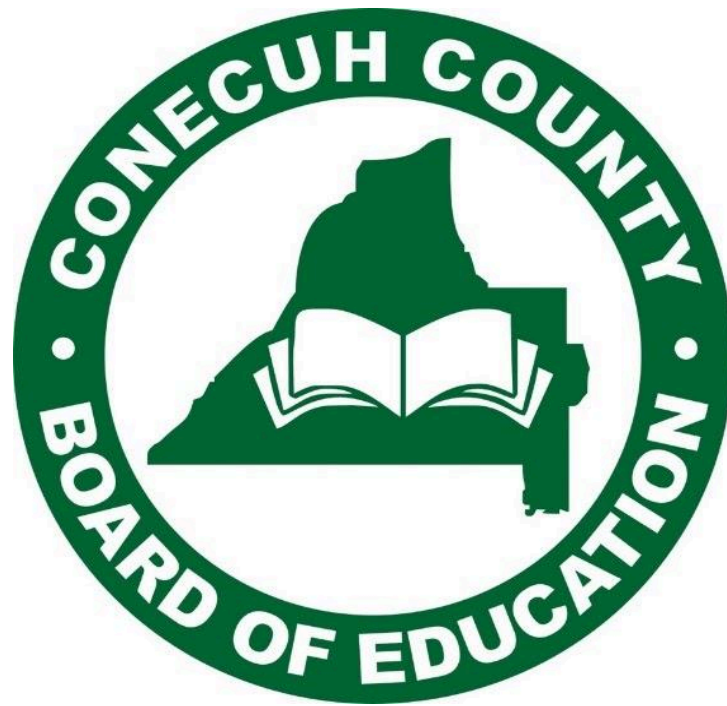


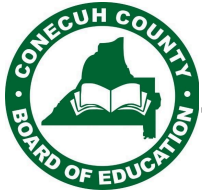
# **Conecuh County Schools Employee Handbook 2024-2025**



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# Welcome to Conecuh County Schools

## Message from Superintendent Dr. Tonya Bozeman

Dear Colleagues,

We made it to another school year! Speaking of newness, I have news to share.

Conecuh County Schools received news of accomplishments in 2023-2024! Our 3rd grade was 88% proficient on their ACAP reading subtest. Great job to everyone here! This is an amazing accomplishment, but third grade wasn't the only ones flying high.

Last year, Repton Junior High School broke barriers and was one of 25 schools state-wide recognized as a School Performance Legislative Awardee for the highest improvement in the state of Alabama. AND, this same award was received by Conecuh County Junior High School in 2023.

We were recently notified that we received another \$135,000 grant for an OSR Pre-K program. Early beginnings make for happy endings. Evergreen Elementary School is now able to serve 18 times 3 students - 3 classrooms of 4-year olds.

Elementary schools were not the only ones with notoriety. Hillcrest High School became the only school in our area to offer dual enrollment Biology 103. We have been offering dual enrollment classes in other subjects such as ENG101 and MA112 for a few years. Our students now have access to one more. That means students will be ahead when they enter college with fewer courses to complete to graduate.

Middle schools are setting the tone for excellence and competing in new arenas. Our first debate team is right around the corner and a continuation of international inquiry in Model United Nations at TMMS. Let's not forget that we are full STEAM ahead at the magnet program at SPMA. We are preparing students to be critical thinkers and problem-solvers in a rapidly evolving world. These programs foster creativity and collaboration, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills they need for future success.

Applause! Applause! I want to dunk the ball! Folks, if this doesn't make you proud then something is wrong! THIS is outstanding!!! What is also outstanding outside of academics, our Hillcrest High School Jaguar basketball team is wearing 3A Championship rings, and some of us are wearing championship pendants! I believe they can do it again!

The 2024-2025 school year will be an equally wonderful year. We are approaching a MILLION DOLLARS in the general fund, and we are investing close to eight MILLION in new construction of a state-of-the-art track and softball field. ALL of the eight million is for our school district's progress expansions, and what is even more impressive is it will be built and completed with no debt. Our students will make memories and win championships on Jaguar Drive.

Our students at Workforce development are leading the state in workforce education! Aside from the seven CTSO programs, we are ecstatic to add cosmetology/barbering this year. If you need a fresh haircut, you might be able to sit in the chair. And another big moment for CCS and WDC is the advancement of STEM. Robotics, drones, and podcasts are in the forecast.

Additionally, I am impressed with our confident, diverse, and innovative learners. We are bragging on our state JAG officers, and we know more are on the way. These students are leading other students in the state of Alabama and making their mark in the world. I KNOW our students want more out of their high school experience, and they are destined to MAKE IT HAPPEN! That is due to great leadership.

Bravo to our principals for finding their own creativity to lead their school programs. They are making these schools their own. And please, don't forget about the teachers and paras. To say they are working is an understatement. Everything about the classes they are teaching will be available at a click. No more questions about what standards are being taught, the instructional material will be available to you. A link will be shared soon.

I can go on a little further to talk about counseling, peer helper, and social services. These past couple of years, we have received close to two MILLION in grants from ADPH, Youth Tobacco Prevention grant, and PEER Helpers for character supports and counseling. We will be present and visible for our students as they grow and learn to navigate life. We will be intentional about the work. Also remember, if you have an objection to a counseling lesson or a counseling class, those programs are optional. Complete the opt-out form for your child to be excused.

Much more is happening in Conecuh County Schools, and I could continue, but I'm going to hit the breaks like our zero-deficiencies transportation department and refuel like our child nutrition department does for our students with nutritious meals to support their learning and growth. It is a blessing to work in Conecuh County Schools. I am so grateful for our progress, and it starts and ends with the 250 colleagues I work with across our 9 campuses and offices. Please show your appreciation for them when you see them. Let them know you appreciate the work they put into educating your children. A little bit of love will cover a multitude of stress.

From the youngest to the oldest students - thank you for being your best selves each day. Continue to be Conecuh prideful and Conecuh strong!

***Dr. Tonya Dukes-Bozeman***

Superintendent  
Conecuh County Schools

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### **Mission**

Our mission is to create a culture of confident, diverse, and innovative learners in high quality educational settings. We will advance forward and move higher toward a climate that encourages continuous growth and prepares learners to reach their fullest potential to excel in college, career, and life.

### **Vision**

Our vision is to Advance Forward and Move Higher.

### **Motto**

Making It Happen

# Introduction

We are pleased to introduce the revised Conecuh County Schools' employee handbook. This handbook has been designed to outline and summarize basic personnel policies, employee benefits, employee responsibilities, and employee rights. This handbook is intended to be a useful tool for all Conecuh County Schools' employees. Compliance with this handbook, departmental rules and regulations, and any other policy is mandatory for all employees, regardless of status or type unless exempted by law or statute.

This handbook was developed to provide general guidelines about the Conecuh County Board of Education policies and procedures for employees; however, it does not contain promises to any employee about how any particular situation will be handled. It is a guide to assist employees in becoming familiar with some of the benefits and obligations of employment. None of the guidelines in this handbook are intended, or to be construed as a guarantee of employment for any specific time of any specific type of work. These guidelines are subject to modification, amendment, or revocation by the Conecuh County Board of Education at any time, without advance notice.

Each department may develop additional policies and procedures relating to their department, at their discretion. Additional policies and procedures may be more restrictive than the provision of this handbook, but may not be less restrictive.

The Conecuh County Board of Education intends to adhere to all applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. Any personnel policy found to conflict with a state or federal law, specifically per Ala. Code §45-22-120, et seq., as amended, will be changed to ensure compliance with the law.

This handbook revokes and supersedes all prior handbooks, amendments, and any policy or communication related to the employee handbook. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the most up-to-date version of the handbook. All questions about information found in this handbook should be referred to your Supervisor, Department Head, or the Personnel Department.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT STATEMENT**

Conecuh County Schools' is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with all applicable state and federal laws, rules and guidelines, including, but not limited to, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, governing discrimination in employment. Conecuh County Schools' recruits, selects, trains and promotes all employee without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, actual or perceived disability or history of disability, genetic information, or status as a Vietnam-era or special disabled veteran except where specific age, sex or physical constitute a bona fide occupational qualification that is necessary to proper and efficient administration.

The Conecuh County Board of Education hereby establishes and reaffirms its commitment to a clearly defined Equal Employment Opportunity Program (EEOP) as set forth by the following guidelines:

Equal opportunity for all our citizens is a historic American ideal, and it is the policy of the Conecuh County Board of Education to maintain equal employment opportunity in the public service position of county government by considering job applicants and employees for hiring and advancement based on job-pertinent individual differences and not based on the extraneous factors such as race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, medical condition, age or disability. The objective of this program is to continue to ensure nondiscrimination in all employment-related decisions.

## **NONDISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT**

Conecuh County Schools does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

## Offices and Departments

<b><u>Office of the Superintendent</u></b>	
Dr. Tonya Bozeman, Superintendent (251) 578-1752, Ext 1201 <a href="mailto:tonya.bozeman@conecuhk12.com">tonya.bozeman@conecuhk12.com</a>	Mrs. Brenda Landon, Executive Administrative Assistant/Human Resources (251) 578-175, Ext. 1204 <a href="mailto:brenda.landon@conecuhk12.com">brenda.landon@conecuhk12.com</a>
<b><u>Federal Programs, Human Resources &amp; Student Support</u></b>	
Dr. LeAnn Smith, Assistant Superintendent (251) 578-1752, Ext. 4003 <a href="mailto:leann.smith@conecuhk12.com">leann.smith@conecuhk12.com</a>	Mrs. Samantha Rudolph, Student Support Administrative Assistant (251) 578-1752, Ext. 4006 <a href="mailto:samantha.rudolph@conecuhk12.com">samantha.rudolph@conecuhk12.com</a>
<b><u>Department of Finance</u></b>	
Mr. James Thompson Chief Finance School Officer (251) 578-1752, Ext. 1203 <a href="mailto:avery.ford@conecuhk12.com">avery.ford@conecuhk12.com</a>	Executive Assistant to CFSO (251) 578-1752, Ext. 1202 <a href="mailto:anita.deason@conecuhk12.com">anita.deason@conecuhk12.com</a>
Mrs. Jeanie Gaskin, Accounts Payable (251) 578-1752, ext. 1111 <a href="mailto:jeanie.gaskin@conecuhk12.com">jeanie.gaskin@conecuhk12.com</a>	Mrs. Pam Brock, Accounts Specialist/Special. Ed. (251) 578-1752 Ext. 1204 <a href="mailto:pam.brock@conecuhk12.com">pam.brock@conecuhk12.com</a>
<b><u>Curriculum and Instruction</u></b>	<b><u>Special Education, State Assessments, Health &amp; Wellness</u></b>
Mrs. Monica Mitchell, Elementary Curriculum Coordinator (251) 578-1752, Ext. 1215 <a href="mailto:monica.mitchell@conecuhk12.com">monica.mitchell@conecuhk12.com</a>	Ms. Rita Young, Special Education Coordinator (251) 578-1752, Ext. 4007 <a href="mailto:rita.young@conecuhk12.com">rita.young@conecuhk12.com</a>
Secondary Curriculum Coordinator (251) 578- 1752, Ext. 1220 <a href="mailto:maegan.grace@conecuhk12.com">maegan.grace@conecuhk12.com</a>	Special Education Administrative Assistant (251) 578-1752, Ext. 4001 <a href="mailto:joann.dees@conecuhk12.com">joann.dees@conecuhk12.com</a>
Mrs. Mary Ann Danford Textbook Coordinator (251) 578-5291, Ext. 1106 <a href="mailto:maryann.danford@conecuhk12.com">maryann.danford@conecuhk12.com</a>	Amanda C. Armstrong School Psychometrist (251) 578-1752, Ext. 4009
<b><u>Department of Technology</u></b>	
Mr. Triston Ewing, Technology Coordinator (251) 578-1752, Ext. 1206 <a href="mailto:triston.ewing@conecuhk12.com">triston.ewing@conecuhk12.com</a>	Mr. Tony Section, Technology Assistant (251) 238-1315 <a href="mailto:tony.section@conecuhk12.com">tony.section@conecuhk12.com</a>
Ms. Nyaesia Thompson, Technology Assistant (251) 578-1752, Ext 1209 <a href="mailto:nyaesia.thompson@conecuhk12.com">nyaesia.thompson@conecuhk12.com</a>	

## Offices and Departments

## **Operations and Student Support**

<p>Ms. Felicia Parham, Transportation Director (251) 578-7075, Ext. 1301 <a href="mailto:felicia.parham@conecuk12.com">felicia.parham@conecuk12.com</a></p>	<p>Mr. Loomas McMillian, Maintenance Supervisor (251) 238-2748 <a href="mailto:loomas.mcmillan@conecuk12.com">loomas.mcmillan@conecuk12.com</a></p>
<p>Mr. Johnny Brock, Child Nutrition Director (251) 578-1752, Ext. 1205 <a href="mailto:johnny.brock@conecuk12.com">johnny.brock@conecuk12.com</a></p>	<p>Mrs. Cathleen McQueen, CNP Bookkeeper &amp; Board Receptionist (251) 578-1752, Ext. 1207 <a href="mailto:cathleen.mcqueen@conecuhk12.com">cathleen.mcqueen@conecuhk12.com</a></p>
<p>Mrs. Terra Simmons Project Aware and Counseling Services Coordinator (251) 578-1752, Ext. 1217 <a href="mailto:terra.simmons@conecuhk12.com">terra.simmons@conecuhk12.com</a></p>	<p>Mrs. Odessa Wallace Parent Project Facilitator (251) 578-1752, Ext. 1217 <a href="mailto:odessa.wallace@conecuhk12.com">odessa.wallace@conecuhk12.com</a></p>



## **Conecuh County Schools & School Leaders**

<b>Conecuh County Junior High School</b>	Mr. Warrick Maye, Principal (251) 966-5411
<b>Evergreen Elementary School</b>	Mr. John Brantley, Principal (251) 578-2576
<b>Genesis Innovative School</b>	Mrs. Mary Ann Danford, Principal (251) 578-5291
<b>Hillcrest High School Workforce Development Center</b>	Dr. William R. Hines, Principal (251) 578-1126 Ms. Briana Hall, CTE Director (251) 578-7077
<b>Lyeffion Junior High School</b>	Mr. Terries Lett, Principal (251) 578-2800
<b>Repton Junior High School</b>	Mr. Tommy Dukes, Principal (251) 248-2960
<b>Southside Preparatory Magnet Academy</b>	Mr. Jarrod Thomas, Program Principal (251) 578-7072
<b>Thurgood Marshall Middle School</b>	Mr. Derek Pugh, Principal (251) 578-2866

# **Equal Employment Opportunity Policy**

## **Transfers and Reassignments**

It is the policy of the Conecuh County Board of Education that it may, at its discretion, initiate or approve employee job transfers at any time. A regular status classified full-time or part-time employee may be transferred by his or her Appointing Authority to a comparable vacant classified full-time or part-time position of the same range and category of service in the same department for which he or she is qualified.

A regular status classified full-time or part-time employee may also be transferred to a comparable position in another department, if he or she is qualified for the position, both Appointing Authorities or Department Heads agree and the transfer is approved by the Board of Education.

A regular status classified full-time or part-time employee may request a voluntary lateral job transfer outside his or her department, within the same grade classification, by applying for a posted open position. However, to be eligible for a voluntary transfer, the employee must be able to meet the requirements of the new position, must have satisfactory performance, must have held their current position for at least six (6) months and must have no adverse disciplinary actions during the same time period. An employee that is transferred will not have to complete a probationary period in his or her new position. No pay increase will be given to any employee as a result of a lateral transfer.

## **Voluntary Demotion**

A voluntary demotion shall be at the request of the employee. For an employee to request a voluntary demotion, he or she must state the reason for the request in writing and apply for a posted open position. However, to be eligible for a voluntary demotion, the employee must be able to meet the requirements of the new position, must have satisfactory job performance, must have held their current position for at least six (6) months and must have no adverse disciplinary actions during the previous year. All voluntary demotions will result in a pay no less than the lowest hourly rate/salary applicable for the new position.

## **Resignations**

If an employee wants to resign his or her position, he or she should notify his or her immediate supervisor, the Appointing Authority or the Appointed Department Head in writing no less than thirty (30) days before the expected resignation date. Failure to provide such a notice will be recorded in the employee's personnel file and may constitute grounds for "no-rehire." Employees who resign may schedule an appointment with the Personnel Department in order to complete an exit interview. At the time of the separation and prior to final payment, all records, assets and other items of District property in the employee's custody shall be transferred to the employee's supervisor, Appointing Authority or Appointed Department Head. Any amount due and owing to the District by the employee because of shortage in the above shall be withheld from the employee's final check.

After an employee gives notice and prior to the expiration of the thirty (30) days, his or her Appointing Authority or Appointed Department Head can release the employee from the job, provided that all state and federal legal requirements are met. If the Appointing Authority or Appointed Department Head releases the employee prior to the thirty (30) days, the employee will not be paid for the rest of that period and has no grievance rights.

The Personnel Department reserves the right to make deductions from an employee's paycheck for failure to return Conecuh County Schools equipment or uniforms (upon leaving employment). The employee's final check will include all annual leave payout (if applicable) and will be processed by the next pay day following the date of termination.

### **Rehire**

Employees who leave employment with Conecuh County Schools and later wish to return are eligible for consideration for rehire provided they left employment in good standing, and are otherwise qualified for re-employment, provided an appropriate position is available. Former employees rehired by Conecuh County Schools will be considered a new hire for purposes of benefits and leave accrual.

### **Garnishments and Levies**

In the event that garnishment or similar proceedings are instituted against an employee, the Conecuh County School System will deduct the required amount from the employee's paycheck.

### **Employment Grievance Procedures**

If an employee or applicant feels he or she has been a victim of discrimination, the employee can file a written complaint. Complaints by employees should be addressed to the employee's supervisor; if the supervisor is the subject of the complaint, the complaint should be directly filed with the Human Resource Department.

### **The written complaint should contain the following:**

1. Date(s), time(s) and location(s) of the incident/incidents that took place
2. Description of each incident, including a statement as to any physical contact, made and as to what was said and/or done
3. Name(s) of witnesses, if any
4. The names of anyone with whom incidents/incidences have been discussed

All complaints of discrimination will be investigated, and the results of the investigation will be reported to the complaining party. Investigation of a discrimination complaint may include, but is not limited to, interviewing the complaining party as well as other employees and/or others necessary to obtain sufficient information upon which to make an assessment of the situation. While every effort will be made to be sensitive to privacy issues, in the course of an investigation, Conecuh County Schools' representative will discuss relevant information with appropriate parties on a need-to-know basis. Therefore, the information provided during the investigation may not be kept totally confidential.

A record of the complaint and findings will become a part of the complaint investigation records and the file will be maintained separately from one's personnel file. The Human Resource Department is primarily responsible for investigating violations of the personnel policies of Conecuh County Schools. When appropriate, informal means to resolve discrimination complaints may be explored. Informal dispute resolution procedures may include, but are not

limited to, counseling the alleged violator or serving as a mediator between the two parties.

When the matter cannot be resolved informally, a written report of the investigation and a recommendation will be made. Recommendations can include discipline for the violator as well as the restoration of any employment terms, conditions, or opportunities the complainant lost or was denied because of the discrimination.

## **Non-Harassment Policy**

Conecuh County Board of Education is committed to creating a workplace free from the unlawful harassment or discrimination of employees by other employees and officials, or the unlawful harassment or discrimination of its officials and employees by its vendors, customers or visitors. Likewise, Conecuh County Schools will not accept the unlawful harassment or discrimination of a vendor, customer, or visitor by any employee of Conecuh County Schools.

In keeping with the spirit and the intent of federal and state law, the Conecuh County Board of Education strives to provide a comfortable work environment. Conecuh County Board of Education is committed to a workplace that is free of discrimination and harassment based on race, sex, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry or citizenship, disability or medical condition, age, or any other basis protected status. Same-sex harassment is also unlawful. Offensive, harassing, or discriminating behavior against any employee will not be tolerated. In addition, employees in a supervisory or managerial position will be responsible for taking proper action to end such behavior in their work areas.

In an effort to prevent sexual harassment and other forms of harassment or discrimination from occurring, this policy against harassment will be communicated to each employee. No Conecuh County Schools' employee is exempt from this policy.

### **Prohibited Behavior**

Offensive conduct or harassment that is of a sexual nature or based on race, sex, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, disability or medical condition, age, or any other protected status is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical actions, written or spoken language, and graphic communications
- Unwelcome and unwanted physical contact
- Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body
- Sexually degrading words to describe an individual
- Expectations, requests, demands or pressure for sexual favors
- The display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, including nude or sexually suggestive photographs
- Slurs, jokes, posters, cartoons, and gestures that are offensive in nature

The above-mentioned forms of conduct are prohibited forms of harassment when any or all of the following is/are true:

1. There is a promise or implied promise of preferential treatment or negative consequence regarding employment decisions or status.
2. Such conduct is intended to or has the effect of creating an intimidating or hostile or offensive work environment, or unreasonably interferes with a person's work performance.
3. A third party is offended by the sexual conduct or communications of others.

Conecuh County Board of Education encourages employees to address harassment directly when it occurs. Any incident of harassment shall be reported immediately to the Personnel Department or the supervisor in the manner described under the section of Equal Employment Opportunity/Employment Grievance Procedures. If an employee is not satisfied with the results or action(s) taken as a result of his or her initial complaint, then the employee must report his or her complaint to the Superintendent.

All complaints about harassment will be investigated, and the results of the investigation will be reported to the complaining party. Investigation of a harassment complaint may include, but is not limited to, interviewing the complaining and accused parties as well as other employees and/or vendors necessary to obtain sufficient information upon which to make an assessment of the situation. While Conecuh County Schools will make every effort to be sensitive to privacy issues, there is no guarantee of confidentiality. Retaliation and/or discrimination against an employee who complains of harassment are strictly prohibited and also may be a violation of Title VII.

Any employee who is found to have engaged in any form of harassment or discrimination of another employee will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Likewise, any employee, who has knowledge of such behavior, yet takes no action to report it, is also subject to disciplinary action. If the complaining employee is dissatisfied with the outcome of any investigation, or if any form of harassment or discrimination persists or re-occurs, the employee has the responsibility to report the occurrence to the appropriate authority as soon as possible.

#### **Non-Disciplinary Administrative Grievance Procedures**

A grievance may be a complaint regarding some matter considered by an employee as unresolved and otherwise unsettled. Below are the grievance steps.

##### **Step 1. (Applicable to Employees and Supervisors)**

The employee is expected to make every effort to resolve problems as they occur through informal means. Therefore, within five (5) calendar days after an employee knows, or should have known, of an alleged violation or misapplication of a Conecuh County personnel rule, regulation or procedure, the employee shall discuss the grievance with his or her immediate supervisor or the next highest supervisor if the problem is with the immediate supervisor (collectively hereafter “supervisor”). If this informal discussion fails to resolve the problem, the employee should prepare a written description of the problem at issue, including reference to any applicable personnel rule, regulation or procedure, the discussion that was held with the supervisor and why the employee feels that no acceptable resolution was reached in the discussion. Any such written description shall be prepared and provided to the supervisor in question within five (5) working days of the discussion.

The supervisor should provide the employee with an answer within five (5) working days of this initial meeting or receipt of said written description. The employee’s signed written description of the grievance along with the response of the supervisor is required at this level.

**Step 2. (Employee, Supervisor, or Appointing Authority)**

Within three (3) working days from the receipt of the supervisor’s final decision, the employee shall have the right to forward the decision.

A written record of the grievance is required by the Appointing Authority and shall include the following:

A statement of rules, regulations or procedures that have been violated or misapplied, with the dates and descriptions of such violations or misapplication signed by the employee;

1. A copy of the written action taken by the supervisor;
2. The specific remedy that is being sought signed by the employee;
3. The specific final action of the Appointing Authority with respect to the grievance signed by the Appointing Authority;
4. Any decision of the Appointing Authority will be final in all matters that do not concern the termination, suspension without pay, or involuntary demotion of an employee who has completed the probationary period.

**Anti-Retaliation**

Conecuh County Board of Education is committed to providing a work environment in which employees may complain about alleged discrimination or other problems, including harassment, without fear of retaliation. The Conecuh County Board of Education strictly prohibits discrimination against an employee because he or she has made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing regarding such alleged practices.

Any employee who wants to report an incident of retaliation should promptly report the matter. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal or retribution. Anyone engaging in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

Conecuh County Board of Education complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Public Law 101-336 (ADA), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The ADA prohibits employers with fifteen (15) or more employees from discriminating against qualified job applicants and employees who are or become disabled.

Conecuh County Schools is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities, unless it would impose an undue hardship on the employer. If an employee has a disability, he or she may request reasonable accommodation at any time during the application process or during the period of employment. The employee, the employee’s health professional, or any other representative acting on behalf of the employee may request an accommodation.

This may be done verbally or by completing a reasonable accommodation request form. This form may be obtained from the employee’s supervisor of the Conecuh County Personnel Department. Reasonable documentation from an appropriate healthcare or rehabilitation professional may be required to establish that an employee has an ADA disability and that the disability necessitates a reasonable accommodation.

## HIPAA

Conecuh County Board of Education complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and follows guidelines involving the protected health information of employees and dependents. Contact the Personnel Department for information on how to obtain a copy of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 policy.

## Technology Use Policy

To remain competitive, better serve our citizens and provide our employees with the best tools to do their jobs, Conecuh County Schools makes available to our workforce access to one or more forms of electronic media and services, including computers, e-mail, telephones, fax machines, external electronic bulletin boards, wire services, online services, intranet, Internet and the World Wide Web.

The Conecuh County Board of Education encourages the use of these media and associated services because they can make communication more efficient and effective and because they are valuable sources of information about vendors, customers, technology, and new products and services. However, all employees and everyone connected with the organization should remember that electronic media and services provided by the county are county property and their purpose is to facilitate and support county business. All computer users have the responsibility to use these resources in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner.

To ensure that all Conecuh County employees are responsible, the following guidelines have been established for using e-mail and the internet. No policy can lay down rules to cover every possible situation. Instead, it is designed to express Conecuh County Schools' philosophy and set forth general principles when using electronic media and services.

1. **Prohibited Communications** Electronic media cannot be used for knowingly transmitting retrieving, viewing, or storing any communication that is:
  - a. Discriminatory or harassing;
  - b. Derogatory to any individual or group;
  - c. Obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic;
  - d. Defamatory or threatening;
  - e. In violation of any license governing the use of software; or
  - f. Engaged in for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to Conecuh County's policy or business interests.
2. **Personal Use.** The computers, electronic media, and services provided by Conecuh County are primarily for business use to assist employees in the performance of their jobs. Limited, occasional, or incidental use of electronic media (sending or receiving) for personal, non-business purposes is understandable, and all such use should be done in a manner that does not negatively affect the systems' use for their business purposes. However, employees are expected to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and not abuse this privilege.
3. **Software.** To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the Conecuh County's computer system, unauthorized downloading of any software is strictly prohibited.

- 4. Social Media.** Employees are prohibited from engaging in any internet blogging, online social networking, or other forms of online publishing or discussion activities ("Online Social Networking and Blogging Activities") while on Conecuh County School's time, CCS's property, or Board business unless they have the advance approval for Board-directed postings.

Even on their own time, employees engaging in Online Social Networking and Blogging Activities are subject to all of the Board's policies and procedures, including, but not limited to, the Board's policies prohibiting any type of employment discrimination or harassment.

Employees engaging in Online Social Networking and Blogging Activities are expected to remain respectful of the School System, and its employees, its services, and should not post any material that is obscene, vulgar, defamatory, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or entity, and should not engage in any activity that reflects or may reflect negatively on the Board of Education, its employees, its services, or contains any content prohibited by the Board's policies and procedures.

Employees should make it clear in any Online Social Networking and Blogging Activities that the views and opinions they express about work-related matters are their own, have not been reviewed or approved by their employer, and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of their employer.

Employees should understand that they are personally responsible for the commentary they express and the material they post while engaging in Online Social Networking and Blogging Activities.

## **Workplace Rules of Conduct**

One of the system's paramount principles is to demonstrate respect and dignity in service to the employees of Conecuh County Schools and interactions with each other. To assure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the system from time to time establishes general work rules. Although it is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of some of the types of infractions that can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. In order to avoid such severe consequences, just follow simple common sense, and when in doubt ask your supervisor before engaging in any questionable activity.

### **Workplace Violence Prevention**

Conecuh County Schools is committed to maintaining a safe environment and preventing workplace violence. All employees should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee or a member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods, will not be tolerated. Within the sole discretion of the county, any employee who engages in workplace violence will be disciplined, up to and including immediate termination of employment with no further warning.



All threats of violence, violent acts, potentially volatile situations, and all conduct prohibited by this policy should be reported as soon as possible to the supervisor. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by clients, vendors, solicitors, or other members of the public. Reports should be as specific and detailed as possible. Additionally, any emergency, crisis or situation posing imminent danger should be immediately reported to 911. As soon as practical, notify the supervisor or Appointing Authority.

The system will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as is practical. No person will be subject to retaliation or reprisal because of making a report. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the system may place employees on administrative leave, either with or without pay, pending investigation. Employees charged with a crime may be placed on administrative leave without pay for a maximum of ten (10) days for investigation.

Anyone determined to be responsible for threats of violence, violent acts, or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Employees are also strictly prohibited from using, possessing or concealing any weapon, including but not limited to handguns, shotguns, rifles, tasers, automatic or semi-automatic weapons, or other firearms, and knives with blades more than three (3) inches in length, while on any Conecuh County Schools' properties.

This prohibition does not apply to materials specifically authorized by the system for use on-the-job or another job-related purpose or such weapons left in the employee's vehicle if otherwise permitted by law. Any employee who violates this provision against weapons will be disciplined, up to and including immediate termination of employment, within the discretion of the Conecuh County Board of Education. The system encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of the supervisor before the situation escalates into potential violence. The system is eager to assist the resolution of employee disputes and will not discipline employees for raising such concerns.

### **Dress Code**

The Conecuh County Board of Education seeks to project a positive image and to promote professionalism in the workplace. Employees are required to dress in an appropriate manner consistent to the specific job duties to which he or she is assigned and to exercise good judgment. Appointing Authorities and supervisors are authorized/required to assure compliance in the particular areas for which they are responsible. Dress codes are left to the discretion of the department head over the department. During business hours or whenever an employee represents the district, he or she should be clean, well-groomed and wear appropriate clothes.

If an employee's supervisor finds that the employee's personal appearance is inappropriate, he or she will be asked to leave work and return properly dressed and groomed. If an employee is asked to leave, he or she will not be paid for the time away from work.

Where necessary, the District may make a reasonable accommodation to this policy for a person with a disability.

The following examples should help the employee understand the district's personal appearance guidelines:

1. Tank tops, tube or halter tops may not be worn alone under any circumstances;
2. Offensive body odor and poor hygiene is not professionally acceptable;
3. Perfume, cologne and aftershave lotion should be used moderately or avoided altogether, as some individuals may be sensitive to strong fragrances;
4. Body piercings, such as eyebrow rings, nose rings, lip rings and tongue studs, is not professionally appropriate and must not be worn at work;
5. Torso body piercings with visible jewelry or jewelry that can be seen through or under clothing must not be worn at work;
6. Footwear should be fastened and secure to feet for safety and shall be appropriate for job duties;
7. Skirt length must be no more than two (2) inches above the knee.
8. Shorts may be worn in certain circumstances in some departments. If shorts are allowed the length must be no more than two (2) inches above the knee. "Short shorts" are not permitted.

### **ADA Accommodations**

If you have a disability and need accommodation to perform your job duties or to receive any regular benefit or condition of employment, you should make the request to your supervisor verbally, in a written note or memo or by using a special form. Any other person may assist in making this request.

### **Attendance**

Each employee is an important member of the Conecuh County Schools' team. In order to accomplish this, each employee's prompt and regular attendance is required. In case of an illness that would prevent the employee from reporting to work at the scheduled time, notice must be **reported** first to his or her immediate supervisor (or designee) or next level, if unable to confirm with their immediate supervisor. If notice is given, the employee will still be considered tardy once he or she arrives at work. Failure to provide notification of absence for three (3) consecutive workdays may result in removal from the payroll as having resigned without notice. Employees who resign under such circumstances are not eligible for rehire.

### **Work Hours and Time Records**

The normal workweek for a full-time employee consists of forty (40) hours depending on the job classification and work location and for a part-time employee less than thirty (30) hours a week on average. Some jobs may require other hours of service. In such cases, the immediate supervisor will inform the employee of the required work hours.

Hourly (FLSA non-exempt) employees will be responsible for completing a time record with the beginning and ending work times, including lunch. This is necessary for payroll calculation of the employee's earnings.

All salaried (FLSA exempt) employees are expected to accomplish their duties irrespective of the time or days required to do so. Salaried exempt employees will be responsible for recording all time records if he or she is absent from work. The employee reserves the right to examine and verify his or her personal time record prior to supervisor approval. Employees who willfully falsify a time record will be subject to immediate termination.

A workday may not be shortened by “working through” or reducing the lunch period on a voluntary basis, nor may an employee voluntarily begin work before or after his or her regularly scheduled hours for the purpose of accumulating overtime. Every adjustment to the work schedule requires approval from the employee’s immediate supervisor.

### **Payroll**

It is the policy and practice of the Conecuh County School System to accurately compensate employees and to do so in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. To ensure that the employee is paid properly for all time worked and that no improper deductions are made, the employee must record correctly all work time and review his or her paychecks promptly to identify and to report all errors.

The Conecuh County School System makes every effort to ensure all employees are paid correctly. When mistakes do happen and are called to our attention, we will promptly make any corrections necessary. Each employee should review his or her pay stub when received to make sure it is correct. If a mistake has occurred or if there are any questions, please use the reporting procedure outlined below.

If an employee is classified as non-exempt (Hourly), he or she must maintain a record of the total hours worked each day. These hours must be accurately recorded in the time-keeping system provided by the Conecuh County Schools. Each employee must verify that the reported hours worked are complete and must accurately reflect all regular and overtime hours worked, any absences, late arrivals, early departures and meal breaks. When an employee receives each paycheck, the employee must also verify immediately that he or she was paid correctly for all regular and overtime hours worked each workweek. Any discrepancies will be corrected on the next regular payroll run. No special payroll will be run.

Unless authorized by the employee’s supervisor, the employee shall not work any hours that are not authorized, unless authorized to do so by his or her immediate supervisor and that time is recorded on his or her time record. Employees are prohibited from performing any “off-the-clock” work. “Off-the-clock” work means work the employee may perform and fails to report on his or her time record. Any employee who fails to report or accurately reports any hours worked will be subject to potential disciplinary action, up to and including termination. It is a violation of the District’s policy for any employee to falsify a time record, or to alter another employee’s time record. It is also a serious violation of District policy for any employee or manager to instruct another employee to incorrectly or falsely report hours worked or to alter another employee’s time record to under- or over-report hours worked. If any supervisor or employee instructs another employee to (1) incorrectly or falsely under- or over-report an employee’s hours worked, or (2) alter another employee’s time records to inaccurately or falsely report that employee’s hours worked, the employee should report it immediately to the Personnel Department.

If an employee is classified as exempt (salaried), the employee will receive a salary that is intended to compensate him or her for all hours he or she may work for the District. This salary will be established at the time of hire or when he or she becomes classified as an exempt employee. While it may be subject to review and modification from time to time, such as during salary review times, the salary will be a predetermined amount and will not be subject to deductions for variations in the quantity or quality of the work the employee performs. Under federal and state law, an employee’s salary is subject to certain deductions.

For example, absent contrary state law requirements, an employee's salary can be reduced for the following reasons:

1. Full day absences for sickness, disability or personal reasons; Partial day absences for sickness, disability or personal reasons when:
  - a. Permission for paid leave has not been sought or has been sought and denied;
  - b. Accrued leave has been exhausted;
  - c. Employees are granted leave without pay, in accordance with the policies adopted by the Conecuh County Board of Education.
2. Full day disciplinary suspensions for infractions of the Conecuh County Board's written policies and procedures;
3. Family and Medical Leave Absences (either full or partial day absences);
4. The first or last week of employment in the event the employee works less than a full week;
5. Suspension without pay for full or partial day absences based on violation of a safety rule or a workplace rule of conduct.

An employee's salary may also be reduced for certain types of deductions such as his or her portion of health, dental or life insurance premiums; voluntary supplemental benefits; state, federal or local taxes and social security; or voluntary contributions to a retirement plan.

If an employee has questions about deductions from his or her pay, please immediately contact the Personnel Department. If an employee believes that his or her pay does not accurately reflect the employee's hours worked, the employee should immediately report the matter to his or her supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or if the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person (or if the employee has not received a prompt and fully acceptable reply), the employee should immediately contact the Personnel Department.

If an employee has not received a satisfactory response within five (5) business days after reporting the incident contact the Superintendent.

Every report will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate, up to and including discipline for any employee(s) who violates this policy. In addition, the district will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report alleged violations of this policy or who cooperate in the district's investigation of such reports. Retaliation is unacceptable and any form of retaliation in violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.

### **Tobacco Use / Smoke Free Workplace**

To protect and enhance indoor air quality and to contribute to the health and well-being of all employees, Conecuh County Schools' facilities and vehicles shall be entirely smoke free. Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is prohibited in all of the enclosed areas within Conecuh County Schools' work sites, without exception. This includes common work areas, conference and meeting rooms, private offices, hallways, stairs, restrooms, and county owned or leased vehicles and all other enclosed facilities.

While Conecuh County Schools make certain areas available to smokers, it in no way has any legal responsibility to do so. Employees who choose to use these smoking areas do so at their own risk. No additional breaks are allowed to any employee who smokes. No Employees may smoke in their personal vehicles, but the smoke and tobacco products must be completely contained within the vehicle. It is not acceptable that either smoking or non-smoking employees are subjected to smoke that they must walk through to reach their vehicle or any other destination on Conecuh County Schools' property. Finally, smokers and users of tobacco products must dispose of the remains in the proper containers. This helps to keep a neat and clean environment for all employees and visitors. Failure to comply with all of the components of this policy will result in disciplinary action that may lead up to and including termination.

## **Progressive Discipline**

### **Procedures**

In cases where an employee displays inappropriate conduct or poor performance, and the activity does not call for automatic termination, Conecuh County Schools' follows a progressive discipline process. This is a system that consists of corrective action, documentation and adverse action.

The steps of progressive discipline may include:

1. Employee Counseling – The first step is usually employee counseling from the supervisor with the employee to identify the problem and to state the corrective action needed. The supervisor documents this step including dates, times and details of incidents of improper conduct or poor performance and the date the employee counseling was given. The supervisor sends this documentation to the HR Supervisor who will review it and place it in the employee's personnel file. The employee may submit a separate written statement for the file, if desired.
2. Written Warning – The second step in the process is usually a written warning with specific examples cited. The supervisor prepares a letter or memo that states a specific time frame in which the employee must improve and gives the consequences of failure to improve. Prior to issuing the letter, the supervisor must review it with his or her Appointing Authority. A copy of the letter is forwarded to the HR Supervisor for review and placement in the employee's personnel file. The employee may submit a separate written statement for the file, if desired.
3. Adverse Action – If attempts at corrective action fail to produce satisfactory results, some form of adverse action may be taken. The term "adverse action" means action involving suspension, in-voluntary demotion, or termination. Before any adverse action becomes effective, the supervisor must obtain the written approval from the Appointing Authority or Appointed Department Head.

An employee who receives two (2) documented warnings for any reason within a twelve (12) month period may be subject to termination, unless automatic termination is justified. Depending on the circumstances surrounding a disciplinary action, any step or progressive discipline may be skipped and disciplinary action up to and including termination may be employed at any time. Furthermore, past performance and disciplinary action may be considered when determining disciplinary action to be taken.

In the event that the HR Supervisor determines that a request for disciplinary action is not appropriate under the circumstances, or in the event that a supervisor fails to take appropriate disciplinary action against an employee, the Superintendent may, in his or her discretion, initiate

new or additional disciplinary action against an employee, which shall be subject to the pre-disciplinary hearing and appeals process set forth below.

In the event that a classified employee is serving as an acting or interim Appointed Department Head serving as the Appointed Department Head, and in the event disciplinary action is required against the acting or interim Appointed Department Head, the CCS Administrator may, in his or her discretion, initiate disciplinary action against the employee which shall be subject to the pre-disciplinary hearing and appeals process.

### **Administrative Leave with Pay**

The Superintendent may place an employee on administrative leave with pay in consultation with the HR Supervisor for up to ten (10) work days during the course of an investigation to determine whether any disciplinary action should be initiated against the employee. Longer periods of administrative leave, with or without pay, may be considered by the Conecuh County Board of Education.

### **Suspensions without Pay**

The Superintendent may suspend an employee without pay as a part of disciplinary action for up to fifteen (15) working days at any one time, not to exceed thirty (30) working days in any one year. Employees may not use annual or sick leave while on suspension.

The progressive discipline process will be followed prior to suspension, unless the situation warrants automatic suspension.

### **Terminations**

1. Immediate termination may be made for cause including, but not limited to, an employee's action or behavior that constitutes:
  - a. Insubordination
  - b. Endangering his or her own health or safety or the health or safety of other employees or citizens;
  - c. Theft, vandalism or willful destruction of District or employee property;
  - d. Making fraudulent statements on employee applications or job records;
  - e. Conviction of a felony offense or of a crime involving moral turpitude
  - f. Conviction of an offense that affects the employee's ability to perform his or her job duties or insurability, including, but not limited to, loss or suspension of licenses or other credentials;
  - g. Any other infraction when termination is determined to be in the best interest of the school district.
2. Terminations that follow the progressive discipline process are permitted for reasons that include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Misconduct;
  - b. Willful neglect of duties;
  - c. Absence from work without authorization or notification;
  - d. Failure to perform job duties;
  - e. Repeated tardiness or absence;
  - f. Violation of departmental rules;
  - g. Email abuse;
  - h. Internet abuse.

Any employee who fails to correct deficiencies after two (2) documented warnings may be subject to termination, unless automatic termination is justified.

### **Appeals Procedures for Adverse Action**

When the Superintendent seeks to discipline an employee either through suspension without pay, or termination, he or she will make a recommendation to the Conecuh Board of Education. The Superintendent shall notify the employee in writing that he or she proposes disciplinary action in the form of suspension without pay, involuntary demotion or termination and the grounds for such proposed action. If the employee does not request a hearing within 15 days (applicable to tenured personnel), the proposed discipline will become effective at the end of the three (3) working days.

### **Personnel Appeals**

An employee who requests a hearing before the Board must have suffered one of the following forms of disciplinary action:

- Termination
- Suspension without Pay
- Involuntary Demotion

## **Travel Policy**

### **Reimbursement**

1. All travel expenses will be on a reimbursement basis only. Travelers may use a personal credit card or charge account for travel purposes and obtain reimbursement from the district.
2. A CCS eForms for Professional Leave and/or Professional Development must be submitted and approved prior to departure for meetings, conferences, seminars, etc.
3. Each traveler anticipating generating reimbursable and/or prepaid expenditures, must submit their own Professional leave/Professional development request, regardless of other travelers or attendees.
4. All travel reimbursement requests for travelers must be submitted and approved in CCSeforms.
5. Travel reimbursement requests must have the following attached, if applicable:
  - a. Registration (if not pre-paid)
  - b. Itemized Meal Receipts (15% gratuity limit; no receipts required for overnight travel)
  - c. Lodging or Hotel
  - d. Airline Tickets (Coach Class Only)
  - e. Mileage for personal vehicle (mileage documentation required for out-of-town mileage)
  - f. Parking Fees (official dated receipts)
  - g. Baggage & Handling Fees (dated receipts)
  - h. Uber/Taxi/Shuttle Fees (dated receipts, destination and amount)
  - i. Telephone/Internet Charges (official/dated receipt required)
  - j. Other Miscellaneous Expenses (discretionary)

All approved forms must be received by the Central Office no later than 30 days following the travel end date. Incomplete reimbursement requests will be returned. All travel reimbursements will be mailed to the address on file. At no time will travel reimbursements be allowed to carry over into the subsequent fiscal year.

### **Unauthorized Expenses**

The Board of Education will not reimburse a traveler for alcoholic beverages, snacks, personal supplies, rental cars, limousine services or entertainment.

### **Mileage reimbursement**

1. Travel in a personal vehicle will be reimbursed at the current mileage rate designated by the State of Alabama. The mileage rate usually changes in January of each year.
2. Travelers are encouraged to use system vehicles, when available. If a system vehicle is unavailable, travelers may be reimbursed for business miles traveled in a personal vehicle at the established or standard mileage rate, as prescribed by the Internal Revenue Service. Rental cars are prohibited. If a rental car is utilized the traveler will only be reimbursed the cost of mileage, as if their own personal vehicle was utilized.\
3. Reimbursement is for point-to-point mileage only and is paid from the traveler's base or home, whichever is closer. For out of county travel, travelers are required to submit a printout from Google Maps, MapQuest, Yahoo Maps, etc. verifying mileage driven. Mileage will not be reimbursed without proper documentation.
4. Vicinity or area mileage, necessary for conducting official district business is allowable, but must be shown separately.

### **Meal Allowance**

1. Travelers may be reimbursed the actual costs of meals within the maximum established limits. Gratuity of up to fifteen (15%) percent may be included; however, it must be added to the costs of the meal. The following meal limits apply: a. Daily travel with no overnight stay - \$20.00/daily b. Overnight travel meal per diem - \$50.00/daily
2. A dated itemized meal receipt is required to claim the daily meal allowance (\$20 maximum).
3. A dated itemized receipt is NOT required to claim the overnight per diem (\$50 daily).
4. Expenses in excess of the per diem limit will not be reimbursed. HOTELS/LODGING:
  - a. Traveler must be at least fifty (50) miles from assigned base (cost center) or home, whichever is closer, to be reimbursed for an overnight stay, unless the stay is required to meet a business need (i.e. an event requires you to be onsite for late night or early morning setup).
  - b. Travelers must arrange all travel and are expected to utilize negotiated or preferred rates, if possible
  - c. Cost associated with internet usage for business reasons is reimbursable.
  - d. In-room meal charges or room service must be itemized separately, so that lodging and meal charges are listed separately.
  - e. In-room meal charges should be itemized separately on an expense report, so that hotel and meal charges are captured separately.

### **Air Travel**

1. Travelers are expected to use the lowest logical airfare at the time of the booking. Airline travel will be limited to Coach Class only.
2. Personal upgrades utilizing personal miles or coupons can be used to upgrade to first class, or a traveler may opt to pay personally for the price difference between coach and first class. The additional cost incurred WILL NOT be reimbursed and participation in these programs must not influence flight selection, which would result in incremental cost to the district, beyond the lowest available airfare, as defined in this policy.



3. A receipt for the paid airfare and a ticket stubs must be attached to the travel claim when seeking reimbursement. \*Note: If an alternative means of transportation is chosen, the limit of reimbursement shall be no more than the mode of transportation that is economical.

### **Itinerant Travel**

All in-system itinerant travel should be conducted in a system vehicle, if possible. Any exception or deviation must be approved by the Superintendent. Failure to obtain approval will result in travel reimbursements being denied. In the event of exceptions or approvals granted by the Superintendent, the following will apply: An employee/traveler assigned to teach classes at two or more campuses (example – mornings at one campus, afternoons at the second campus which requires automobile use) may claim one-way mileage for travel between campuses.

Employees/travelers may not claim mileage when they are assigned to work all day at different schools or work sites on alternate days (example – Mondays at one school, Tuesdays at a second school, or any like combinations). Certified employees, with the exception of School Administrators, traveling on a continuing basis from school to school or worksite to worksite to conduct the activities associated with their jobs shall be paid mileage.

### **Other Provisions**

1. The Superintendent may authorize exceptions to the provisions set forth if he/she deems the exceptions necessary to meet the needs of the School Systems operations. School Principals or Supervisors, accompanied by an explanation of the circumstances that justify the need for making the exception, will request the Superintendent's authorization of exceptions in writing.
2. School Principals are permitted to reimburse school employees for actual travel expenses while such employees are conducting school business. All local school travel reimbursements must follow the district travel guidelines, as explained above. Failure to compile with district guidelines may result in disciplinary action. All travel expenses for Principals that are to be paid out of school funds must first be approved by the Superintendent.
3. All consultants hired by the Board will be required to follow the guidelines set forth when requesting reimbursements
4. All transport and homebound travel approved by the Board will be required to follow the guidelines set forth when requesting reimbursements. If at all possible, employees traveling to the same location, for the same purpose should carpool and share lodging. It is also the employee's responsibility to ensure that the applicable forms and receipts are submitted for reimbursement.
5. Mileage reimbursement is for point-to-point mileage only and is paid from the employee's base or home, whichever is closer. For out-of-town travel, employees are required to submit a printout from Google Maps, MapQuest, Yahoo Maps, etc. verifying mileage driven. Mileage will not be reimbursed without proper documentation.
6. Fully approved travel reimbursements requests will be processed in the due course of business. The district will make every effort to process fully approved travel claims within two (2) weeks. However, there may be times when, due to absences, closures, weather days, etc. this is not feasible.

## **Leave Policies**

All current full-time employees hired by the Conecuh County Board of Education, will earn paid leave for the length of their contract in accordance with the State Department of Education. All Leave Requests including Sick, Personal, Vacation and Professional should be submitted through the Conecuh County Employee Portal forms (CCSeforms).

### **Sick Leave**

All full-time employees will earn one sick leave day per month of contract as long as the employee is in an active pay status. Employees in an unpaid leave status will not earn sick leave. Earned sick leave can be accumulated and carried over from one year to the next.

An employee may use accrued sick leave for any of the following reasons:

When an employee is unable to work due to personal illness, injury incurred off-duty, or on-the-job injury leave under state law or the Family Medical Leave Act, or when the employee's presence may endanger the health of fellow workers;

An employee will not accrue sick leave while he or she is on a leave of absence and on a leave without pay status. Upon separation of employment from Conecuh County Schools, an employee will not be paid for his or her accrued sick leave.

### **Sick Leave Notification and Approval**

If an employee is absent, the employee is required to immediately notify his or her supervisor, or next level manager and submit a form in CCS eforms.

### **Personal Leave**

Full-time employees may take up to two (2) personal days per scholastic calendar year. All personal days should be submitted in CCS eforms.

### **Vacation Leave**

All employees that earn vacation leave are to request such leave in CCS eforms at least 2 weeks in advance, if possible. All vacation days should be submitted in CCS eforms.

### **Professional Leave**

The Superintendent is authorized to grant professional leave with pay to CCBOE employees to engage in educational activities which in the judgment of the Superintendent serve the needs and interests of the school system. The number of days approved for such leave will be at the discretion of the Superintendent. All professional leave requests should be submitted in CCS eforms.

## **Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace Policy**

The Conecuh County Commission is committed to providing a safe working environment for all employees while serving the citizens of Conecuh County. The Conecuh County Board of Education recognizes that any employee who improperly uses intoxicating substances, including drugs and alcohol, poses a serious threat to himself/herself, his or her co-workers and to the public in general. Even small quantities of narcotics, abused prescription or over-the-counter drugs or alcohol can impair judgment and reflexes. This impairment can have dire results, particularly for employees operating vehicles of potentially dangerous equipment.

It is therefore the policy of the Conecuh County Board of Education that all employees or any person performing any kind of work for Conecuh County Board of Education must report to work completely free from alcohol, illegal or unauthorized drugs or any other substances that may have a mind-altering or intoxicating effect or otherwise impair the employee's judgment, reaction times or functioning.

The Conecuh County Board of Education also prohibits all employees from using, possessing, manufacturing, distributing or making arrangements to distribute alcohol, illegal or unauthorized drugs or any other intoxicating substances while at work or on or about any county property.

In order to avoid creating safety problems and violating this policy, employees must inform his or her supervisor when he or she is legitimately taking any medication, including prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications, which affects his or her ability to work. Employees whose job performance may be affected by such medications may be required to provide a fitness-for-duty certification before being allowed to resume their job duties.

Any employee who violates this policy in any way shall be immediately removed from his or her job duties and shall be subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

No part of this policy shall be construed to create a contract of continued employment or to confer upon any employee or applicant a property interest in his or her employment. Conecuh County Schools maintains the right to change this policy at any time without notice. To the extent that any portion or provision of this policy and procedure conflicts with any applicable federal or state laws or regulation, such federal or state laws or regulations will be controlling.

## **Code of Ethics**

### **Ethical Conduct**

It is the policy of the Conecuh County Board of Education to uphold, promote and demand the highest standards of ethics from all employees and officials, whether elected or appointed.

Accordingly, all County employees should maintain the utmost standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty and fairness in carrying out their public duties; avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants; and never use their county position or powers for improper personal gain.

Every employee of the Conecuh County School System is a "public employee." The taxpayers of this County entrust every employee with the responsibility of carrying on business beneficial to the taxpayer.

Employees of the Conecuh County School System are subject to the provision of the Alabama Ethics Law (codified at §§ 36-25-1, et. Seq., Code of Alabama 1976, as amended from time to time) (sometimes referred to as the "Alabama Ethics Law" or the "Ethics Law") and the decisions and enforcement of the Alabama Ethics Commission. Employees may visit the Ethics Commission's website for further information of interest at [www.ethics.alabama.gov](http://www.ethics.alabama.gov)

### **Statement of Economic Interest**

Some employees may have to complete an annual questionnaire for the Alabama Ethics Commission. The Personnel Department will provide these employees the required forms, upon request. These employees are responsible for filing the reports in a timely manner. Section 36-25-4.2 states that “all public employees required to file the Statement of Economic Interests required by Section 36-25-14, shall participate in an online educational review of the Alabama Ethics Law provided on the official website of the commission. Employees hired after January 1, 2011, shall have 90 days to comply with this subsection.”

### **Political Activity**

Employees may individually exercise their right to vote and privately express their views as a citizen, including becoming a candidate for public office. In an effort to harmonize the Board’s policy on Political Activity of school employees with State law, the Commission adopts Ala. Code § 45-22-120.13 (1975) verbatim:

**(a)** In county elections, no employee shall make, solicit, or receive any assessment, donation, subscription, or contribution for any political purpose whatsoever except to exercise his or her right as a citizen to express his or her opinion and cast his or her vote; no employee shall assist any candidate for nomination or election to county office or make any public statement in support of or against any such candidate, or participate in any manner whatever in the campaign of any candidate in any county election; and no employee shall receive any appointment or advancement as a reward for his or her support of a candidate for office or a political party; nor shall he or her be dismissed, suspended, or reduced in rank or pay as punishment for failure to support any candidate for political office. Any employee who wishes to become a candidate for county office shall, upon qualifying for such office, take leave of absence without pay to campaign for such office. Upon winning any such election, the employee shall resign from his or her position of employment with the county.

**(b)** The provisions of this section notwithstanding, nothing herein contained shall be construed as limiting the activities of county employees in city, state, or national elections, nor as prohibiting an employee from being a member, officer, or beat committeeman or committeewoman of a political party; neither shall this article interfere with any duty such employee might have as such member, officer, or beat committeeman or committeewoman. Conecuh County Schools also prohibits employees from distributing political literature or printed or other material of any kind in working areas at any time. Employees may not use any equipment owned by Conecuh County Schools, including but not limited to, copiers and fax machines, to engage in political activities. This prohibition against soliciting other employees for political purposes covers Conecuh County Schools’ telephonic and computer equipment. Thus, no employee is permitted to use Conecuh County Schools’ electronic mail, the internet, voice-mail, telephones, computers or other related equipment for the purpose of soliciting others for political activities or for preparing, duplicating or distributing political literature or other material to other employees or non-employees. The Board Attorney is available to answer any questions regarding proper employee political activity. This policy does not authorize an employee to engage in political activity in violation of federal or state law.

### **Secondary Employment**

Conecuh County Schools' employees shall not engage in any outside employment which adversely affects his or her work performance as an employee of the District or creates a conflict of interest. If an employee engages in other employment, he or she must notify his or her supervisor in writing stating the name of the employer, the nature of the work or business, specific duties, and hours worked per week. The supervisor will send a copy of these statements to the HR Supervisor for placement in the employee's personnel file. If the supervisor believes there may be a potential incompatibility between the outside employment and Conecuh County Schools' employment due to either the number of work hours or nature of work or scheduling requirements, he or she shall submit appropriate recommendations to the HR Supervisor. The final decision will be made jointly by the HR Supervisor and the Appointing Department Head or Superintendent.

### **Reporting Arrests**

Any employee of the Conecuh County Schools who has been arrested for any reason must report the arrest and surrounding circumstances to his or her immediate supervisor within one (1) day of returning to work. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action. Supervisors are required to forward the information to the Appointing Authority, Appointed Department Head and HR Supervisor.

## **Nepotism Policy (Hiring of Relatives)**

Conecuh County Board of Education permits the employment of qualified relatives as long as such employment does not, in the opinion of the school system, create actual or perceived conflicts of interest. For this policy, "relative" is a spouse (including civil union partner and registered domestic partner), child, parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, first cousin, or corresponding in-law or "step" relation. Conecuh County Board of Education will consider the placement of related employees as follows:

1. Individuals who are related by blood or marriage are permitted to work for Conecuh County Schools, provided no direct reporting or supervisory/management relationship exists. That is, no employee is permitted to work within the "chain of command" of a relative such that the other relative could influence one relative's work responsibilities, salary, or career progress. No relatives are permitted to work in the same department. Additionally, no relatives are permitted to be employed in any other positions in which the District believes an inherent conflict of interest may exist.
2. Employees who marry while employed are treated in accordance with these guidelines. That is, if, in the opinion of the school system, a conflict or an apparent conflict arises as a result of the marriage, one of the employees will be transferred at the earliest practicable time.

In addition, Conecuh County School System recognizes that at times, employees and their domestic partners, or "significant others" also could be in supervisor-subordinate relationships which create an actual or perceived conflict of interest. In such circumstances, the school system will treat these employees as "relatives" for purposes of enforcing this policy.

It is the goal of Conecuh County Schools to avoid creating or maintaining circumstances in which the appearance of possibility of favoritism, conflicts, or management disruptions exist. The school system will allow existing personal/working relationships to be maintained, thereby creating a “grandfather clause” for those employed as of the date of adoption, under the following circumstances:

- That the relationship will not create an adverse impact on work productivity or performance;
- That the relationship will not create actual conflict-of-interest.

It is the responsibility of every employee to identify to the Conecuh County Schools’ Personnel Department any potential or existing personal relationship which falls under the definitions provided. Employees who fail to disclose personal relationships covered by this section will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including the termination of employment. This policy does not apply through Kelly Services, employees who are hired for a specific non-permanent position.

## **Alabama Educator Code of Ethics**

**[https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ee/Documents/Alabama\\_Educator\\_Code\\_of\\_Ethics.pdf](https://www.alsde.edu/sec/ee/Documents/Alabama_Educator_Code_of_Ethics.pdf)**

### **Introduction**

The primary goal of every educator in the state of Alabama must, at all times, be to provide an environment in which all students can learn. In order to accomplish that goal, educators must value the worth and dignity of every person, must have a devotion to excellence in all matters, must actively support the pursuit of knowledge, and must fully participate in the nurturance of a democratic citizenry. To do so requires adherence to a high ethical standard.

The Alabama Educator Code of Ethics defines the professional behavior of educators in Alabama and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The code protects the health, safety, and general welfare of students and educators; outlines objective standards of conduct for professional educators; and clearly defines actions of an unethical nature for which disciplinary sanctions are justified.

### **Standard 1: Professional Conduct**

***An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards.***

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: Encouraging and supporting colleagues in the development and maintenance of high standards.

- Respecting fellow educators and participating in the development of a professional and supportive teaching environment.
- Engaging in a variety of individual and collaborative learning experiences essential to developing professionally in order to promote student learning.

Unethical conduct is any conduct that impairs the certificate holder’s ability to function in his or her employment position or a pattern of behavior that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students. Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Harassment of colleagues.
- Misuse or mismanagement of tests or test materials.
- Inappropriate language on school grounds.
- Physical altercations.
- Failure to provide appropriate supervision of students.

### **Standard 2: Trustworthiness**

#### **An educator should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice.**

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Properly representing facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.
- Advocating for fair and equitable opportunities for all children.
- Embodying for students the characteristics of intellectual honesty, diplomacy, tact, and fairness.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting professional qualifications, criminal record, or employment history when applying for employment or certification.
- Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information submitted to federal, state, and/or other governmental agencies.
- Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel.
- Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting reasons for absences or leaves.
- Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting information submitted in the course of an official inquiry or investigation.

### **Standard 3: Unlawful Acts**

#### **An educator should 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. 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 or a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted.

### **Standard 4: Teacher/Student Relationship**

#### **An educator should always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom.**

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Fulfilling the roles of trusted confidante, mentor, and advocate for students' growth.
- Nurturing the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and civic potential of all students.
- Providing an environment that does not needlessly expose students to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
- Creating, supporting, and maintaining a challenging learning environment for all students.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Committing any act of child abuse, including physical or verbal abuse.
- Committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment.
- Committing or soliciting any unlawful sexual act.
- Engaging in harassing behavior on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion, or disability.
- Soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, or physical relationship with a student.
- Furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or allowing a student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs.

### **Standard 5: Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Use or Possession**

#### **An educator should refrain from the use of alcohol and/or tobacco during the course of professional practice and should never use illegal or unauthorized drugs.**

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Factually representing the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use and abuse to students during the course of professional practice.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Being under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs.
- Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcoholic beverages or using tobacco. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity that is sponsored by a school or a school system or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum such as club trips, etc., where students are involved.

**Standard 6: Public Funds and Property**

**An educator entrusted with public funds and property should honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility.**

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Maximizing the positive effect of school funds through judicious use of said funds.
- Modeling for students and colleagues the responsible use of the public property.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Misusing public or school-related funds.
- Failing to account for funds collected from students or parents.
- Submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or pay.
- Co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts.
- Using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing body.

**Standard 7: Remunerative Conduct**

**An educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.**

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Ensuring that institutional privileges are not used for personal gain.
- Ensuring that school policies or procedures are not impacted by gifts or gratuities from any person or organization.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Soliciting students or parents of students to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local governing body.
- Accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there appears to be a conflict of interest.
- Tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education.

**Standard 8: Maintenance of Confidentiality**

**An educator should comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material, and other information covered by confidentiality agreements.**

Ethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Keeping in confidence information about students that have been obtained in the course of professional service unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.
- Maintaining diligently the security of standardized test supplies and resources.

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Sharing confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status/income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law.
- Violating confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, and violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items.
- Violating other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.

**Standard 9: Abandonment of Contract**



**An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or educational agency for the duration of the contract.**

Unethical conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Abandoning the contract for professional services without prior release from the contract by the employer;
- Refusing to perform services required by the contract.

**Reporting**

Educators are required to report a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics as soon as possible, but no later than sixty(60) days from the date the educator became aware of the alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. Educators should be aware of their local school board policies and procedures and/or chain of command for reporting unethical conduct. Complaints filed with the local or state school boards, or with the State Department of Education Teacher Certification Section, must be filed in writing and must include the original signature of the complainant.

**Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-2-.05**

(1)-5-c Each Superintendent shall submit to the State Superintendent of Education within ten calendar days of the decision, the name and social security number of each employee holding an Alabama certificate or license who is terminated, or nonrenewed, resigns, or is placed on administrative leave for cause, and shall indicate the reason for such action.

**Disciplinary Action**

Disciplinary action shall be defined as the issuance of a reprimand or warning or the suspension, revocation, or denial of certificates. "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate issued by the authority of the Alabama State Department of Education.

**Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-2-.05**

**(1) Authority of the State Superintendent of Education**

(a) The Superintendent shall have the authority under existing legal standards to:

1. Revoke any certificate held by a person who has been proven guilty of immoral conduct or unbecoming or indecent behavior in Alabama or any other state or nation in accordance with Ala. Code §16-23-5 (1975).
2. Refuse to issue a certificate to an applicant whose certificate has been subject to adverse action by another state until after the adverse action has been resolved by that state.
3. Suspend or revoke an individual's certificate issued by the Superintendent when a certificate or license issued by another state is subject to adverse action.
4. Refuse to issue, suspend, or recall a certificate for just cause.

Any of the following grounds shall also be considered cause for disciplinary action:

- Unethical conduct as outlined in the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics, Standards 1-9.
- Order from a court of competent jurisdiction.
- Violation of any other laws or rules applicable to the profession.
- Any other good and sufficient cause.

An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, or substitute teacher during the period of his or her revocation, suspension, or denial.

**Grievance Form**  
**(General Administrative Procedure)**

I. Name of Person Making Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

II. Name(s) of each school district employee or another individual(s) whose decision or action(s) is an issue:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Dept: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Dept: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Dept: \_\_\_\_\_

III. Please provide a description of the alleged violation of each individual whose action is an issue, including dates, times of actions, or incidents. (Please Print.) You may attach additional pages to the form.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

IV. Please list each specific solution desired.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

V. Please attach any additional documentation for which consideration is desired.

**VI.** My other grievance(s) (if applicable) are for:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gifted Procedures and Practices | <input type="checkbox"/> Form attached |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Form attached |

\*\*\*Based on race, color, national origin, sex religion, age or disability (Title IX, ADA, Title VI, and Section 504)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complaint / Grievance | <input type="checkbox"/> Form attached |
|--|--|

\*\*\*Based on the belief that an employee has acted improperly or has otherwise caused the grievant/complainant to suffer hardship or wrong. This may be completed by parents, guardians, third parties, and /or students.

**VII.** In the event, a person files a complaint under multiple areas or otherwise has several avenues available under the Board of Education policies and procedures, the policies and procedures may be consolidated in order to achieve a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaints when doing so will not deprive the grievance of any rights granted under any of the separate policies and procedures. However, under no circumstances does the filing of a grievance complaint stop or delay other administrative proceedings.

**VIII.** This form and any additional supporting documentation shall be personally delivered or hand mailed to the school principal or immediate supervisor. In the event the complaint is made against the principal/supervisor, this form and any additional documentation shall be personally delivered or hand mailed to the Superintendent.

Signature of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Employee Acknowledgement of Handbook*

I have been advised that the Conecuh County School System uses the employee handbook which is effective August, 2024. The handbook is available on the Conecuh County Schools' website and a hard copy is available for review in each department of the school system. These copies will be updated as appropriate. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the contents of the employee handbook, as well as any revisions or modifications made to it. Furthermore, I understand that I should consult with my supervisor, department head and/or the County Personnel Department regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Conecuh County Employee Handbook that covers many important Conecuh County policies, including, but not limited to:

1. Alcohol and Drugs-Drug Free Workplace Policy
2. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
3. Non-Harassment Policy
4. Technology Use Policy
5. Workplace Rules of Conduct
6. Travel Policy
7. Leave Policies
8. Nepotism Policy

I understand the following:

The handbook contains policies, procedures, and rules of conduct governing employment at the District, and these are MANDATORY for all county employees, regardless of status or type unless exempted by law or statute.

THIS HANDBOOK HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND SHALL NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT BETWEEN CONECUH COUNTY SCHOOLS AND MYSELF. OTHER POLICIES MAY APPLY TO MY EMPLOYMENT AND MY DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE RULES AND REGULATIONS WHICH I MUST FOLLOW.

The benefits and policies of the Conecuh County policy may be changed or amended at any time, with or without notice unless dictated otherwise by statute and that my department may have rules in addition to the ones contained in the handbook.

By signing and dating this form, I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the contents of this handbook, and to consult with my supervisor and/or department head concerning any questions that may arise concerning the contents of the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date