

Vidalia City Schools

Established 1906



2018/19 Personnel Handbook

J. Garrett Wilcox, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Vidalia City Board of Education:

Bruce Asberry, Chair
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Vidalia City Board of Education
301 Adams Street
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(912) 537-3088 office / (912) 538-0938 fax

Welcome!

On the behalf of the Vidalia City School Board members and central office staff we welcome you to our school system.

Our desire is that you continue to grow in knowledge and interpersonal skills in order to effectively help your students achieve at maximum levels. We appreciate all that you do to enhance learning for our students. The personnel handbook has been assembled to provide you a guide to the code of ethics, board policies and practices as it relates to your employment expectations.

We commit to provide you focused opportunities to develop your professional growth which will benefit you as well as all of the students in the Vidalia City School System.

Sincerely,

J. Garrett Wilcox, Ed. D.
Superintendent

FOREWORD

The purpose of this handbook is to set forth on a limited basis procedures and rules of the Vidalia City Board of Education.

It will be necessary to revise the procedures from time to time so as to include any changes, which might affect the operation of the schools in the city.

VIDALIA BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY MANUAL

The Vidalia City School District operates according to policies established by the Vidalia City Board of Education. The Board, which represents both the State and local community, develops the policies after careful deliberation, and the school administration implements them through specific rules and regulations. The Board then appraises the effects of its policies and makes revisions as necessary. A copy of the Vidalia City Board of Education Policy Manual can be viewed on the following web site: <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Index.aspx?S=4167>

NON-DISCRIMINATION: TITLE IX, SECTION 504, and AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Vidalia City Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, marital status, age, native language, religion, creed, or handicap/disability in educational programs and activities, admissions to facilities, or in employment practices. You may contact the Central Office, 301 Adams Street 30474. The phone number is (912) 537-3088. Any employee, student, or parent can submit a complaint regarding equal opportunity to the Superintendent. If the employee is dissatisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Superintendent, she/he can then have the complaint referred to the Board of Education. For details regarding the grievance procedure related to equal opportunity, refer to the Board Policy Manual, Administrative Regulation, GAAA.

COMPLIANCE WITH FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) sets minimum wage, overtime pay, equal pay, record keeping, and child labor standards for employees who are covered by the act and are not exempt from specific provisions. Vidalia City School System employees who are nonexempt from overtime and minimum wage requirements include most non-certified staff members. All certificated positions and some non-certificated positions are exempt from overtime requirements.

Non-exempt employees are not required to work beyond the 40-hour workweek, and will not be compensated for remaining at work beyond the 40-hour workweek. All over time must be approved in writing by the superintendent in advance.

Vidalia City Schools Strategic Plan

Vision: Our children will become productive leaders in a global society.

Mission: To prepare all students to be college or career ready.

Strategic Initiatives:

- I. Student Achievement
 - a. Graduate all students from high school
 - b. Provide diverse curriculum that exceeds state and national standards
 - c. Equip students to be successful after high school in academic and career pursuits.
- II. Quality Learning Environment
 - a. Provide a safe environment
 - b. Recruit and maintain a qualified, compassionate, and diverse staff
 - c. Effectively evaluate and train staff
- III. Engagement
 - a. Promote student and staff achievement
 - b. Promote engagement of parents and community
 - c. Promote positive public relations
- IV. Operational Effectiveness
 - a. Ensure effective and reliable technology
 - b. Ensure effective resource stewardship
 - c. Maintain clean, safe and structurally sound facilities and grounds.
 - d. Ensure student health, safety and well-being.

505-6-.01 THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS

<https://www.gapsc.com/Rules/Current/Ethics/505-6-.01.pdf>

- (1) Introduction. The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession.
- (2) Definitions
 - a) "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
 - b) "Child endangerment" occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.
 - c) "Educator" is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.
 - d) "Student" is any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual between and including the ages of 3 and 17 under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the year of graduation.
 - e) "Complaint" is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.
 - f) "Revocation" is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.
 - g) "Denial" is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.
 - h) "Suspension" is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
 - i) "Reprimand" admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
 - j) "Warning" warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
 - k) "Monitoring" is the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.
 - l) "No Probable Cause" is a determination by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary action.
- (3) Standards
 - a) Standard 1: **Legal Compliance** - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the Commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana

as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.

- b) **Standard 2: Conduct with Students** - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
 2. committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
 3. committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
 4. engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
 5. soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
 6. furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
 7. failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students who are under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).
- c) **Standard 3: Alcohol or Drugs** - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
 2. being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc).
- d) **Standard 4: Honesty** - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting or omitting:
1. professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
 2. information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
 3. information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
 4. reasons for absences or leaves;
 5. information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
 6. information submitted in the course of professional practice.

- e) Standard 5: **Public Funds and Property** - An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. misusing public or school-related funds;
 2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
 3. submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
 4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
 5. using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.
- f) Standard 6: **Remunerative Conduct** - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. soliciting students or parents of students, or school and/or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
 2. accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
 3. tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
 4. coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.
- g) Standard 7: **Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
 2. sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;
 3. violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
 4. violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.
- h) Standard 8: **Abandonment of Contract** - An educator shall fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or education agency for the duration of the contract. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the employer, and
 2. willfully refusing to perform the services required by a contract.
- i) **Standard 9: Required Reports** - An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
 2. failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
 3. failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.
- j) **Standard 10: Professional Conduct** - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position, or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.
- k) **Standard 11: Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
1. committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
 2. compromising the integrity of the assessment.

(4) Reporting

- a) Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of legal requirements and local policies and procedures for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission must be in writing and must be signed by the complainant (parent, educator, or other LUA/school district employee, etc.).
- b) The Commission notifies local and state officials of all disciplinary actions. In addition, suspensions and revocations are reported to national officials, including the NASDTEC Clearinghouse.

(5) Disciplinary Action

- a) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and

performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:

1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
 2. disciplinary action against a certificate in another state on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-11 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
 3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
 4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20-3-295);
 5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
 6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession; and
 7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.
- b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The Superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200; 20-2-981 through 20-2-984.5

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Characteristics connecting staff development and higher achieving schools include the following: a greater focus on improving student performance, a greater focus on classroom instruction, more support and direction from leadership, more collective actions by the faculty, and more effective training strategies. (Harkreader and Weathersby, 1998, *Staff Development and Student Achievement: Making the Connection in Georgia Schools*) With these facts in mind, the Vidalia City System Plan and the school improvement plans of each school reflect Professional Learning that is aligned to the goals and strategies of the respective plans. Through school improvement planning, all staff personnel will participate in opportunities to improve their craft.

Research has shown that effective professional learning activities are ongoing and allow for follow-up of initial training. Evidence of follow-up should be reflected in individual professional learning activities logs, which will be a part of the evaluation process. In addition, results will be reflected in the school's staff development summative evaluation.

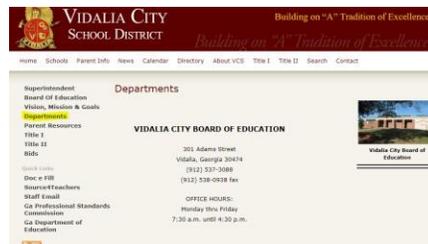
Steps To Complete Professional Development Request Forms & Travel Expenses in Softdocs

Please go to the following link www.vidalia-city.k12.ga.us and follow the steps below:

(1) Double click on Central office cube (circled in clip below):



(2) Click on Departments (highlighted in yellow):



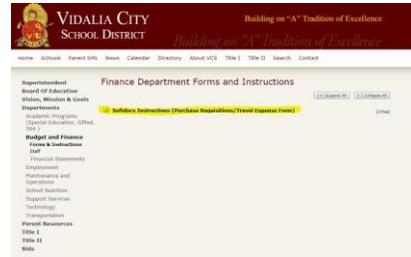
(3) Click on Budget and Finance (highlighted in yellow):



(4) Click on Forms & Instructions (highlighted in yellow):



(5) Click on Softdocs Instructions (Purchase Requisitions/Travel Expense Form highlighted in yellow):



(6) Two (2) .pdf files (Purchase Requisitions Instructions & Travel Expense Form Instructions with step by step instructions & pictures will help to complete both in the correct manner for submission.



*****ATTENTION*****

The employee must complete these steps **correctly** before before the employee can receive reimbursement for expenses.

Requests for reimbursement must be received within fifteen (15) days of the approved activity.

For Professional Learning scheduled off–contract (i.e. summer months), a contract will be issued to the educator via google forms. Contracts must be completed and submitted in order to be eligible for stipends. Vidalia City Schools agrees to pay stipends upon receiving documentation of the program completion from the instructor. Depending on the date such documentation is received in the central office; the stipend will be processed during the next payroll cycle.

CERTIFICATE RENEWAL

Effective July 1, 2017, certificate renewal requirements have been revised. Please carefully read this section to understand the new renewal requirements that apply to the certificate or license you hold.

Certificate renewal is an outcome of applying Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC)-accepted continuing professional learning toward the continued validity of a state certificate or license. While it is essential for individual educators to maintain valid certificates and licenses, professional learning should be focused toward school improvement leading to improved teaching and increased student learning. The goal of certificate renewal and professional learning is for educators within a Georgia local unit of administration (LUA) to work together to enhance established educational goals for the individual educator, the school and the LUA to assist students in meeting state standards for student achievement. This requirement applies to the design of school and LUA learning communities, the selection of workshops that support learning communities, and any other professional learning designed for certified educators. Click this link to read the rule - [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#)

Types of renewable certificates: *Standard Professional (SR), Performance-Based Professional (PR), Advanced Professional (AP), Lead Professional(LP) and Life (D) certificates. [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.02 CLASSIFICATION](#) [*Most educators have this type of certificate.]

Types of renewable licenses:

Adjunct, Educational Interpreter, Non-Instructional Aide, Paraprofessional and Support Personnel [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.02 CLASSIFICATION](#)

Validity periods of certificates and licenses:

Certificates are valid for a five (5)-year period. Licenses are valid for a period of one (1) to five (5) years depending on the type of license. [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.32 VALIDITY PERIOD & DATING OF CERTIFICATES](#)

Renewal credit will be comprised of the following *(must be completed during validity period of certificate or license):*

- Professional Learning Plans and Professional Learning Goals (see below), and/or
- The Special Georgia Requirement in Special Education as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 Special Georgia Requirements.
- School districts may have additional professional learning requirements in addition what the GA Professional Standards Commission requires for certification.

Professional Learning Plan / Professional Learning Goal:

Written Professional Learning Plans (PLPs) or Professional Learning Goals (PLGs) shall be required for all certificate holders employed by a Georgia LUA. PLPs outline requirements for the professional growth of educators as well as clearly delineate support the school or school system will provide for the educator's professional growth. PLGs outline identified areas for educator growth for those educators not required to have PLPs.

Educators who hold Professional certificates or higher shall engage in continuous improvement by developing PLGs. Professional Learning Plans will be required for the educators who fall into one or more of the categories listed below:

- Educators under an Induction certificate
- Educators returning to the profession after an absence
- Educators working on non-renewable certificates

- Educators working in a certification field in which they have not worked before
- Educators new to the state
- Educators who have low summative ratings

Certificate Renewal:

The PLPs and PLGs are developed and maintained locally. When it is time for you to renew your certificate, the principal or other designated official will verify completion of professional learning requirements. The certification official responsible for the electronic renewal of a certificate will also verify that the PLP/PLG has been met prior to submitting documentation.

Applications for educators employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring GaPSC certification must be submitted electronically by the employing LUA. Educators will be notified by the certification official of the application process which includes a criminal record check.

Certificates not eligible for renewal:

Educators who have received any combination of two (2) Unsatisfactory, Ineffective or Needs Development annual performance evaluations during the previous five (5) year validity cycle that have not been satisfactorily remediated by the employing Georgia LUA shall not be entitled to any certificate except for a Waiver in any field. [GAPSC Rule 505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#)

PARAPROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

In January 2002, the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the "No Child Left Behind Act" were enacted. The purpose is "to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind." Title I of the act discusses methods for the improvement of academic achievement for disadvantaged students. A major component of this discussion is the qualifications of paraprofessionals for each state. This new act establishes Federal eligibility requirements for instructional educational paraprofessionals.

Federal Requirements - Paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, shall have one of the following:

- Completion of at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education; or
- An associate’s (or higher) degree; or
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate through a state or local academic assessment -
 - Knowledge of, and ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics; or
 - Knowledge of, and ability to assist in instructing, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.

Who has to meet these New Federal Requirements?

- Any paraprofessional who is hired after January 8, 2002, to be employed in any school working with instruction, regardless of funding source.
- Any paraprofessional hired with Title I funds in a Targeted Assisted School who works with instruction.
- Any paraprofessional hired prior to January 8, 2002, in the above-defined schools has four years to meet the new Federal requirements.

Exceptions -

ESEA requirements do NOT apply to paraprofessionals with:

- Primary duties to act as a translator.
- Duties consisting solely of conducting Parental Involvement Activities.

Georgia Requirements – All Georgia Paraprofessionals must hold a valid state certificate issued by the PSC. Vidalia City School System is responsible for ensuring that all applicable Federal ESEA hiring requirements are met.

Paraprofessional License renewals that expire in 2018 or later:

- Employment by a Georgia [LUA](#);
- Certificate holders who are employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring certification must have an individual Professional Learning Plan (PLP) or a Professional Learning Goal (PLG) coordinated with their supervisor and employing LUA. These PLPs or PLGs are developed and maintained locally, and must be aligned with individual educator evaluation results as well as with school and school system professional learning plans. To be acceptable for certificate renewal, the PLP or PLGs must be directly associated with the annual personnel evaluation. (For additional information, please see [Rule 505-2-.36 Renewal](#) effective date: July 1, 2017);
- Pass a criminal background check;
- Employing school system applies for Certificate.

It is the responsibility of each certified employee to maintain a valid certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission. Failure to maintain a valid certificate is grounds for termination.

FINGERPRINTING AND CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

A criminal record check will be conducted at or 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 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 shall 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.

All background checks are generated electronically and are initiated by the school system. The individual is required to pay all costs associated with the background check.

Individuals who provide voluntary services over an extended period of time shall be fingerprinted and have a criminal record check prior to volunteering in the schools.

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.

Screening of Criminal Record Checks

In the event the criminal record check reflects that the employee, whether certified or classified, has been charged with, pleaded to or been convicted of an offense other than a minor traffic violation, the Superintendent shall bring the matter to the board of education at its next meeting or sooner, **if warranted**, for an employment decision. The acceptability of the criminal record check will be at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee. Employment may be terminated at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee for those whose criminal record check is not satisfactory. At the superintendent's discretion, the employee may continue employment in the school district pending final board decision.

In the event an employment decision is made adverse to a person whose record was obtained from the criminal record check pursuant to this policy, the person will be informed by the Superintendent or designee the information pertinent to that decision. This disclosure shall include information that a record was obtained from the Georgia Criminal Information Center, the specific contents of the record, and the effect the record had upon that decision.

PSC Clearance Certificate Requirements

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1 requires that all educators employed by Vidalia City Board of Education on and after January 1, 2011 hold a valid Professional Standards Commission (PSC) Clearance Certificate, subject to the limitations set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211.1.

For the purpose of this policy, "Educator" means teachers, school or school system administrators, and other education personnel of this state who hold certificates, permits, or other certification documents, including Clearance Certificate, issued by the Professional Standards Commission; and, persons who have applied for but have not yet received or have been denied such certificates, permits or other certification documents from the Professional Standards Commission.

A PSC Clearance Certificate verifies that an educator employed in Georgia has successfully completed fingerprint and criminal background check requirements and has no convictions of any felony, of any crime involving moral turpitude, of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana, or of any sexual offense, and does not have a certificate or license that is currently revoked or suspended in Georgia or any other state. There are no academic requirements necessary to qualify for this certificate and it does not authorize the holder to be considered in-field for any position. Employees of charter, waiver, and IE2 schools must

hold a PSC Clearance Certificate even if not required to hold any other certification. All holders of this certificate are subject to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators (PSC Rule 505-6-.01).

To qualify for the PSC Clearance Certificate, the educator must:

Be employed by the Vidalia City Board of Education; have satisfactorily completed fingerprint and criminal background check requirements as outlined above; and not hold an educator certificate that is currently revoked or suspended in Georgia or any other state; and The PSC Clearance Certificate is valid for five years. It may be renewed through the Vidalia City Board of Education upon completion of a Georgia (GCIC) criminal background check and submission of a renewal application.

The PSC Clearance Certificate is not a professional educator certificate and is not part of the Interstate Agreement to be accepted by other states.

Time-line for Compliance

On January 1, 2011, educators holding a professional educator certificate who are already employed by a Vidalia City Board of Education are not required to obtain a Clearance Certificate until their professional certificate is renewed. To renew the professional certificate and add the Clearance Certificate, the Vidalia City Board of Education shall conduct the required Georgia (GCIC) criminal background check. After the criminal background results are in and the educator completes the renewal application, the Vidalia City Board of Education shall submit the information electronically to PSC. No additional fingerprinting shall be required for renewal of the Clearance Certificate.

As of January 1, 2011, educators holding a professional educator certificate who are newly employed by Vidalia City Board of Education are required to obtain a PSC Clearance Certificate at the time of employment.

LEAVE AND ABSENCES

SICK LEAVE

Each person employed by the Vidalia City Board of Education in the capacity of teacher, student service support personnel or administrative and supervisory personnel as provided by Georgia's Quality Basic Education Act shall be entitled to sick leave with full pay computed on the basis of $1\frac{1}{4}$ working days for each completed contract month. An employee must work a minimum of 10 days per month to earn sick leave. This means that an employee provided under the above section earns $12\frac{1}{2}$ days on a 10-month contract, $13\frac{3}{4}$ days on an 11-month contract, and 15 days on a 12-month contract. The Georgia Teacher Salary Schedule provides for teachers to be on a 10-month contract.

All of the above employees may accumulate sick leave from one year to the next up to a maximum of 45 days. Sick leave accumulated up to 45 days is transferable from one system to another. **A doctor's note is required for more than 5 consecutive days of sick leave.**

Paraprofessionals and secretaries are entitled to earn $12\frac{1}{2}$ days of sick leave each school year computed on the basis of $1\frac{1}{4}$ days per month of employment for 10 months. Sick leave may accumulate up to a maximum of 45 days. **A doctor's note is required for more than 5 consecutive days of sick leave.**

Bus drivers may earn sick leave computed on the basis of $1\frac{1}{4}$ days for each completed school month, making a total of $12\frac{1}{2}$ days per school year. Bus drivers may accumulate sick leave from one school year to the next up to a maximum of 45 days, which is transferable from one system to another. **A doctor's note is required for more than 5 consecutive days of sick leave.**

A lunchroom employee may earn $12\frac{1}{2}$, $13\frac{3}{4}$ or 15 days of sick leave, depending on 10, 11 or 12 month employment, per school year at the rate of one ($1\frac{1}{4}$) day per school month. All or any portion of this time not used by the end of the school year may be accumulated up to a maximum of 45 days. Sick leave is not transferable from one system to another. **A doctor's note is required for more than 5 consecutive days of sick leave.**

No sick leave is earned if the employee works less than ten (10) days of a school month.

Any unused sick leave and personal leave credited to the employee shall be forfeited if she/he withdraws from service for a period of 12 or more consecutive months, unless the withdrawal is for educational leave to seek a higher level or different field of certification and provided that the withdrawal does not exceed 24 months.

A teacher, paraprofessional, secretary, or custodian may utilize sick leave upon the approval of the principal or supervisor for absence due to illness, or injury, or necessitated by exposure to contagious disease in which the health of others would be endangered by his/her attendance on duty, or for illness or death in the employee's immediate family. The term "immediate family" is defined as including husband, wife, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, daughter, daughter-in-law, son, son-in-law, grandparents, or grandchildren.

It is expected that sick leave for appointments will be requested 72 hours in advance and that an appointment which could be accomplished in half a day would be limited to half of sick leave.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

Beginning August 2004, if an employee will be absent for more than ten (10) days due to circumstances that qualify under the Family Medical Leave Act, the employee must request Family Medical Leave by completing the "Request for Family Leave" form and the accompanying "Certificate of Health Care Provider" and submit to Superintendent for approval. Additional information provided, along with copies of these forms, in the section entitled "Personnel Policies and Procedures".

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

The Vidalia City Board of Education does not formally recognize or provide for "bereavement leave". Leave for the death of an immediate family member is provided for and explained in the sick leave policy above. Any such leave is deducted from the employee's sick leave, provided such leave is available. If the employee has no sick leave, the employee's pay will be docked for the time away from work.

MATERNITY LEAVE

An employee is entitled to utilize sick leave for maternity leave absences not to exceed the doctor's written statement of estimated length of disability. Any employee who is pregnant shall be entitled to a leave of absence to begin at a time to be determined by the employee, the physician and the local school superintendent between the commencement of pregnancy and the anticipated date of delivery. Said employee shall notify the superintendent in writing of her desire to take such leave and, except in cases of emergency, shall give such notice at least sixty (60) calendar days prior to the date on which her leave is to begin. This notice shall include a doctor's statement of anticipated date of physical disability (beginning and ending dates). The employee may continue in active employment as late into her pregnancy as she desires provided she is able to properly perform the required functions of her job. Final determination of ability to properly perform the required job function shall be made by the local board of education. An employee wishing to work to the date of physical disability shall be entitled to the use of all accumulated sick leave credited to her and concurrently use any Family Medical Leave for which she qualifies, not to exceed the doctor's estimated length of physical disability. An employee who has used her sick leave of which she is entitled shall continue to use any Family Medical Leave for which she is entitled and have her salary reduced by one day or her annual salary for each additional day of absence.

In summary, to prepare for maternity leave, please follow these guidelines:

1. Request maternity leave from immediate supervisor (administrator) and advise on leave intentions.
2. Contact Payroll for coordination of leave/benefits. Appointment with payroll personnel should be scheduled as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days in advance of anticipates leave.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Each certified employee, paraprofessional, secretary, custodian or bus driver may utilize **up to three (3) days of any accumulated sick leave each year for personal reasons**, if prior approval of his/her absence is given by the Principal 72 hours in advance (except in an extreme emergency). Director of Transportation will approve a bus driver's personal leave.

Each lunchroom employee may utilize three (3) days of any accumulated sick leave for personal leave. Prior approval must be given for lunchroom employees by the Lunchroom Manager and School Nutrition Director 72 hours in advance except in an extreme case of emergency. Prior approval for personal leave for a custodian must be approved 72 hours in advance by the Principal.

Employees are encouraged to use personal leave for the purpose for which it is intended: taking care of personal business, which reasonably cannot be taken care of outside the work day/year. **Personal leave will be granted upon the availability of a substitute and at the discretion of the employee's supervisor.**

NOTE: Personal/Vacation leave shall not be taken preceding or following a school holiday or vacation period. Neither shall personal leave be used during pre-planning, post-planning, or in-service days. Neither shall personal leave be taken on the first and last day of school except in extreme cases of emergency unless prior approval from building principal or the Superintendent has been granted. Personal leave days are not cumulative from year to year.

IN-SERVICE DAY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Certified/classified employees of the Vidalia City School System are required by employment contract specifications to work at least 190 days. These days include, but are not limited to, any pre and post planning days and any other days that the Board of Education has specified as "in-service".

Certified/classified employees are reminded that these in-service days are mandatory attendance days and no personal leave days are to be requested during this time. In extenuating circumstances left to the Principal's discretion, an exception may be allowed. Such circumstances should be rare and will be considered on an individual basis. All requests should be made in writing and the Principal should keep this written request for documentation. If permission is given to miss an in-service day(s), the employee will be required to make-up the in-service day(s) and a log should be kept by the Principal to document the make-up day(s). If employee fails to make-up day(s) missed within 30 days of leave, it will be the responsibility of the Principal to report this to the Personnel Director who will document information and submit notification to Payroll to dock employee for time missed.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE

Professional leave must be approved at least one week in advance and is restricted to those activities that are beneficial to the system and/or promote professional growth for the employee.

VACATION LEAVE

Vacation leave applies only to those employees who work twelve months. Twelve-month classified central office personnel will earn 10 days after working one year. **Vacation days may not be carried over beyond one fiscal year.**

RELIGIOUS LEAVE

Leave for observance of religious holidays may be granted to school personnel including certified personnel, paraprofessionals, secretaries, bus drivers, lunchroom managers and employees, and custodial staff as part of their allowable personal leave. The Principal and Superintendent must approve request for such leave 72 hours in advance.

MILITARY LEAVE

Persons employed in any capacity in any school (other than those employed on a temporary basis) shall be entitled to military leave for ordered military duty with full employment and reinstatement rights as provided by law. An employee shall be allowed a leave of absence for his/her duties while performing ordered military duty.

The term "ordered military duty" as defined by O.C. G. A., 38-2-279 shall mean the following- Any military duty performed in the service of the State or of the United States, including but not limited to attendance at any service school or schools conducted by the armed forces of the United States by a public officer or employee as a voluntary member of any force of the organized militia or any reserve force or reserve component of the armed forces of the United States pursuant to orders issued by the competent State or Federal authority, without the consent of such public officer or employee.

An employee shall be paid his/her salary or other compensations for a period or periods of absence while engaged in the performance of ordered military duty and while going to and returning from such duty, not exceeding a total of 18 days in one calendar year and not exceeding 18 days in any one continuous period of such absence.

In the event the governor declares an emergency and orders an employee to State active duty as a member of the National Guard, such employee shall be paid his/her salary or other compensation while performing such duty for a period not exceeding 30 days in any one calendar year and not exceeding 30 days in any one continuous period of such State active duty service.

JURY DUTY LEAVE

Employees summoned to jury duty will be granted administrative leave. This leave will not count against an individual's personal, professional or sick leave. Employees will not be required to reimburse the Board of Education for jury pay received. An employee must inform his/her immediate supervisor of the summons upon receiving it and complete a Request for Leave form and attach a copy of the jury summons.

TARDIES/EARLY DEPARTURES

All contractual employees are required to perform their duties for an eight (8) hour day. Arrival & Departure times may vary according to assigned duties. Tardiness to work should be rare and only in extreme emergencies. The school administrator will handle late arrival and early departures from work. Continual tardiness/early departure will be reflected in end of the year evaluation.

REPORTING EMPLOYEE ABSENCES

Absent Tracking:

Every employee WILL sign in/out at a central location at his/her work site each day.

In the event of an absence, the employee will submit a request via Source4Teachers by accessing one of the following:

- Online: <http://source4teachers.com> (must have login ID and password)
- Phone: (877) 983-2244
- Email: sams@source4teachers.com if **AFTER DATE OF ABSENCE**

Timesheet:

All hourly, non-exempt employees shall submit a timesheet (to be filled out daily) via Softdocs (<http://softdocs.vidalia-city.k12.ga.us/index.aspx>) bi-weekly in accordance with the Workday Schedules

and Leave cutoff dates for payroll. The timesheet will be approved by the site administrator and the leave clerk. The Leave Clerk will verify the timesheet against the sign in sheets and any leave data reported to Source4Teachers (SAMS). Any leave not reported shall be brought to the attention of the employee and administrator and corrected immediately by email submission as stated above.

At the end of each leave cycle (payroll cutoff date), the leave clerk shall provide a copy (may be scanned and submitted electronically) of the sign in sheets and a check off sheet showing that all timesheets have been properly verified and submitted to the Payroll Department. Check off sheet shall be signed by the Leave Clerk and the Administrator who will assume full responsibility for following proper reporting procedures.

Payroll Department Responsibility

Upon receipt by the Payroll Department, the timesheet will be reviewed for indication of overtime, which will be paid in accordance with FLSA. All overtime will be reported to the Superintendent and the administrator will be contacted and requested to eliminate overtime as our budget constraints do not currently allow for any overtime.

HR / Payroll Manager will also complete a check off sheet (may use sheet submitted by school if desired) to verify receipt of timesheets from all employees as they are archived into Softdocs (DocEFill).

It will be assumed by the Payroll Department that all leave data shall have already been submitted to Source4Teachers based upon processes followed at the site level.

As part of the process for each payroll cycle, the HR / Payroll Manager will download a list of current absences from the absence tracking software utilized by Source4Teachers which will then be uploaded into PCGENESIS as official record to be reported on monthly payroll direct deposit voucher.

VIDALIA CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM
WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROCEDURES
State Board of Workers' compensation
270 Peachtree Street, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303-1299
404-656-1299 or 1-800-533-0682
<http://www.sbwc.georgia.gov>

IMPORTANT!!! FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES WHEN AN ON-THE-JOB INJURY OCCURS MAY PREVENT YOU RECEIVING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS:

1. When an employee is injured at work, he/she must report this injury to his/her supervisor immediately. A report of injury form must be completed.
2. Workers' Compensation will not pay for treatment at the emergency room in non-emergency situations.
3. Follow-up doctor visits should be scheduled before or after work hours where possible.
4. Should an injury require medical treatment, the injured employee must select a physician from the list below:

Accordia Urgent Care
3193 East 1st Street
Vidalia, GA 30474
OFFICE: 912-537-8858
FAX: 912-537-3488

Vidalia Orthopedic Center
1707 Meadows Ln Ste H
Vidalia, GA 30474
OFFICE: 912-538-0040
FAX: 912-538-8133

Georgia Eye Institute
420 Gentilly Place
Statesboro, GA 30458
OFFICE: 912-489-3606

The Hughston Clinic
1811 Manning Drive
Vidalia, GA 30474
OFFICE: 912-538-0333

Spivey Orthopedic Clinic
3301 East 1st Street
Vidalia, GA 30474
OFFICE: 912-537-4411

Vidalia Surgical
303 Harris Industrial Blvd Ste 3
Vidalia, GA 30474
OFFICE: 912-538-9977

Worker's Compensation Fraud

Vidalia City Board of Education strongly believes that the vast majority of employees will never submit a fraudulent workers' compensation claim. Nevertheless, workers' compensation fraud exists and can have substantial cost for affected businesses. The information below explains some aspects and consequences of workers' compensation fraud.

You will sign a signature page indicating your receipt and understanding of Waste, Fraud and Abuse. Contact your principal and/or supervisor if you have any questions.

A person commits workers' compensation fraud when, in the course of reporting a claim to obtain benefits, he or she intentionally misrepresents a material fact to obtain a benefit to which the claimant is not otherwise entitled. A misrepresentation is material when it is relevant to whether benefits will be paid or the amount of benefits to be paid.

Some Examples of Workers' Compensation Fraud:

- Filing a workers' compensation claim for an injury that is known with certainty to be completely unrelated to employment.
- Lying about earnings received from employment other than the employment in which you were injured.
- Purposely misleading or exaggerating one's current medical condition to receive workers' compensation benefits.

Making false statements for the purpose of obtaining workers' compensation benefits may result in civil and criminal penalties for the individuals that make such statements. Vidalia City Board of Education supports activities to detect and combat workers' compensation fraud!

This is not intended to discourage the legitimate use of the workers' compensation system. You should report any bodily injury that you believe is work-related to your supervisor at once.

FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE OR CORRUPTION

Reporting

Vidalia City School System employees shall report verbally or in writing to their supervisor, department head, or other appropriate authority, evidence of activity by a district department, agency, or employ constituting:

1. A violation of local, state, or federal law, rule or regulation;
2. Fraud;
3. Misappropriation of resources;
4. Substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety; or
5. Gross mismanagement, a gross waste of monies, or gross abuse authority

Definitions

Fraud:

The intentional deception perpetrated by an individual or individuals, or an organization or organizations either internal or external to federal, state, or local governments, which could result in a tangible or intangible benefit to themselves, others, or the district or could cause detriment to others or the district, state, or federal governments. Fraud includes a false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading statements, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives and is intended to deceive.

Waste:

The intentional or unintentional, thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use, or squandering of district, state, or federal resources to the detriment or potential detriment of the district. Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs as a result of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

Abuse:

Excessive or improper use of a thing, or to employ something in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules for its use. Intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment, or misuse of resources. Extravagant or excessive use as to abuse one's position or authority. Abuse can occur in financial or non-financial settings.

Staff Responsibilities

Vidalia City School District employees who suspect that financial fraud, impropriety, or irregularity has occurred shall immediately report those suspicions to their immediate supervisor and/or the Superintendent/designee, who shall have the primary responsibility for initiating the necessary investigations. Investigations shall be conducted in coordination with legal counsel and/or other internal or external departments or agencies as appropriate.

The Superintendent shall inform employees with financial accounting responsibilities of the following anti-fraud regulations established by the Board:

1. The District shall operate in a climate of honesty and ethical behavior with employees doing all within their power to further that goal.

2. Employees shall comply with all state and federal laws, rules, regulations and court orders, as well as Board policy addressing fiscal matters.
3. Employees shall practice good stewardship of District financial resources, including timely reporting of fraudulent expenditures.
4. Employees with financial/accounting responsibilities shall support and follow sound business practices to the best of their ability and in keeping with their assigned responsibilities and job-related training by:
 - Maintaining and protecting District financial records;
 - Performing one's job with the highest attention to detail to minimize and prevent error, falsification of accounting records, and omission of transactions;
 - Reporting knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud, including intentional misstatements and omissions of amounts or disclosures.
 - Guarding against misappropriation of assets;
 - Refusing to reveal unauthorized persons or agencies investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the District; and
 - Resisting incentives, pressures, and negative attitudes that detract from performance or assigned responsibilities.

Internal Controls/Investigations

The Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for developing internal controls to aid in preventing and detecting fraud or financial impropriety or irregularity within the District. Reports or suspected fraudulent activities shall be investigated in a manner that protects, to the extent possible, the confidentiality of the parties and avoids unfounded accusations. Employees involved in the investigation shall be advised to keep information about the investigation confidential. Employees who bring forth a legitimate concern or suspicion about potential impropriety shall not be retaliated against. Those who do retaliate against such an employee shall be subject to disciplinary action.

If an investigation substantiates occurrence of a fraudulent activity, the Superintendent/designee shall issue a report to appropriate personnel and to the Board of Education. Final disposition of the matter and any decision to file a criminal complaint or refer the matter to the appropriate law enforcement and/or regulatory agency for independent investigation shall be made in consultation with legal counsel. Results of the investigation shall not be disclosed to or discussed with anyone other than those individuals with legitimate need to know until the results become subject to public disclosure in accordance with state or federal law.

Each employee shall have access to this document, complete a compliance module regarding waste, fraud & abuse and sign attesting that they have indeed received the information and understand its contents on the staff signature page.

CHILD ABUSE

PROTOCOL FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT IN THE VIDALIA CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM

As a Mandated Reporter, school staff must report suspected child abuse or neglect. Each year employees will receive training via a Compliance Director module. Your completion will be recorded and kept on file by the human resources department. If you have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, report these concerns to the school counselor at your first opportunity during the same school day. If you work in a system-wide position, report child abuse or neglect to your direct supervisor. **It is not your duty to investigate child abuse or neglect.** It is your responsibility, however, to report child abuse or neglect so that it can be investigated by a trained professional, usually from the Department of Family and Children Services. Please follow the steps below for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect:

- 1) All school system personnel who have reasonable cause to believe that any student has been abused shall report the suspected abuse to the school counselor or school administration.
- 2) The school counselor or administrator who receives reports shall immediately report in turn to the Department of Family and Children Services and shall notify the school system superintendent of all referrals.
- 3) If all school administrators are not available, contact the system social worker. Supervisors of system-wide staff should contact the social worker directly.
- 4) If the system social worker is not available, contact the Assistant Superintendent or Superintendent.
- 5) Upon receiving the report, the administrator, system social worker or school counselor will submit the report via:
 - a) Email CPS.Intake@DHS.GA.Gov OR
 - b) Fax (229) 317-9663 OR
 - c) Toll Free 1-855-422-4453 OR
 - d) Local # (912) 526-5850 between the hours of 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Even if a child resides in another county, the Department of Family and Children Services will contact the county in which the child resides.

- 6) If the Department of Family and Children Services are not available to take your report, contact the Vidalia City Police Department, the Lyons Police Department, or the Toombs County Sheriff's Department, depending upon where the child resides.

Any person or official required by subsection (c) of O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 to report a suspected case of child abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. You may also be disciplined by your school system.

DRESS CODE

All employees represent Vidalia City Schools; therefore professional appearance is expected in order to support a positive educational environment. To insure this, staff clothing must be:

- Reflective of an employee's position as a role model when representing Vidalia City Schools.
- Conducive to the employees' tasks and/or environment.
- Clothing and apparel (accessories including jewelry, shoes, undergarments) that is clean, modest, and safe.

To support employees and administrators, Vidalia City Schools has established the guidelines above for classroom staff (both certificated and support staff) to clarify expectations. The guidelines are the District's minimum guidelines. Administrators may develop more restrictive guidelines for their campus, but they may not create less restrictive guidelines. Directors may develop alternative guidelines for their department. The department guidelines may take into account the employee's job duties and work environment. Administration is expected to review these guidelines with their staff each year.

Employees must always consider that their employment placed them in the position of role models for students. Employees shall be expected to exhibit a professional image to students, parents, and the community. The Board of Education expects the dress and appearance of certificated and support personnel to be professional and appropriate for their job description. So while denim jeans and shorts would not normally be considered standard professional attire, there are occasions/tasks where these would be deemed appropriate (i.e., fundraising, safety). Each school may designate specific activities related to school spirit when jeans may be worn. The building administrator has the decision making authority when addressing professional dress expectations with their staff.

STAFF LUNCH CHARGES

School Nutrition is a self-supporting program provided for students and staff. As a result, we do not receive any funding from our system. To insure staff can participate in the program, the following charge policy will be followed at all schools:

- No staff member may charge more than \$20.00 per month.
- ALL charges must be paid by the 5th of the following month. Failure to do so will result in the staff member not being allowed to charge until the prior charges are paid.
- If charges are not paid monthly, the staff member will be contacted by the Director of School Nutrition first, building administrator and if left unresolved, by the Superintendent of Schools.

EMPLOYEE INTERNET ACCESS AGREEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Please read the following carefully before signing the signature page. This is a legally binding document. Violations of the Acceptable Use Guidelines may cause an employee's access privileges to be revoked, School Board disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken, up to and including employment termination.

Internet access is available to students and employees in all Vidalia City Schools. We believe the Internet offers vast, diverse and unique resources to both students and employees. Our goal in providing this service to employees and students is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers.

With the access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. Available precautions will be taken to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover controversial information, but we believe the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of this project.

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies, and regional and state networks. In addition, the smooth operation of the network relies upon the proper conduct of the end users who must adhere to strict guidelines. Users of Vidalia City Schools Network and Internet Access are subject to Administrative Monitoring. Our Internet appropriate use regulations are provided here so that you are aware of the responsibilities you are about to acquire. If a user violates any of these provisions, future access could be denied. The user may also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including employment termination.

Teachers who have access to student data must adhere to guidelines and legal requirements as specified by local Board policy and procedure, state rules and federal law. A breach of confidentiality is a violation of the Educator Code of Ethics for certified personnel.

Access to Vidalia City Schools' Student Information System (PowerSchool) is a privilege, not a right.

When a teacher enters attendance information for a student, the attendance information becomes part of the student's official student record. Falsification of attendance in PowerTeacher is the same as falsification of paper-based student records. It is a violation of the Educator Code of Ethics for certified personnel to falsify student records.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

I. Acceptable Use

Access to the school's network and the Internet is provided exclusively for educational purposes and research consistent with the school system's educational mission and goals. All employees shall also be required to sign the "Employee Internet Access Agreement and Administrative Procedures" affirming that they have read and understand the administrative procedure on "Use of Electronic Media: Internet Use and Web Page Policy (IFBGA) and understand the consequences for the violation of said policy.

II. Privileges

The use of the school system's Internet is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use may result in the cancellation of those privileges. The Superintendent or designee(s) shall make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated these policies and procedures and may deny, revoke, or suspend access at any time.

III. Unacceptable Use

The user is responsible for all his/her actions and activities involving the network. Examples of prohibited conduct include but are not limited to the following:

- A.** Accessing materials or communications that are:
 - 1. Damaging to another's reputation
 - 2. Abusive
 - 3. Obscene
 - 4. Sexually oriented
 - 5. Threatening
 - 6. Contrary to the school system's policy on harassment
 - 7. Harassing
 - 8. Unauthorized access including so-called "hacking"
 - 9. Other unlawful activities
 - 10. Disrupting instruction (i.e. Using chat-rooms and Internet for personal use during school or work hours)
 - 11. Disrupting work hour's productivity (i.e. Playing games, surfing the Internet for personal use, and personal shopping online during school or work hours).

- B.** Sending or posting materials or communications which are:
 - 1. Damaging to another's reputation
 - 2. Abusive
 - 3. Obscene
 - 4. Sexually oriented
 - 5. Threatening
 - 6. Contrary to the school system's policy on harassment
 - 7. Harassing
 - 8. Other unlawful activities.

- C.** Using the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyright or other contracts or transmitting any material in violation of U.S. and State regulations;
- D.** Copying or downloading copyrighted material on any system connected to School System's hardware/software without the owner's permission. Only the owner(s) or individuals specifically authorized in writing by the owner(s) may copy or download copyrighted material to the system;
- E.** Copying or downloading copyrighted material without the owner's written Permission—copyrighted materials can only be distributed with the owner's written permission. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the owner in accordance with applicable copyright laws, Board policy and administrative procedures;
- F.** Using the network for private financial or commercial gain;
- G.** Wastefully using resources;
- H.** Utilizing any software having the purpose of damaging the unit's system or user's system;
- I.** Gaining unauthorized access to resources or entities (hacking);
- J.** Invading the privacy of individuals;

- K. Using another user's account or password;
- L. Posting material authorized or created by another without his/her consent;
- M. Posting anonymous messages;
- N. Using the network for commercial or private advertising;
- O. Forging of electronic mail messages;
- P. Attempting to read, delete, copy or modify the electronic mail of other system users or deliberately interfering with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail;
- Q. Using the network while access privileges are suspended or revoked; and
- R. Using the network in a fashion inconsistent with policies, accepted practices and or specific directives from administrators and generally accepted network etiquette.

IV. Supervisor Supervision

Principals and other supervisors should become familiar with this procedure and should enforce the rules concerning appropriate use of the Internet by employees. When in the course of their duties, principals and supervisors become aware of employee violations of this policy and procedures, they should correct the employee and address the matter in accordance with policy and procedures and the Board of Education general disciplinary policies and procedures.

V. Compensation

Employees shall be responsible for compensating the school system for any losses, costs, or damages incurred by the school system relating to or arising out of any employee violation of these procedures and policy.

VI. Security

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

VII. Vandalism

Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges and other disciplinary action. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy the school unit's equipment or materials, data of another student, the Internet network, or agency. This includes but is not limited to the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

VIII. Telephone Charges

The Board of Education assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees including but not limited to long distance charges, per minute surcharges and/or equipment or line costs.

IX. Network Expectations

The user is expected to abide by the generally accepted network expectations. These include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Be polite. Do not become abusive in messages to others.
- B. Use appropriate language. Do not swear or use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.
- C. Do not reveal the personal addresses or telephone numbers of any students.
- D. Recognize that electronic mail (E-mail) is not private. People who operate the system have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
- E. Do not use the network in any way that would disrupt its use by other users.
- F. Consider all communications and information accessible via the network to be

- property of Vidalia City Schools School District.
- G. Limiting streaming music and video files for educational use only.
 - H. Employees must be aware that students have access to the Internet from all of the school system's computers. Employees must use good judgment and closely supervise their student's use of the Internet. The School System uses filtering software to help prevent student access to inappropriate web sites. However, it is impossible to block access to all objectionable material. If a student decides to behave in an irresponsible manner, they may be able to access sites that contain materials that are inappropriate for children or are not commensurate with community standards of decency in accordance with Board Policy and the Children's Internet Protection Act.
 - I. Employees are required to keep all passwords confidential and secure, including student account IDs and Passwords. Employee passwords will be required to be changed on at least an annual basis.
 - J. Employees are responsible for the appropriate storage and backup of their data.

X. Expectations for Communicating Electronically

Vidalia City Schools (VCS) recognizes that today's students and parents engage in electronic forms of communication for their daily interactions with friends, family, and their larger social networks. VCS too has turned to e-mail, websites, blogs, text messaging, cellphones and use of public social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and others to communicate with similar groups. Whereas these forms of communication are dynamic, mobile, and quickly reach their audience through technologies that have become an integral part of our online lives, they may, in some circumstances, not meet the public and professional standards for communicating with students and parents.

VCS realizes that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of staff, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is a part of 21st century learning. To this aim, VCS has developed the Expectations for Communicating Electronically to provide direction for employees when participating in online social media activities. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by VCS employees is a reflection on the entire district. By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, or other social media for classroom or district use, you agree to abide by these expectations. Please read them carefully before posting or commenting on any blog or creating any classroom blog, wiki and/or podcast.

All employees must adhere to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators (<http://www.gapsc.com/professionalpractices/rules/505-6-.01.pdf>) as stated in VCS Board Policy.

The expectations outlined in this document are designed for the purpose of:

- 1. Protecting the students, staff, and the District;**
- 2. Raising awareness of acceptable ways to use electronic communication tools when communicating with students and parents; and**
- 3. Raising awareness of the positive and negative outcomes that may result in using these tools with student and parents.**

The following is a set of expectations that all members of the VCS professional community will adhere to when communicating with students and parents electronically.

Does the communication pass the TAP Test?

Electronic communication with students and parents must always be **Transparent, Accessible and Professional** as defined below.

- 1. The communication is transparent.** – ALL electronic communication between staff, students, and parents should be transparent. As a public school district, we are expected to maintain openness, visibility, and accountability with regard to all communications.
- 2. The communication is accessible.** - ALL electronic communication between staff, students and parents are a matter of public record and/or may be accessible by others.
- 3. The communication is professional.** – ALL electronic communication from staff to student or parent should be written as a professional representing VCS. This includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a VCS professional. Always choose words that are courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike in manner.

If communication meets all three of the criteria above, then it is very likely that the methods of communicating with students and parents that you are choosing are very appropriate; moreover, encouraged.

Vidalia City Schools does not permit the use of social media sites for students at the current time. Vidalia City will revisit policy & procedures for students accessing social media on the Vidalia City Schools network at a later time.

Social Media Sites for Personal Purposes (a friendly reminder)

Staff members presently using social media sites, such as Facebook, to communicate with friends, family and their personal networks should consider adjusting their privacy settings to “Only Friends.” If “Friends of Friends” or “Networks and Friends” settings are used, staff members open their content to a much larger group of people, including students and parents. Since social networking is relatively new to many staff members, the following are guidelines for maintaining a clear line between personal social networking and professional/educational social networking.

Your Online Identity As educators, we have a professional image to uphold, and how we conduct ourselves online impacts this image. Mistakenly, some educators assume that being online shields them from having their personal lives examined. Online identities are public and can cause serious repercussions if behavior is careless.

Friending

One of the hallmarks of online networks, whether personal or professional, is the ability to “friend” others and thus creates an online group that shares interests and personal news. Vidalia City Schools strongly discourages staff members from accepting or initiating invitations to “friend” students within personal social networking sites. When students gain access into a staff member’s network of friends and acquaintances and are able to view personal photos and communications, the student-teacher dynamic is altered. By “friending” current students, staff members provide more information than one should share in an educational setting. It is important to maintain a professional relationship with students to avoid relationships that could cause bias in the classroom. Social networking can be a way to

stay connected with students after they have graduated, but even then staff members should use their best judgment when “friending” students who have graduated.

The potential for “friending” parents of students also exists and can create some awkwardness for educators who want to maintain a clear line between their private and professional lives. Those who find themselves in the delicate position of either “unfriending” parents who are already a part of their social network or of not accepting requests for friendship can use the following language to help them out: “Our district has provided us with guidelines to help us navigate the line between our personal and professional on-line activities. I use my Facebook account solely within the realm of my personal life and would like to maintain that personal/professional distinction. In the spirit of maintaining that distinction I need to not “friend” parents of students.”

The following are recommended practices:

Recommendations for Professional/Educational Social Networking by Staff

- Let your administrator, fellow teachers, staff, and parents know about your educational network.
- Use district-supported networking tools (e.g. Gmail, PowerSchool...).
- Do not say or do anything using a site attached to your Vidalia City Schools account that you would not say or do as a teacher in the classroom.
- Have a clear purpose and outcomes for the use of the networking tool, and establish a code of conduct for all network participants.
- Adhere to the FERPA guidelines when posting student pictures and using student names. BE CAREFUL. Unsure....check with media specialists or Technology Specialists at district office.
- Pay close attention to the site's security settings and allow only approved participants access to the site.

Recommendations for Personal Social Networking by Staff

- Do not access your Personal Accounts on the Vidalia City Schools Network
- Do not accept students as friends on personal social networking sites. Decline any student-initiated friend requests and do not initiate social networking friendships with students.
- Use your best judgment when "friending" former students AFTER they have graduated.
- Do not friend parents of students.
- Do not post to or update your page during work hours. Yes, you may be on your lunch break, but others who see your page may inaccurately infer that you are social networking when you should be teaching.
- Remember that people classified as "friends" have the ability to download and share your information with other people. You don't have control over others with whom they share your information.
- Post only what you want the world to see. Imagine your students, their parents, or your administrator visiting your site. It is not like posting something to your web site or blog and then realizing that a story or photo should be taken down. Once you post something on a social networking site it may be accessible even after it is removed from the site.
- Check your profile's security and privacy settings. At a minimum, educators should have all privacy settings set to "only friends". "Friends of friends" and "Networks and Friends" open your content to a large group of unknown people. Your privacy and that of your family may be at risk.

Recommendations for All (Personal and Professional) Social Networking by Staff

- Do not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous. Exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colorful language, obscenity, guesswork, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.

- Staff members receiving information on a social networking site that falls under the mandatory reporting guidelines, must report it as required by law.
- Stay informed and cautious in the use of all new networking technologies.

X. Unauthorized Disclosure

Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors is illegal under the Children’s Internet Protection Act of 2000.

Employees will employ the same supervision and care in determining appropriate use of the Internet as is used with other instructional materials.

XI. No Expectation of Privacy

All employees of the school system understand and agree that there is no expectation of privacy in the use of the Vidalia City Schools’ network or Internet at any system school or on any other premise under the control of the school district. Employees also understand that every communication and every use of Vidalia City Schools’ network and Internet within Vidalia City Schools System may be and periodically will be monitored in the interest of maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of ongoing classroom instruction and school system operations.

ComplianceDirector.org

~ Instructions for Staff ~

Step One: www.compliancedirector.org

Step Two: Click on the **state** where you work.

Step Three: Click on the **module** you have been requested to take.
(either a current *Standard* module or a *Custom* module unique to your district)

Step Four: Your Username is:

Vidalia City

Your Password is:

behavior

(Use this username and this password for **every module**.)

Step Five: Complete the training and assessment requested.
(Modules take approximately 20 minutes to complete)

Step Six: When you have completed a module successfully, you will be asked to select your system's name and to login again. This last input of username and password will allow you to register, which creates a legal record of your module completion. **You will also have the option to enter your email address to receive a confirmation email.**

Your system registration username is:

Vidalia City

Your system registration password is:

behavior



ComplianceDirector.org

Standard Modules

[Awareness Walks](#)

[Ethical Use of Social Media](#)

[Parental Rights](#)

[Suicide Awareness and Prevention](#)

[Presentar Informes Bajo Mandato](#)

[Bloodborne Pathogens](#)

[FERPA / Data Privacy](#)

[Sexual Misconduct Reporting](#)

[Code of Ethics](#)

[Human Sex Trafficking](#)

[Sexual Harassment](#)

[Copyright for Schools](#)

[Mandated Reporting](#)

[McKinney-Vento](#)