

5. Service Member Exigency Leave: For absences caused by an active-duty exigency when the employee's spouse, child, or parent is a service member.

6. Military Caregiver Leave: To care for the employee's spouse, child, parent, or next of kin (if the employee is the nearest blood relative) who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty.

   IMPORTANT NOTE: The school district must choose any one of the following methods of determining the "12 month period". Once chosen, that method must be used consistently and changed only upon 60 days written notice to all employees.

   1. The calendar year.
   2. Any fixed 12 month "leave year", that is,
      1. a fiscal year
      2. a year required by state law
      3. a year starting on the employee's employment anniversary date
      4. the 12-month period measured forward from the beginning date of the employee's FMLA leave
      5. a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date the employee uses FMLA leave (may not extend back before August 5, 1993). *
      6. The Columbus Municipal School District Uses "a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date the employee uses FMLA.

b. Spouses have a 12-week aggregate leave limit except for personal illness or the illness of a child or the other spouse; that is, if each spouse took 6 weeks of leave for the birth of a child, each could later use an additional 6 weeks due to personal illness or to care for a sick child.

c. Brother and sister employees would have an aggregate limit of 12 weeks to care for their parent.

d. Special rules apply to this school district which allow it to require eligible instructional personnel only to take FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule, or to take leave near the end of a

semester. Instructional employees are only those employees whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, small group, or individual setting. Instructional employees include teachers, teacher aides and assistant teachers who actually teach, coaches, driver's ed instructors and special ed assistants such as signers. All other eligible employees may request intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule to care for a family member or for the employee's own serious health condition.

3. Notice Requirement

a. School district employees must provide this district at least 30 days advance notice before FMLA leave is to begin if the need for the leave is foreseeable based on an expected birth, placement for adoption or foster care or planned medical treatment for a serious health condition of the employee or family member.

b. Due to lack of knowledge or a medical emergency, notice must be given as soon as is practicable, which means as soon as both practical and possible or at least verbally within 1 or 2 working days when the need for leave becomes known to the employee (followed by written notice). *

c. Failure to give 30 days' notice for foreseeable leave may result in the denial of the taking of FMLA leave until at least 30 days after the date the employee provides notice. *

II. REQUIRED CERTIFICATION

1. Eligible employees shall provide the superintendent or designee certification of a serious health condition for his/her own serious health condition or that of a family member. The certification, to be signed by the health care provider, * shall be attached to the required written notice or submitted in a timely manner which shall be no more than three (3) working days after providing written notice. No leave period may begin without the approval of the superintendent. No approval shall be granted by the superintendent or designee without the required written notice and certificate.

2. The certification is to include the following:

    1. The date on which the serious health condition in question began.

    2. The probable duration of the condition.

    3. Appropriate medical facts regarding the condition.

    4. A statement that the employee is needed to care for a spouse, parent, or child (along with estimate of the time required) or that the employee is unable to perform his/her functions, and, in the case of intermittent leave, the duration of treatment to be given.

    5. Signature of health care provider.

3. The school district may require that a second opinion be obtained at the school district's expense. The second opinion may not be provided by a health care provider employed by this school district. In the event of conflicting opinions, the school district may pay for a third and final provider to offer a binding decision.

4. The school district may require subsequent written recertification on a reasonable basis.

III. EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS PROTECTION

1. An employee who completes a period of leave and has complied fully with the terms of this policy shall be returned either to the same position he/she had before the taking of leave or to a position which is genuinely equivalent (as compared to a comparable or similar job) in pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.

2. Taking of leave shall not result in the loss of any previously accrued seniority or employment benefits. Except for health benefits, no other benefits will accrue during the leave period.

3. The school district may exempt from the restoration requirement in paragraph A above a key employee who is in the highest paid 10 percent of this district's workforce within a 75-mile radius of the school facility if restoring the key employee would cause substantial and grievous injury to the classroom and instructional program. *

4. The school district shall notify the key employee of its intent not to restore him/her at the time of the request for leave or when the determination is made. If the leave has begun, the key employee shall have the option of deciding whether or not to return to work after receiving the notice. An employee who is not restored shall be considered to be on leave for the duration of his/her leave period. *

5. Health benefits shall continue through an employee's leave period, even for key employees who have been notified that reinstatement will be denied. The school district shall recover health coverage premiums paid for an employee who fails to return from leave except as follows:

    1. No recovery will be made from a key employee who has chosen to take or continue leave after receiving notice of non-reinstatement.

    2. No recovery will be made from an employee who fails to return from leave if the reason is the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition, or something else beyond the employee's control, all of which is subject to the certification requirement in Section II, above.

IV. PROHIBITED ACTS

This school district shall not interfere with or restrain an eligible employee's right to exercise the provisions of this policy. * This policy shall take effect and be in force from and after August 5, 1993. An employee's service prior to this effective date shall be counted in determining whether the employee is eligible for leave.

V. SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

All certified and classified personnel will participate in the supervision/evaluation of their performance. The goal of the supervision and evaluation process is for the employee to reflect and analyze his/her performance in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and relevancy.

CERTIFIED EMPLOYEE EVALUATION (GBI)

The evaluation of professional employees shall be in the form and manner prescribed by the State Department of Education. The school board of this district directs the superintendent to formulate and implement a formal annual performance appraisal system based on job descriptions and on-the-job performance of every professional employee.

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE EVALUATION (Board Policy GDI) Added Existing Policy

The development of a strong, competent classified staff of employees, and the maintenance of high morale among this staff, are major objectives of the school board. The board recognizes that thorough, regular appraisal of performance is essential to the realization of district goals. The primary purpose of personnel evaluation is the growth and development of individual staff members, the strengthening of the school staff as a whole, and improvement of support services provided.

The board directs the superintendent and administrative staff to develop regulations, procedures, and instruments for evaluation, using the following guidelines:

- The board expects principals and supervisors to exert every effort to encourage staff members to develop their performance to an optimum degree.

- Performance appraisal will be continuous, and not limited to items and procedures set for formal evaluation.

- The evaluation process will make use of both self-evaluation and supervisory evaluation.

- The evaluation process will emphasize both the achievement of goals set mutually by the staff member and supervisor early in the school year and standardized objectives rating forms.

- The procedures will provide for the recognition of outstanding services and also will be used for sound decision making as well as for counseling and in-service training.

- When aspects of a staff member's performance are in need of improvement, the principal or supervisor will specifically identify those areas needing improvement and will develop a plan of assistance. Subsequent evaluations will address improvement and/or the need for further monitoring.

- To provide for objectivity and uniformity, observations and evaluations will be carried out in accordance with the guidelines set forth in administrative regulations which have been developed cooperatively by the administration and staff and reviewed and approved by the school board.

The Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard for this policy is Standard 3.

VI. REQUEST FOR REASSIGNMENT

REASSIGNMENT/TRANSFER CERTIFIED PERSONNEL (Board Policy GBEB)

Certified non-administrative personnel recommended for the following year may apply for transfer to a position in another school and may be given **priority** consideration over new candidates.

If a vacancy occurs in any one school, a teacher may request a transfer to that vacancy. A request for transfer shall be voluntary and shall not be perceived prejudicial in any way. The employee requesting the transfer shall complete the proper forms and confer with the receiving principal. If the receiving principal approves the employee request, the principal submits a recommendation to the Superintendent. If the transfer request is approved by the Superintendent, the request is presented to the Board of Trustees for board action on the reassignment.

The following criteria will be used in evaluating transfer requests:

1. Employee has been recommended for reemployment by the principal of the school to which he/she is currently assigned.
2. Employee makes written request on the approved form.
3. Transfer will not imperil the accredited status of the school.
4. Employees impacted by the Reduction in Force policy are not eligible for transfer.
5. Employees with a plan of improvement may be transferred only with the approval of the Superintendent.

All transfers shall be completed prior to the **beginning of the** school year when possible. After the beginning of the school year, any request is subject to the Superintendent's approval with special regard to the welfare of the students and the district. Transfers will require the approval of the Principals of impacted schools.

VII. GRIEVANCE PROCESS (Board Policy GAE-P)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this grievance procedure is to provide the licensed employee an equitable solution to a grievance filed in connection with a personnel appraisal.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply in this grievance procedure:

1. "Personnel appraisal" refers to the system of annual performance evaluation of all licensed staff, as is mandated by state law. This grievance procedure has been approved by the school board for use in this district as part of its "Personnel Appraisal System."
2. A "grievance" is a complaint by an individual based upon an alleged violation of his or her rights under state or federal law or board policy related to the personnel appraisal process for that individual.
3. A "grievant" is a person or persons making the complaint.
4. The term "days" shall mean working school days and shall exclude weekends, holidays, and vacation days.

PROCEDURE FOR PROCESSING GRIEVANCES

Grievances shall be processed in accordance with the following procedure:

Level One

1. All grievances, as defined above, must be presented orally to the principal of the grievant within five (5) days of the act or omission complained of, and the principal and grievant will attempt to resolve the matter informally.
2. If the grievant is not satisfied with the action taken or the explanation given by his principal the grievant shall, within five (5) days after meeting with his principal, file a written statement with his principal setting forth in detail how the grievant claims to have been discriminated against. This written statement shall contain, in addition to the above, the time, place, and nature of the alleged act or omission and the state or federal law or board policy violated. The statement must be signed by the grievant.
3. In the event the grievant does not submit to his principal a written statement as required, his failure to do so shall be deemed as an acceptance of the informal decision rendered by his principal.
4. Within five (5) days after receiving the grievant' s signed statement the principal shall send to the superintendent a copy of the grievant 'statement along with a statement from the principal setting forth his response to the grievant and/or his decisions, as is applicable. At the same time, the principal shall also provide a copy of his written statement to the grievant.

Level Two

1. Upon receipt by the superintendent of the written notice that the grievant intends to appeal the decision of his principal, the superintendent shall notify the grievant in writing within five (5) days and shall advise the grievant of the date, time, and place upon which the matter will be considered by the superintendent. The superintendent shall schedule a hearing on the matter no later than ten (10) days.
2. The written statement submitted by the grievant to his principal in Level One shall form the basis of the grievance before the superintendent. The grievant shall submit in writing all additional information on his behalf which he desires to the superintendent not later than five (5) days prior to the date upon which the matter is scheduled for hearing by the superintendent.
3. In the event the grievant does not personally attend the hearing scheduled by the superintendent, his failure to attend shall be deemed as an acceptance of the written decision rendered by his principal at LEVEL ONE.
4. The superintendent shall render a written decision to the grievant within five (5) days of the date upon which the matter was heard.

Level Three

1. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant at LEVEL TWO, or if the superintendent does not render a decision within five (5) days, the grievant may file the grievance with the secretary of the school board.
2. If the grievance is not filed with the secretary of the school board within five (5) days of the hearing at LEVEL TWO, the grievance shall be considered resolved.
3. Within five (5) days after receipt of the grievance, the board secretary, in concert with the board President and superintendent, shall schedule a hearing before the school board on the grievance.
4. The board shall render its decision within seven (7) days of the hearing.

VIII. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

RESIGNATIONS

Staff members who wish to resign should notify their Administrator or the Human Resources Office, in writing, as soon as possible. Resignations become effective on the date on the date of board approval. Resignations should be submitted to the Superintendent as soon as possible. A licensed employee is not released from their contract until the Columbus Municipal School District Board of Trustees agrees to the contract release and determines a suitable replacement is available. The Board of Trustees, through authority bested in the Superintendent may seeks Educator Licensure revocation for persons who fail to follow this process.

DISMISSAL

Procedures for the dismissal of certified employees are governed by state law, all actions of the school district and the board, as well as, the rights and privileges or employees, are clearly identified in the statutes and the Columbus Municipal School District Board **Policy.**

REDUCTION IN PROFESSIONAL STAFF (POLICY GBKA)

The Board of Trustees has the responsibility for providing and maintaining quality schools within the district. In order to carry out its responsibility, the board may; (1) abolish or combine job positions, (2) reduce the length of the work year with a concomitant reduction in salary (the same to be in no event less than 187 days per contract year), (3) reduce administrative supplements, and (4) reduce the number of employees. Initially, staff reduction will be accomplished by attrition.

When reducing the number of licensed employees, the board will consider the following reasons for such reduction in force:

(a) Enrollment declines,
(b) Financial decline/education,
(c) Education program(s) elimination, and
(d) Priority needs for human, material, and financial resources.

The primary objective of the board when reducing the work force will be the maintenance of a fair and balanced educational program consistent with the needs of the students and the functions and responsibilities of the school district. When deciding reduction in force personnel decisions, the board may consider any or all the following factors, not necessarily in the order listed:

(a) Length of service within the district,
(b) Criticality of the position to the mission, goals, and objectives of the school district,
(c) Subject area(s) and advanced degrees by certification,
(d) Experience, professional training, and work assignments,
(e) Quality of performance including the proven ability to accomplish the educational mission of the school district,
(f) Executive ability,
(g) Employee attendance and discipline history, and

(h) Skills and licensure in the area(s) where the district has instructional and/or supervisory needs.

CLASSIFIED STAFF PERSONNEL

Non-instructional personnel are “at-will” employees where duties do not require a certificate (or license) issued by the State Department of Education. Classified employees have no property rights in their employment, which may be terminated without notice at any time by either the employee or the employer.

The superintendent has the power, authority, and duty to make assignments to the various schools in the district of all non-instructional and non-licensed employees, as provided in Section 37-9-17, and to make reassignments of such employees from time to time. ’37-9-14(2)(s).

The superintendent has the power, authority, and duty to employ and dismiss non-instructional and non-licensed employees as provided by law. 37-9-14(2)(y)

****Please sign and return to your Building Administrator/Supervisor****

EMPLOYEE COMPLIANCE AGREEMENT – HANDBOOK

I, _____, have received and read the Columbus Municipal School District's Certified and Classified Employee Handbook. I agree to comply with the guidelines set forth in this handbook. If I have any questions regarding the guidelines set forth, I understand that I may contact the Columbus Municipal School District's Office of Human Resources.

_____
Employee's Signature

_____
Date

"Student Centered; Excellence Driven"

****Please sign and return to your Building Administrator/Supervisor****

EMPLOYEE COMPLIANCE AGREEMENT – HANDBOOK

I, _____, have viewed and read the Columbus Municipal School District's Certified and Classified Employee Handbook online. I am aware that I can view the handbook at any time by going on the districts website and clicking on "For Employees" then "Staff Handbook". I agree to comply with the guidelines set forth in this handbook. If I have any questions regarding the guidelines set forth, I understand that I may contact the Columbus Municipal School District's Office of Human Resources.

_____
Employee's Signature

_____
Date