

# Habersham County Schools



# Personnel Handbook

## Introduction

Welcome to Habersham County Schools. The Habersham County School System is committed to "Quality Public Education", and this handbook is issued to assist you in performing your duties more efficiently as we strive for "Excellence in Education." The material is taken from the policies and procedures manual of the Habersham County Board of Education, the State Board of Education, and Georgia Law.

It is the responsibility of all staff members to familiarize themselves with the Personnel Handbook and all system policies.

## Administrative Discretion

It is at the discretion of the administration to revise any rule, regulation, or consequence in this handbook without prior notification. Every possible instance requiring administrative action cannot be covered in this handbook. However, employees will be held accountable for any unwritten rule or regulation that might impede the educational process of Habersham County School System.

## Board of Education

The Habersham County Board of Education holds its regularly scheduled meetings on the second Monday of each month. Meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. and are held at the Habersham County Board of Education Administrative offices at 132 Stanford Mill Road.

|                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Dr. Robert Barron     | Chairman      |
| Miss. Pat Taylor      | Vice-Chairman |
| Mr. Rick Williams     | Board Member  |
| Mr. Russ Nelson       | Board Member  |
| Mr. Doug Westmoreland | Board Member  |

# Policy Concerning Discrimination

The Habersham County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or sex in its employment practices, student programs, and dealings with the public.

## Discrimination

The Habersham County Board of Education, recognizing that certain inherent rights, privileges, and immunities accompany the educational process, declares its abhorrence of discrimination in any and all forms including race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability. The Board, in fulfilling its responsibilities to the educational process, obligates itself to and guarantees that:

- 1) It shall make every reasonable effort to protect its students, teachers, and employees from exposure to conditions which are embarrassing or disparaging;
- 2) It shall make every effort to insure that no student, teacher, or employee be excluded from participation in or denied the benefits of any course, program, or activity because of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age, or disability; and,
- 3) It shall prohibit its students, teachers, and employees from appearing in, accepting invitations to, or participating in contests between an institution which practices discrimination.

## Central Office Administration and Staff

Matthew Cooper, Superintendent-----706-754-2118  
Melinda Jenkins, Superintendent's Administrative Assistant

Angela Robinson, Personnel Director-----706-754-2110  
Deborah Trotman, Personnel Administrative Assistant

Rhonda Andrews, Director of Elementary Schools-----706-754-2110  
Pam Dalton, Director of Secondary Schools  
Gail Gordon, Administrative Assistant to Curriculum

Renee York, Federal Programs Director-----706-778-2020

Martha Cantrell, Gifted Program Coordinator-----706-754-2118

Jill Maxwell, Special Education Director-----706-754-2110

Diane Lent, Assistant Special Education Director

Stephen Dalin, Special Education Student Services Coordinator

Delores Goss, Special Education Administrative Assistant

Jenny Martin, Special Education Administrative Assistant

Staci Newsome, Chief Financial Officer-----706-754-2110

Holly Roberts, Finance and Accounting Specialist-----706-754-2110

Lisa Harris, Purchasing and Accounts Payable Specialist

Wanda Gosnell, Payroll and Benefits Specialist-----706-754-2110

Barb Cely, Payroll and Benefits Specialist

Andrea Thomas, Nutrition Director-----706-754-2110

Damen Ledford, System Wide Manager

Sylvia Gerrin, Nutrition Administrative Assistant

Tricia Smith, Free and Reduced Clerk

Denise Gunn, Maintenance Director-----706-778-7579

Dennis Unbehant, Technology Director-----706-778-2020

Tim Dockery, Transportation Director-----706-754-2118

Stephanie Walker, Transportation Coordinator

Kathy Cook, Transportation Administrative Assistant

Kathleen Clement, Social Worker-----706-754-4461

Michelle Blackburn, Social Worker

## Schools/Facilities

Habersham Board of Education  
132 Stanford Mill Road  
Clarkesville, Ga. 30523

Phone: 706-754-2118  
Fax: 706-754-3185

Baldwin Elementary School  
894 Willingham Avenue  
Baldwin, Ga. 30511

Phone: 706-778-6435  
Fax: 706-776-5946

Clarkesville Elementary School  
6539 Hwy 115 West  
Clarkesville, Ga. 30523

Phone: 706-754-4224  
Fax: 706-754-5964

Cornelia Elementary School  
375 Old Cleveland Rd.  
Cornelia, Ga. 30531

Phone: 706-778-6526  
Fax: 706-776-7828

Demorest Elementary School  
3116 Demorest Mt. Airy Hwy  
Demorest, Ga. 30535

Phone: 706-778-4126  
Fax: 706-776-6691

Fairview Elementary School  
2925 Cannon Bridge Rd  
Demorest, Ga. 30535

Phone: 706-778-2030  
Fax: 706-778-2033

Habersham Central High School  
2059 St. Hwy 197 S  
Mt. Airy, Ga. 30563

Phone: 706-778-7161  
Fax: 706-778-1258

Habersham Ninth Grade Academy  
171 Raider Circle  
Mt. Airy, Ga. 30563

Phone: 706-778-0830  
Fax: 706-778-0848

Habersham Success Academy  
171 Raider Circle  
Mt. Airy, Ga. 30563

Phone: 706-894-3056  
Fax: 706-778-0848

Hazel Grove Elementary School  
6390 Dicks Hill Parkway  
Mt. Airy, Ga. 30563  
Phone: 706-754-2942  
Fax: 706-754-6409

Hilliard A Wilbanks Middle School  
3115 Demorest Mt Airy  
Demorest, Ga. 30535  
Phone: 706-894-1341  
Fax: 706-894-1342

Level Grove Elementary School  
2525 Level Grove Road  
Cornelia, Ga. 30531  
Phone: 706-778-3087  
Fax: 706-778-3731

North Habersham Middle School  
1500 Wall Bridge Road  
Clarkesville, Ga. 30523  
Phone: 706-754-2915  
Fax: 706-754-8218

South Habersham Middle School  
237 Old Athens Hwy  
Cornelia, Ga. 30531  
Phone: 706-778-7121  
Fax: 706-778-2110

Woodville Elementary School  
911 Historic Old 441 Hwy  
Clarkesville, Ga. 30523  
Phone: 706-754-4225  
Fax: 706-754-1812

## Habersham County Schools Mission/Vision

As we serve our community, we strive for excellence in all things, and our mission is to create a World-Class education for all of our students so that they are ready for college or the workplace.



## **One Team, One Mission...Success for All Students!**

The Habersham County School System will provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained, and safe facilities with those conditions and support systems that ensure an optimal student learning experience. It will cooperate with the family, community, social services, business, and government entities as they work together to meet the needs of children and to plan, develop, and evaluate educational programs and services.

## **School Year**

The school year is determined according to the requirements and guidelines of the State Board of Education. All employees are to work as specified by the school calendar. In order to gain one year's work experience, certified employees must work for 120 days on contract during the school year; classified employees must work at least half of their position's full school year days.

## **School Day / Work Schedules**

All Certified staff is expected to work an 8 hour minimum day. The duty schedule for each individual school will be posted by the principal. Signin sheets will be provided in each school. The official starting time for the school day is the time at which teachers should be signed in and ready to assume their designated duty stations.

All classified employees are to work their position's set daily hours; limited to a 40 hour work week, unless prior approval is obtained in writing from the supervisor. If you work more than 40 hours in any week as reflected in your time records, you will be paid overtime at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times the hourly rate or you will be given compensatory time off at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours for each hour worked over 40. All overtime must be approved by the HR Department ahead of time.

Each employee will be given periodic breaks as well as a lunch or dinner break depending on your work hours. All employees are expected to remain on site during these breaks unless cleared by the supervisor. Prompt and regular attendance is expected of all employees. All employees should sign-in and sign-out each day. If an employee needs to leave the worksite during their shift, they are expected to sign-out and when they return they should sign back in. Absences should be reported to your supervisor as far in advance as possible, or in the case of an emergency, as soon as possible.

## Employee Leave Days and Absences

This policy shall apply to all certificated/classified employees of the Habersham County Board of Education. All employees are required to follow the work calendar established by the Board and may take leave from work only in accordance with this policy or other leave policies enacted by the Board. Unless otherwise provided by the Board, principals and other supervisors are not authorized to rearrange the work calendars of employees. Deductions in pay will be made for absences not covered by this policy.

As a general rule, the Board does not grant sabbatical leave or leaves of absence over extended periods of time. Special requests may be considered by the Board on a case-by-case basis.

Staff Development leave taken at the request of or on behalf of the school system shall not be counted against sick leave.



## Leave Days:

\*\* Earned / Allotted at 1.25 monthly.

\*\* Issued at the beginning of each month.

### Classified Employee

| Work Days       | Months | Sick Leave | Annual Leave            |
|-----------------|--------|------------|-------------------------|
| 180 / 182 / 184 | 9      | 11.25      | 0                       |
| 190 / 200       | 10     | 12.5       | 0                       |
| 209             | 11     | 13.75      | 0                       |
| 248 / 261       | 12     | 15         | 5 (Does not accumulate) |

### Certified Employee

| Work Days | Months | Sick Leave | Annual Leave |
|-----------|--------|------------|--------------|
| 190 / 200 | 10     | 12.5       | 0            |
| 209 / 218 | 11     | 13.75      | 0            |
| 228       | 12     | 15         | 0            |

### Personal Days:

Up to (3) of the sick leave days may be used as personal days.

### Accumulation / Transfers

\*\*Unused sick leave accumulates into the next school year.

\*\*Sick leave can accumulate to a maximum of (100) days.

\*\*No more than (45) leave days may be transferred from another system.

### **System Holidays:**

New Year's Day (1), Martin Luther King Day (1), Memorial Day (1), Independence Day (1), Labor Day (1), Thanksgiving Break (3), Christmas Break (4), Good Friday (1)

### Bereavement Leave for an Immediate Family Member:

When a death occurs in an employee's immediate family, all regular full time employees may take up to (3) days off with pay if the arrangements or funeral occur on a scheduled work day. The school system may require verification of the need for the leave. Immediate family in this case is defined for Bereavement Leave as; an employee's spouse, parents, stepparents, brother, sister, children, stepchildren, grandparents, father-in-law, mother-in-law, or grandchildren. All

Bereavement leave for the above stated purpose will not be charged to sick leave. If additional days are needed for the death of an immediate family member, this leave must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee and will be charged to the employee's sick leave.

#### Bereavement Leave For An Extended Family Member:

When a death occurs in an employee's extended family, all regular full time employees may take (1) day off with pay if arrangements or funeral occur on a scheduled work day. The school system may require verification of the need for the leave. Extended family in this case is defined as: Brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, or son-in-law. If additional days are requested for the above extended family deaths, this leave must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee and will be charged to the employee's sick leave.

All other extended family bereavement leave requests must be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee and will be charged to the employee's sick leave. Extended family in this case is defined as: Uncle, Aunt, Cousin, etc.

#### Observance of Religious Holidays

Employees may use personal leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. If an employee desires to take leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays in excess of the days allowed for personal leave, the employee may take unpaid leave for such purposes provided that such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

#### Jury and Witness Leave

Each person employed by the Board shall be allowed leave with pay for the purposes of serving as a juror in any court or when attending a judicial proceeding in response to a subpoena or other court order or process that requires the employee's attendance at the judicial proceeding. Jury and/or witness leave shall not be deducted from an individual's accumulated personal, professional or sick leave. No employee utilizing jury and witness leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute to serve during his or her absence for such leave. Employees who serve on juries or who are subpoenaed to attend a judicial proceeding must remit any jury/witness pay they receive to the Board of Education.

## Military Leave

All employees of the Board are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen days in any one federal fiscal year for the purpose of complying with ordered military leave duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the militia or reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia. Employees also are entitled to leave not exceeding thirty days in any one federal fiscal year if ordered to duty as a result of the declaration of any emergency by the governor or the appropriate officials of the United States armed forces. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the Superintendent or designee annually and shall cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of the Board of Education.

## Accrual of Sick Leave and Absence for Medical and Related Reasons

Sick leave provided under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness in the employee's immediate family. Maternity leave will be granted in accordance with Georgia law on the same basis as leave for any other illness.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. In the event that sick leave is used to care for a member of the immediate family, the Superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member.

For the purposes of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, child, parent, sister, brother, in-law equivalents of the same, grandparent, grandchild, or other relatives living in the household, unless an exception is granted by the Superintendent or designee.

For sick leave that extends beyond 10 days, Family Medical Leave (FMLA) paperwork must be submitted to the HR Department.

## Family Medical Leave

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- \*For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- \*To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- \*To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- \*For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

## **SICK LEAVE BANK**

A sick leave bank shall be established and maintained from participating employees' voluntary contributions of accumulated sick leave. The bank shall be developed consistent with the requirements of state law and pursuant to guidelines and procedures developed by the Superintendent and modified from time to time by the sick leave bank committee, as approved by the Superintendent. All participating employees shall make equal contributions to the sick leave bank and all decisions of the sick leave bank committee shall be final and shall not be subject to appeal to the Board of Education.

## **Worker's Compensation**

The Habersham County School System provides worker's compensation for all employees. Any employee who is injured while at work should report immediately to his supervisor, principal, superintendent, or to the office. Medical attention will then be furnished in accordance with provisions of the Worker's Compensation Law. The Workers' compensation law provides you, as a worker in the State of Georgia with certain rights and responsibilities should you be injured on the job. The Workers' Compensation provides a full realm of insurance benefits. Information is posted at all facilities regarding procedures to be followed in the event you have a workers compensation injury.

## Emergency Closing of Schools

Under emergency conditions created by snow storms, severe weather, or other conditions, it sometimes becomes necessary to close the schools. The decision to cancel classes is made by the Superintendent or an official designated to act for him. The decision will be made by 6:00 a.m. if at all possible. When schools must be closed, local radio stations and television stations will be notified. Each school and facility maintains an emergency notification system to assist in notifying staff of school closings.

## Professional Attire

All staff members shall dress in a professional manner and in such a way as to be a role model for students. Shorts, jeans and jogging suits are not appropriate professional attire. However, there are times when school or classroom activities require more casual attire. In these cases, and when approved by the appropriate supervisor, casual wear is acceptable.

## Assessment of Performance

Assessment of performance will be completed for every staff member during the school year. Evaluation procedures will follow mandates as out-lined in state law. In-service will be provided early in the school year concerning procedures to be followed in the professional evaluation process.

## Board Policies

Policies adopted by the State Board of Education and the Habersham County Board of Education specify the rules and regulations that our schools operate under. A copy of the Board policies may be found on the system website under Board of Education: [www.habershamschools.com](http://www.habershamschools.com). All employees should familiarize themselves with all policies and make sure they are complying with them. Questions regarding the policies are to be addressed to your principal, assistant principal, or mentor. Employees who violate Board policy may be subject to reprimand and/or dismissal.

## Building Security

The safety of our students and staff members is always important. Each school has specific procedures for making sure their building is secure during the day and after hours. Make sure that you are familiar with these procedures and follow them at all times. It is your responsibility to keep track of any keys that are issued to you. Notify your principal/supervisor immediately if you discover a key missing. Each employee is issued an ID badge upon employment. It is a requirement by the Board of Education that the name tag be worn at all times while on campus. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the badge is not lost or stolen. Replacement badges may be obtained by contacting your principal. If a replacement badge is needed there will be a \$5.00 fee.

## CDL

All vehicle operators covered by the commercial driver's licensing laws must have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and must successfully complete the training course prescribed by the Habersham County School System. Certain other specialized positions may require licensing.

## Cellular Phones

Cell phones should be limited. Personal phone calls and business calls should be conducted outside the work day whenever possible and not during the instructional time.

## Child Abuse/Neglect-Mandated Reporting

The Habersham County School System supports the legal mandate O.C.G.A 19-7-5 for professionals to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. As a mandated reporter, you must notify the school counselor or administrator of any suspected child abuse/neglect immediately upon learning about the suspected abuse/neglect. The school counselor/administrator is then responsible to report the abuse to the local Department of Family and Children Services and/or local Law Enforcement. School

staff that make the report to the school counselor/administrator is deemed to have fully complied with the law. Any person or official required by law to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willingly fails to do so will be guilty of a misdemeanor.

## LEGAL DEFINITIONS

- "Abused" means subjected to child abuse.
- "Child" means any person under 18 years of age.
- "Child abuse" means:
  - Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker thereof by other than accidental means; provided, however, physical forms of discipline may be used as long as there is no physical injury to the child;
  - Neglect or exploitation of a child by parent or caretaker thereof;
  - Sexual abuse of a child; or
  - Sexual exploitation of a child.
- "Sexual Exploitation" means conduct by a child's parent or caretaker who allows, permits, encourages, or requires that child to engage in:
  - Prostitution, as defined in Code Section 16-6-9.
  - Sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual or print medium depicting such conduct, as defined in Code Section 16-12-100.

Each year the Habersham County School System will provide child abuse/mandated reporter training that includes: Georgia law regarding mandated reporting, school protocol for reporting suspected child abuse/neglect, indicators of abuse, and types of disclosures.

## CODE OF ETHICS FOR CERTIFIED EMPLOYEES

All personnel who hold a certificate by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission are held to a high standard of conduct as delineated in the Code of Ethics. It is the responsibility of every employee to become familiar with the Code of Ethics and to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Copies of the Code of Ethics will be posted on the website. For additional information, please refer to the Georgia Professional Standards website, [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) under ethics.

All personnel are required to complete the compliance director training at the following training module website:

[www.ComplianceDirector.org](http://www.ComplianceDirector.org)

**Step One:** Click on the State in which you work (GEORGIA)

**Step Two:** Click on the module you have been requested to take

**\*\*Standard modules**

- 1) Bloodborne Pathogens
- 2) Code of Ethics
- 3) Ethical Use of Social Media
- 4) FERPA
- 5) Mandated Reporting
- 6) Parental Rights
- 7) Sexual Misconduct
- 8) Sexual Harassment
- 9) Suicide Prevention

**\*\*Custom Modules (Click on Habersham County)**

- 1) Complaint Procedures
- 2) Restraint and Seclusion

**Step Three:**

**\*\*Username:** Habersham County

**\*\*Password:** desk

**Step Four:** Complete the training and assessment requested.

(Modules are usually about 20 minutes long.)

**Step Five:** When you have successfully completed a module, it will ask you to select your system's name and then login again. You will use the same username and password that was used to access the module(s) which will allow you to successfully register, thus creating a legal record that you have taken the training. You will also have the option to receive a confirmation email.

## Communication

Email has increased our ability to communicate more quickly and with more individuals and groups; however, even your email is subject to Georgia's Open Records Law and can be requested at any time. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance. E-mail communication must not include specific student information. Refer to FERPA for additional details.

Do not write anything you don't want to be read by the general public.



## Complaints and Grievances

It is the purpose of this policy to implement the provisions of the Act of the General Assembly of 1992, O.C.G.A. 20-2-989.5 et seq. In accordance with the foregoing, it is the policy of the Board of Education that certified personnel shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible. The Board of Education encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of congeniality where possible. This policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed, or where, for any other reason, the certificated employee desires to pursue this procedure.

## Confidentiality

As a school employee, you will have access to a significant amount of information about your students and their families. Most of this information is and should be considered confidential. By law, you are required to maintain confidentiality of student records and should be cautious when sharing any information. Unless a colleague is working with a student and has a specific need to know, it is best to refrain from casual sharing of student information. Under no circumstances should you share student information with parents of other students. Confidentiality also extends to conversations in the community.

All records are to be maintained in a safe, secure location. Your principal will notify you where specific types of records are to be kept in your school. Copies may not be made without the explicit permission of your principal.

## Criminal Records Check

A criminal record check will be conducted prior to employment on every person who is employed by the Board of Education for the first time to fill either a full-time or part-time certified or classified position with this School District. For initial hiring purposes, the employee either shall be fingerprinted or shall provide a signed and notarized consent on a form designated by the School District, including the employee's full name, address, social security number and date of birth, based upon the requirement of state law or applicable rule or regulation. A clearance certificate verifying a satisfactory criminal background

check may be required based on the requirements of state law and rules of the Professional Standards Commission.

Subsequent criminal record checks will be conducted on all personnel in accordance with state laws, state board rules, and rules of the Professional Standards Commission. All certified personnel whose employment is continued with this School District shall have a criminal record check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission. All classified employees whose employment is continued with this School District shall have subsequent criminal record checks on a periodic basis, not to exceed every five years, using procedures and schedules to be determined by the Superintendent or designee.

Criminal record check information shall be used by the school district and its officials and employees only for the purpose of determining whether to grant regular employment, and in any administrative or judicial proceeding calling such employment into question. Such information shall be stored, restricted, and disposed of in such manner as may be required by federal and state authorities. A breach of confidentiality or the inappropriate use of criminal background check information may constitute a workplace violation and may be grounds for disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination and/or reporting to the Professional Standards Commission.

The Superintendent shall establish such procedures, fees and regulations needed to administer this policy.

## Drug-Free Work Force

The Board of Education declares that the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of controlled substances, marijuana and other dangerous drugs in an unlawful manner or being at work under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, marijuana or other dangerous drugs is a serious threat to the public health, safety and welfare. With this in mind, the Board declares that its work force must be absolutely free of any person who would knowingly manufacture, distribute, sell or possess a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug in an unlawful manner. This prohibition specifically includes, but is not limited to, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol in the employee's workplace. This prohibition also includes,

but is not limited to, an employee being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while on duty.

Any employee who is convicted for the first time, under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be subject to disciplinary action. At a minimum, such an employee shall be suspended for a period of not less than two months and shall be required to complete, at his or her own expense, a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the board. At a maximum, such an employee may be terminated from his employment with the school system. Any employee who is convicted for a second or subsequent time under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be terminated from his or her employment and shall be ineligible for employment for a period of five years from the most recent date of conviction.

If, prior to an arrest for an offense involving a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug, an employee notifies the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee that the employee illegally uses a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug and is receiving or agrees to receive treatment under a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the Board, the employee shall be entitled to maintain his or her employment for up to one year as long as the employee follows the treatment plan. During this period, the employee shall not be separated from employment solely on the basis of the employee's drug dependence, but the employee's work activities may be restructured if practicable to protect persons or property. No statement made by an employee to the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee in order to comply with this code section shall be admissible in any civil, administrative or criminal proceeding as evidence against the public employee. The rights granted by this policy shall be available to an employee only once during a five year period and are intended to be and shall be interpreted as being the same as those minimum rights granted pursuant to the Georgia Drug-Free Work Force Act and any subsequent amendments thereof.

As a condition of employment, each employee must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify the Board within five days after any arrest on any drug-

related criminal charge and further notify the Board within five days of any conviction of a drug-related offense.

A copy of this policy shall be disseminated to all employees either directly or through employee handbooks.

The Board of Education shall not consider for employment any applicant who has been convicted for the first time of any drug offense as described above for a three month period from the date of conviction nor shall the Board of Education consider any applicant for employment who has been convicted for the second time of any drug offense as described above for a five year period from the most recent date of conviction.

For purposes of this policy, "conviction" refers to any final conviction in a court of competent jurisdiction, specifically including acceptance of a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or any plea entered under the First Offenders Act of Georgia or any comparable state or federal legislation.

No certified employee or employee with a contract for a definite term shall be subject to suspension or termination pursuant to this policy except in compliance with the provisions of the Fair Dismissal Act of Georgia, Official Code of Georgia Annotated §§ 20-2-940 through 947. This policy is not intended and shall not be interpreted as prohibiting the school system from taking appropriate disciplinary action against any employee where there exists evidence that an employee uses, distributes or sells illegal drugs even though the employee has not been convicted of any criminal offense or where there exists evidence that an employee is under the influence of alcohol while on duty, except that the school system may not use the statement of any employee to the Superintendent requesting treatment as described in this policy.

The school district shall provide such staff development as required by state or federal law to inform employees of the dangers of drug abuse, the availability of employee assistance and drug counseling and treatment and the terms of this policy.

## **Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing**

The Board of Education is dedicated to providing safe and efficient transportation for students transported on school buses. The Board recognizes that safe student

transportation depends on unimpaired judgment, physical dexterity, reflex action, and unimpaired senses of sight and hearing, of employees in safety-sensitive functions. The goal of this Board is to provide our employees and students with an environment that promotes health and safety.

In order to meet this goal, the Board hereby endorses the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration's anti-alcohol and controlled substances policies, regulations and procedures for transportation workplace drug and alcohol testing programs. The Board shall require testing for alcohol and controlled substances by employees engaged in safety sensitive functions in accordance with federal and state law, which shall include pre-employment, post-accident, random, follow-up and reasonable suspicion testing.

Operating a school bus or other commercial vehicle requires a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and is considered a safety-sensitive function. Individuals who are employed by the Board of Education to operate safety-sensitive vehicles include, but are not limited to: mechanics, school bus drivers, substitute school bus drivers, maintenance workers, coaches, teachers, and administrators.

Individuals who have positive controlled substance test results shall be terminated, as shall individuals whose test results reveal blood alcohol concentrations 0.04 and above and individuals who refuse to submit to a required alcohol or controlled substance test. Individuals whose tests results reveal blood alcohol concentrations of at least 0.02, but less than 0.04, and individuals who engage in other conduct prohibited by the regulations may, in the Board of Education's discretion, be terminated.

Drivers must inform their immediate supervisor of any therapeutic drug use, whether by prescription or "over the counter", and must provide a statement from their treating physician that the substance does not adversely affect the driver's ability to operate the bus.

## Use of Tobacco Products

At no time should any employee of the Habersham County School System use any tobacco product, e-cigarettes, or any similar vaping-type items in the presence or view of students during the employee's regular work hours or during school-sponsored activities.

## Public Records

Parents and the community maintain the right to view and inspect many of the documents that are produced by educators. Documents that must be made available upon request by a community member, agency, or the media are considered public records. While there are certain restrictions on what the general public has access to, parents have the right to inspect any of their child's educational records. If such a request is made, your principal or the Central Office will make the records available as specified in the law.

Employees who receive requests for records are to notify their principal and are not to release information without the principal's guidance. That being said, it is important for employees to be aware that others may potentially view anything that is written. Employees have the responsibility to ensure that anything they write is objective and is not inflammatory or based on rumor. Personal business should not be conducted at school or through the system's email as such emails may be subject to disclosure. At the very least such email may be interpreted as misuse of time and public equipment.

## Student Data Privacy Procedures

Effective July 1, 2016, Georgia enacted the Student Data Privacy, Accessibility, and Transparency Act (OCGA 20-2-660). The purpose of the Act is to provide parents and students with greater assurance that their educational records will be kept private. The Act directs school systems to establish procedures and notifications related to student data privacy.

To ensure compliance with all federal, state, and district privacy laws and regulations, any online or non-district provided information system that may contain student personal identifiable information, including free web based

websites, educational applications, learning management systems, etc., must be verified for privacy law compliance by the Chief District Data Privacy Officer, Calter Moore (cmoore@habershamschools.com), before uploading or entering any student personal identifiable information into the online system.

To request verification of an educational resource, please complete the Data Privacy Review form on the Technology department website located on habershamschools.com, follow the links Departments, Technology, Links & Tech Tips, and click the link [Data Privacy Review Form](#).

## Employee Liability for Computer Damage

Recognizing the responsibility of our school system to be good stewards of taxpayer-provided resources, the Habersham County School System will require employees to pay for damages or expenses related to equipment damage due to the following types of incidences:

1. Willful misuse or neglect, resulting in damage to school district equipment issued to employees.
2. Negligence regarding the spilling of liquids or food onto or into computers.
3. Dropping of computers and the resulting damages by the employee or students and/or others under supervision or direction of the employee.
4. Melting of computer parts due to external heat sources such as candles (sources of flames), stoves, hair dryers, or any other heat producing external environments, use of devices on surfaces that block air ventilation vents such as padded fabric surfaces.
5. Storage or use of devices in extreme cold or moisture that result in damage.
6. Theft or damage of the computer equipment while in the employee's possession at home, in transit, or while in the employee's possession away from employee's assigned campus or office.
7. Theft or damage of issued laptops or mobile devices in any location, on campus or off campus, due to negligent storage of the issued device.

All employees are required to use a carrying case when transporting mobile devices. The district provides a carrying case and employees are responsible

for replacing the carrying case if it is lost or damaged.

Charges for damaged equipment due to neglect or improper care will be assessed by the Technology Department. Employee may be responsible for paying for the entire repair or replacement cost. The Technology Department may choose to repair or replace the damaged device depending on availability and cost effectiveness.

Employees taking charge of school-system equipment agree to the responsible use and care of computer equipment as listed above by accepting issued computer equipment. Employees who do not wish responsibility for computer equipment should turn in computer equipment to the Technology Department or issuer.

All issued Habersham County School System equipment remains the property of Habersham County Schools. The Habersham County School System reserves the right to require employee turn in of any issued equipment at any time if needed.

## FRAUD PREVENTION (BOE Policy DIE)

All employees, board members, consultants, vendors, contractors and other parties maintaining a business relationship with the District shall act with integrity and due diligence in matters involving District fiscal resources.

### **Definition**

"Fraud" refers to intentionally misrepresenting, concealing, or misusing information in an attempt to commit fiscal wrongdoing.

Fraudulent actions include, but are not limited to:

- Behaving in a dishonest or false manner in relation to District assets, including theft of funds, securities, supplies, or other District properties.
- Forging or altering financial documents or accounts illegally or without proper authorization.
- Improper handling or reporting of financial transactions.
- Personally profiting as a result of insider knowledge.
- Disregarding confidentiality safeguards concerning financial information.
- Violating Board conflict of interest policies.



- Mishandling financial records or District assets (destroying, removing or misusing).

### **Employee Responsibilities**

Employees who suspect that financial fraud, impropriety or irregularity has occurred should report their concerns to the superintendent or his/her designee. Investigations shall be conducted in coordination with legal counsel and/or other internal or external departments or agencies as appropriate.

## **INVENTORY (BOE Policy DIC)**

School districts are required by law to maintain a proper accounting of furniture, equipment, technology, books, and various other purchases made with public monies. In the event you are requested to complete an inventory by a principal or director, please do so quickly and with as much accuracy as possible.

## **FIELD TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS (BOE Policy IFCB)**

Field trips are school-sponsored, off-campus student learning activities which supplement, extend, or enrich the regular instructional program in a manner not possible within the school setting.

Extracurricular trips are trips related to school-sponsored extracurricular activities sanctioned by the Habersham County Board of Education.

### **Procedures and Guidelines for Conducting, Field Trips and Extracurricular Activity Trips**

- Trips are to be planned to ensure the safety of students, and to keep the risk of liability at a minimum. Teachers considering field trips must discuss the trip with a building administrator prior to planning trip.
- Field trips made during the school day must be instructional in nature and have sufficient educational potential to justify the time taken from the classroom instructional program.

- Trips which are strictly recreational in nature are not authorized during the regular student/teacher day.
- Members of the school staff officially supervising and chaperoning students on trips shall have complete knowledge concerning location of every student in the group at all times. "Complete knowledge" does permit entrusting the supervision of small groups of students to non-staff chaperones who have cleared background checks.
- All members of the Habersham County School System, including students, shall conduct themselves in an exemplary manner at all times.
- A minimum of one chaperone per 28 students is required for all trips. Teachers should consider the nature of the trip to determine if additional chaperones are needed. Elementary trips should have one chaperone per 25 students. Exceptions to the number of chaperones required must be approved by a building administrator.
- The class, group of students, or team shall depart for the return trip at the earliest practical time following the planned field trip experience, game, contest, or event. Students shall be checked against a master list prior to departure for the return trip. Should any student not be present, a sponsor or other school employee must remain behind until such student(s) have been located, and their safety and return assured.
- A travel list of students and names of chaperones by vehicle, and trip itinerary shall be available in the school office prior to departure. A master list of students and adults riding the bus, including emergency contacts, should be on each bus. Teachers must also take health forms and needed student medications. A teacher, administrator or school employee must be assigned to each bus. Parents are permitted to ride the bus on field trips if they are official chaperones for the trip.
- Should it become necessary for emergency help for any student, it will be the principal's responsibility or designee to authorize a teacher or chaperone to seek such help as needed.

### **C. Use of School Buses for Field Trips and Extracurricular Activities**

- Requests for field trips will be written and submitted to the School Administrator 10 days prior to the deadline for submission to the Transportation Director. **Trips must be submitted to the Transportation**

**Director at least 45 days prior to the date of the actual trip.**

- System will cover the cost of fuel and driver for two instructional field trips per grade level per school, one each semester to any location in Habersham County or any county adjoining Habersham County (White, Stephens, Rabun, Banks or Hall). **All cost for any trip outside of these locations will not be covered by system funds.** Trips must meet these requirements:
  - High School - Both trips must be based on college and career readiness
  - Middle School - One of the two trips must be based on college and career readiness
  - Elementary - 5<sup>th</sup> grade - One of the two trips must be based on college and career
  - Readiness. 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> trips approved at principal's discretion.
- Fine arts competitions, state recognized career and technical student organizations; academic competitions and athletic events are exempt from these limitations. Exceptions may also be considered for system level field trip opportunities, such as special education, gifted, and fine arts.
- A building administrator must approve all field trips.
- Additional trips may be requested, however, the school must reimburse the system for the cost of the driver and fuel. The Superintendent and Transportation Director must approve these additional trips. Prior approval is required.
- No trips shall be taken during the last two weeks of school.
- Schools should be able to confirm their trips no later than five days prior to the date of the trip. Schools must immediately inform the Transportation Director of any cancellations of trips.

## Payroll and Benefits

### Pay Schedule

Habersham County School District offers competitive employee salaries. Regular assessments of positions and pay practices are performed to ensure marketplace comparability and equality within the district. The Board of Education approves all certified and classified employee Salary Schedules annually as part of the fiscal year budget process. Pay day is the last business

day of each month. Exceptions may be granted for November and December based on available revenue. All new hire employees receive a Salary Sheet at their New Hire Orientation meeting. Every school system employee receives an updated salary sheet annually either in July, August, or September, as applicable. An Employee Work Calendar is created each fiscal year showing the first work day and the last work day for each position in the school system. Payroll calendars are also created each year detailing the pay period dates, the cutoff dates, and pay dates. Pay for employees who work a schedule based on the school year will be prorated over a 12 month period. Pay for employees who complete a time sheet is paid based on payroll cutoff dates.

### **Payroll Work Day/Work Week**

The work week for Habersham County Schools is defined as Sunday thru Saturday. The minimum work day for Teachers and other certified instructional staff is eight hours, and the minimum work week is 40 hours. Depending on the position, classified employees work a minimum of three hours a day and a maximum of 40 hours per week. Employees should check with their supervisor for their particular schedule.

### **Payroll Time Records**

Time records are legal documents and the basic source of information for payroll purposes; therefore, time worked must be reflected accurately. Falsification of time or unauthorized submission is a serious offense and may result in disciplinary action and/or termination. It is your responsibility to sign your time record to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. Any errors in your time record should be reported immediately to your Supervisor.

### **Payroll Direct Deposit**

All employees are required to participate in Direct Deposit for payroll checks. Direct Deposit will be available in your account by 9:00 a.m. on payday. Payroll checks can be viewed on the Employee Portal at: [www.habershamschools.com](http://www.habershamschools.com). Click "Employee Portal", click "Registration". Follow prompts provided. The Employee Portal also houses information for benefits, tax withholding, YTD information, and address information.

### **Payroll Deductions**

Payroll deductions include, but are not limited to, federal and state taxes required by law; retirement systems contributions; Social Security; and medical, dental and other deductions authorized by the employee.

### **Benefit Package**

Habersham County School District provides employees with a comprehensive benefits package. Employee benefits can be a very important part of the total employment package you receive - and may add an additional 30% or more of your salary to your total compensation from the district. Personnel must meet all eligibility requirements to receive benefits. As a school district, several of the benefits we offer are developed and administered by the State of Georgia and rules are set in state law. The State Health Benefit Plan, managed by the Georgia Department of Community Health, is the health insurance coverage option for all eligible certified and classified employees of the school system. Our voluntary employee benefit package for all active, eligible employees is comprised of: Short Term Disability, Long Term Disability, Voluntary Group Term Life Insurance, Permanent Life Insurance, Vision Insurance, Cancer & Critical Illness Insurance, Flexible Spending Accounts, and Dental Insurance. We are committed to continually reviewing and evaluating each type of insurance to ensure that our employees have the best coverage available at the lowest cost for themselves and their families. Employee Benefits Information can be accessed on the school system website - "Employee Benefits" link.

## **PURCHASING (BOE Policies DJE, DJED)**

The Habersham County Board of Education has the responsibility to assure that all purchases are made in the best interest of the school system both in the quality and usefulness of the purchases and meeting program goals. The Board is also responsible for making purchases in line with state guidelines and requirements. Purchases that are billed to the Board of Education must be made through the use of the requisition and purchase order process in the financial package software.

## **TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT**

Personal expenses associated with Habersham County Schools approved travel will be reimbursed based on current Statewide Travel Policy available from the State Accounting Office, State of Georgia. Employee travel is paid by direct deposit to same account on file for payroll direct deposit.

## **CASH/MONEY COLLECTING (BOE Policies DK, DL)**

All funds raised by classes, clubs, and other organizations shall be turned in to the school office for daily deposit. The staff sponsor acts as the treasurer for such funds and shall be responsible for receipt and handling of such funds. Any purchases made from such activity funds, for any purpose, must be approved by the principal. All financial accounting shall be done in accordance with the school financial accounting handbook.

## **SOLICITATION ON SCHOOL PROPERTY (BOE Policy DJEIA-R)**

No person, firm, corporation or business can solicit money from or sell, trade or barter merchandise or products of any kind to students, employees and school clubs or organizations without the approval of the superintendent and respective school principal.

## **USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES (BOE POLICY KG)**

The Habersham County Board of Education will permit its school facilities to be used by associations or organizations located within the county for appropriate activities which do not interfere with any activity of the school system. Terms and conditions detailed in BOE policy KG and "Use of School Facilities Applicant Packet" available on the school district website.

