

The School District of Hernando County, Florida



We are Hernando. This place is our home

2019-2020 Staff Handbook

Vision: To inspire and support the pursuit of individual greatness

Mission: The Hernando County School District collaborates with students, parents and other community stakeholders to effectively prepare all students for a successful transition into a diverse and changing world.

SUPERINTENDENT

John Stratton

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Susan Duval, Chairperson

Linda Prescott, Vice Chairperson

Gus Guadagnino, Board Member

Kay Hatch, Board Member

Jimmy Lodato, Board Member

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1 – Opening

Page

4	Welcome
5	Hernando County Schools Strategic Plan
6	Education Standards Commission
9	Nondiscrimination Statement
10	Workplace Harassment of Employees
12	Drug-Free Workplace
13	Important Numbers
14	Additional District Information

Section 2 – Policies and Procedures

Page

16	Americans with Disabilities Act
16	Anti-Fraud
16	Arrests/Self Reporting Arrests
16	Athletics/Academics
16	Attendance
17	Care of Building, Furniture & Equipment
17	Certification
18	Change of Address
19	Communications
21	Computer Software
21	Conflict of Interest
21	Copyrighted Materials
22	Dress
22	Duty
22	Employee Assistance Program
22	Equity
23	Evaluation/Assessment
23	Grievances
23	Higher Degree Payment
23	Hours
24	Internal Funds
25	Leave of Absence
29	Meetings
29	Parking
29	Payroll Information
30	Payroll FAQs
32	Personnel Records
32	Probationary Period
33	Public Records Requests
33	Reappointments and Employment Contracts
33	Resignations
33	Safe Driver Plan
34	Safety and Security

38	Suspensions/Dismissals
38	Tobacco Free Environment
38	Toxic Substances at Work
38	Use of Facilities
39	Visa Purchasing Card
39	Volunteers/Sponsors
41	Weapons/Firearms
41	Work Experience

Section 3 – Risk, Benefits and Compliance

Page

44	Employee Benefits
46	Qualifying Event/Status Change
48	Retirement
50	Sick Leave Donation
51	Human Resources FAQs
53	Workers' Compensation

Section 4 – Employee Policies and Procedures for Students

Page

56	Attendance - Student
56	Bullying/Harassment/Dating Violence
56	Child Abuse Reporting
57	Clinic
58	Confiscated Student Property
59	Cumulative Folders
59	Dropping/Transferring Students
59	Field Trips
59	Fundraising
60	Grades
61	Guidance Services
61	Instruction
62	Instructional Materials
63	Lesson Plans
64	Locker Room Security
64	Media Centers
64	Parent/Guardian Pick-Up
65	Passes
65	Reporting to Parents/Guardians
65	Return of Students to Class
66	Student Absences
66	Student Access, Referral, Interview
67	Student Conduct Policies
68	Supervision of Students
68	Surveys of Students

Staff Handbook

Section 1 Opening

Welcome
Hernando County Schools Strategic Plan
Education Standards Commission
Nondiscrimination Statement
Workplace Harassment of Employees
Drug-Free Workplace
Important Numbers
Additional District Information

Welcome to the School District of Hernando County

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the Hernando County School District. We believe we are successful every day we can offer our students the fullest opportunities to learn and experience greatness. This includes everything from appropriate and rigorous curriculum, to clean and sanitary facilities, to timely, efficient and safe transportation.

We value every member of our team for the vital roles they play in this process and recognize that a collective effort is essential to our success. You will experience from those around you the team attitude and hard work that motivate us toward better educational opportunities for our students. It is our hope that your efforts as a member of this team will effectively and efficiently contribute to the mission.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

We believe:

- Education is the foundation for a better future.
- Family and community involvement are critical to a high quality educational system.
- Diverse individuals, ideas, talents, and learning styles strengthen our communities.
- All stakeholders share in the responsibility and decision-making as part of supporting student success and school improvement.
- Individuals and organizations are accountable for their behaviors and actions.
- Commitment to teaching methodologies that foster student engagement, critical thinking, and content mastery will prepare all students to graduate ready for work and postsecondary education.
- Shared purpose, collaboration, commitment to continuous improvement, and an innovative spirit are essential in effective teaching cultures.
- Safe, caring environments are essential for learning and the well-being of all students.
- High expectations and recognition empower individuals and lead to improved performance.
- Aligned expectations and policies that reflect best business practices are essential for success.

This handbook is intended as an overview of the District's policies and procedures. It is not a contract and is not intended to be. As a school board employee it is important that you become acquainted with the policies, procedures, and benefits that contribute to the success, much of which is contained within this manual. Please read through it. You are expected to know and adhere to the information and regulations it contains. Administrative efficiency and effective public relations require that all staff members conform to the information and regulations. If any policy or regulation needs clarification, please consult your supervisor at once.

Answers to many questions are in this handbook, as well as information which will make your work easier. All departments should create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to direct the work associated with the information outlined in the Staff Handbook and School Board Policies.

This Staff Handbook shall be deemed amended to comply with all laws, all lawful rules of the State Board of Education, all lawful rules and actions of the School Board, and all terms of any applicable ratified collective bargaining agreement. In the event an actual or perceived conflict arises between the language contained in it and the terms and conditions of employment set forth in the respective collective bargaining agreement(s), the language in the bargaining agreement shall prevail. All policies, collective bargaining agreements, board member and board meeting information for the Hernando County School District is available for review at www.hernandoschools.org. Again we wish you much success in Hernando County.

Hernando County School District

Strategic Plan

2018 through 2023

PILLAR #1: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Goal: Create and provide learning opportunities for all students to achieve individual success

Objective A: Engage all students by increasing flexible learning options and providing a caring learning environment

Objective B: Improve learning outcomes for all students in literacy

Objective C: Improve learning outcomes for all students in mathematics

Objective D: Improve learning outcomes for all students in Science

Objective E: Improve learning outcomes for all students in Social Sciences

Objective F: Create additional Career Technical Education (CTE) courses/opportunities for grades K-12. Incorporate and strengthen college pathways for all students

PILLAR #2: PEOPLE

Goal: Build a dedicated workforce by recruiting, developing, and retaining accomplished professionals

Objective A: Enhance recruitment and hiring processes

Objective B: Build leadership capacity at all levels

Objective C: Increase the employee retention rate of qualified personnel

PILLAR #3: FACILITY OPERATIONS

Goal: Provide a safe and well-maintained learning and work environment

Objective A: Improve physical assets of the district by increasing operational efficiency of buildings and infrastructures

Objective B: Strengthen the safe learning and work environment

PILLAR #4: COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Foster positive relationships and collaboration among all stakeholders

Objective A: Improve internal and external communication

Objective B: Contribute to and grow positive regard for the organization throughout the greater community

PILLAR #5: FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Goal: Leverage resources and ensure operational efficiency to maximize organizational performance

Objective A: Increase the district's financial position

Objective B: Ensure optimal efficiency in internal processes

Education Standards Commission

The Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida

The State of Florida has established the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida which are found in State Board Rule 6A-10.081. As professionals, all employees must be aware of and adhere to these rules at all times. These rules are established by the State of Florida and govern the teaching certificates of instructional personnel. In the event the language conflicts with Board policy (i.e. self-reporting of arrests), employees are required to abide by the rules outlined in Board policy. Employees may be disciplined for unprofessional conduct.

All employees are required to adhere to School Board Policies and Florida Statutes regarding ethics. Employees are expected to abide by policy and act in a professional manner at all times. Employees may be disciplined for unethical or unprofessional conduct.

See School Board Policy 1129, 3129, 4129, 1210, 3210, 4210, 1139, 3139, 3139.01 and 4139.01. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

6A-10.081 Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida

(1) Florida educators shall be guided by the following ethical principles:

(a) The educator values the worth and dignity of every person, the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, acquisition of knowledge, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. Essential to the achievement of these standards are the freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal opportunity for all.

(b) The educator's primary professional concern will always be for the student and for the development of the student's potential. The educator will therefore strive for professional growth and will seek to exercise the best professional judgment and integrity.

(c) Aware of the importance of maintaining the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents, and of other members of the community, the educator strives to achieve and sustain the highest degree of ethical conduct.

(2) Florida educators shall comply with the following disciplinary principles. Violation of any of these principles shall subject the individual to revocation or suspension of the individual educator's certificate, or the other penalties as provided by law.

(a) Obligation to the student requires that the individual:

1. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning and/or to the student's mental and/or physical health and/or safety.

2. Shall not unreasonably restrain a student from independent action in pursuit of learning.

3. Shall not unreasonably deny a student access to diverse points of view.

4. Shall not intentionally suppress or distort subject matter relevant to a student's academic program.

5. Shall not intentionally expose a student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.

6. Shall not intentionally violate or deny a student's legal rights.

7. Shall not harass or discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition, sexual orientation, or social and family background and shall make reasonable effort to assure that each student is protected from harassment or discrimination.

8. Shall not exploit a relationship with a student for personal gain or advantage.

9. Shall keep in confidence personally identifiable information obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

(b) Obligation to the public requires that the individual:

1. Shall take reasonable precautions to distinguish between personal views and those of any educational institution or organization with which the individual is affiliated.

2. Shall not intentionally distort or misrepresent facts concerning an educational matter in direct or indirect public expression.

3. Shall not use institutional privileges for personal gain or advantage.

4. Shall accept no gratuity, gift, or favor that might influence professional judgment.

5. Shall offer no gratuity, gift, or favor to obtain special advantages.

(c) Obligation to the profession of education requires that the individual:

1. Shall maintain honesty in all professional dealings.

2. Shall not on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, handicapping condition if otherwise qualified, or social and family background deny to a colleague professional benefits or advantages or participation in any professional organization.

3. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political or civil rights and responsibilities.

4. Shall not engage in harassment or discriminatory conduct which unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance of professional or work responsibilities or with the orderly processes of education or which creates a hostile, intimidating, abusive, offensive, or oppressive environment; and, further, shall make reasonable effort to assure that each individual is protected from such harassment or discrimination.

5. Shall not make malicious or intentionally false statements about a colleague.

6. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment to influence professional judgments of colleagues.

7. Shall not misrepresent one's own professional qualifications.

8. Shall not submit fraudulent information on any document in connection with professional activities.

9. Shall not make any fraudulent statement or fail to disclose a material fact in one's own or another's application for a professional position.

10. Shall not withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.

11. Shall provide upon the request of the certificated individual a written statement of specific reason for recommendations that lead to the denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.

12. Shall not assist entry into or continuance in the profession of any person known to be unqualified in accordance with these Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida and other applicable Florida Statutes and State Board of Education Rules.

13. Shall self-report within forty-eight (48) hours to appropriate authorities (as determined by district) any arrests/charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, shall self-report any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, commitment to a pretrial diversion program, or entering of a plea of guilty or Nolo Contendere for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within forty-eight (48) hours after the final judgment. When handling sealed and expunged records disclosed under this rule, school districts shall comply with the confidentiality provisions of Sections 943.0585(4)(c) and 943.059(4)(c), F.S.

14. Shall report to appropriate authorities any known allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 1012.795(1), F.S.

15. Shall seek no reprisal against any individual who has reported any allegation of a violation of the Florida School Code or State Board of Education Rules as defined in Section 1012.795(1), F.S.

16. Shall comply with the conditions of an order of the Education Practices Commission imposing probation, imposing a fine, or restricting the authorized scope of practice.

17. Shall, as the supervising administrator, cooperate with the Education Practices Commission in monitoring the probation of a subordinate.

Rulemaking Authority 1001.02, 1012.795(1)(j) FS. Law Implemented 1012.795 FS. History—New 7-6-82, Amended 12-20-83, Formerly 6B-1.06, Amended 8-10-92, 12-29-98, Formerly 6B-1.006, Amended 3-23-16.

THE POLICY OF NONDISCRIMINATION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HERNANDO COUNTY

GENERAL: It is the policy of the Hernando County School Board not to illegally discriminate or to allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability, handicap or other legally protected status in its educational programs or employment practices. By operating in this manner, the School Board adheres to the provisions of Federal Law and other applicable laws.

EMPLOYMENT: Neither the Hernando County School District nor its employees shall illegally discriminate in its employment policies and practices on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, marital status, disability, age or any other legally protected status as defined by applicable law.

STUDENTS: The Hernando County School Board prohibits exclusion of any student from participation in or the denial of the benefits of any educational program or activity as well as any and all forms of illegal discrimination against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability or other legally protected status as provided by applicable law.

PRECEDENCE: This policy shall take precedence over any other statement in the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Hernando County School Board wherever such may appear unless in conflict with any collective bargaining agreement.

In accordance with Florida Administrative Code, national origin minority or English Language Learners (ELL) students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their appropriate use of a language other than English.

F.S. 1000.05

It is the policy of the Hernando County School district not to illegally discriminate or allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, disability or GINA in its educational programs or employment practices.

For questions regarding equity within the school system, please contact Matthew Goldrick; by email goldrick_m@hcsb.k12.fl.us, phone 352-797-7019, or mail 919 N. Broad St. Brooksville, FL 34601. To file concerns, please follow the complaint procedures found in School Board Policy.

See School Board Policy 1122, 3122 and 4122. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT OF EMPLOYEES

The School District of Hernando County forbids the discrimination against any employee, applicant for employment, or student on the basis of sex or race. The District will not tolerate any type of bullying or harassment activity by any of its employees, including but not limited to sexual, racial, religious, national origin, disability, or pregnancy. This policy also applies to non-employee volunteers who work subject to the control of school authorities. Members of the School District community and third parties, which includes all staff, are encouraged to promptly report incidents of unlawful harassing conduct to an administrator, supervisor, or other School District official so that the Superintendent or designee may address the conduct before it becomes severe, pervasive, or persistent.

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcomed sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, nonverbal, graphic, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term or condition of employment or of an individual's education.
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an employment or academic decision affecting that individual; or
- such conduct substantially interferes with an employee's work performance or student's academic performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or school environment.

Sexual harassment, as defined above, may include but is not limited to the following:

- unwelcome sexual propositions, invitations, solicitations, and flirtations;
- verbal, nonverbal, graphic, and written harassment or abuse;
- pressure for sexual activity;
- repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications;
- unwelcome or inappropriate touching;
- suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's employment or education.

Sexual harassment may involve the behavior of a person of either gender against a person of the same or opposite gender. Any teacher, administrator, coach, or other school authority who engages in sexual conduct with a student may also be guilty of a crime.

Racial harassment consists of verbal, nonverbal, graphic, written, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward any employee based upon race when such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; or when such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or employment opportunities.

Racial harassment as defined above may include but is not limited to the following conduct which is based upon race:

- epithets and slurs;
- written or graphic material that shows hostility or aversion toward an individual group;
- negative stereotyping;
- threatening, intimidating or hostile acts.

Disability harassment is oral, written, graphic or physical conduct or any act as relating to an individual's disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to limit or interfere with the ability of the individual to participate in or benefit from district programs or activities; harassment that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or school environment.

Examples of disability harassment include, but are not limited to conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's disabling condition such as:

- imitating manner of speech;
- interfering with necessary equipment;
- negative stereotyping;
- threatening, intimidating or hostile acts;
- written or graphic material that shows aversion or hostility towards an individual or group with disabling attitudes.

SPECIFIC PROHIBITIONS

It is sexual harassment for a school district employee or non-employee volunteer to use his or her authority to solicit sexual favors or attention from subordinates or students, including but not limited to incidents when the subordinate's or student's failure to submit will result in adverse treatment, or when the subordinate's or student's acquiescence will result in preferential treatment. It is racial harassment for a school board employee or non-employee volunteer to create or be responsible for a racially hostile environment i.e., harassing conduct that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so far as to interfere with or limit the ability of an employee or student to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges provided by the District. It is disability harassment when a school district employee, non-employee volunteer or student seeks to involve a student or employee with a disability in antisocial, dangerous or criminal activity where the student or employee because of a disability, is unable to comprehend fully or consent to the behavior.

PROCEDURES

Any person who alleges harassment by any staff member may report directly to his/her administrator or supervisor. If the direct administrator or supervisor is the offending person, the report should be made to the next higher level of administration or supervision. Filing of a complaint or otherwise reporting harassment will not affect the individual's status, future employment, future promotion, extracurricular activities or work assignments. It is unlawful to retaliate against a person who has made a report or filed a complaint alleging unlawful harassment, or who has participated as a witness in a harassment investigation

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected, consistent with the District's legal obligations, and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

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

A substantiated charge against a school district employee shall subject such employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission who believes he/she has been discriminated against or harassed is encouraged to use the District's established complaint procedures or directly contact his/her administrator or supervisor.

See School Board Policy 1362, 3362, 4362, 5517, 5517.01 and 5517.03. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol, illicit drugs or any controlled substances is prohibited. Only prescribed medications are permitted on School Board premises or during any official School District related activity, and it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that any prescribed medication is properly secured. To facilitate enforcement of this Policy, following an offer of employment by the Hernando County School Board, all job applicants will be required to take and pass a drug test. Current employees will be tested for drugs and/or alcohol for any of the following: 1) reasonable suspicion/cause; 2) post-accident/injury as required for DOT reporting; 3) random testing as per Department of Transportation regulations; 4) follow-up after an employee returns from a drug treatment or counseling program; 5) as required as part of any medical examination required by the HCSB. Refusal to submit to testing upon request, for any of the reasons authorized, shall subject the employee to the same disciplinary consequences as would result from a positive test result including termination for cause, denial of Unemployment Benefits, denial of Workers' Compensation, and medical and indemnity benefits.

Any employee violating this policy shall be immediately suspended by the Superintendent and report shall be made to the School Board for further action, which could result in termination of employment.

Failure by any employee to report a known violation of this policy will constitute an act of insubordination and willful neglect of duty. Employee Assistance Program is available and information can be found on the District website under Risk, Benefits and Compliance. For additional information, see School Board Policy and Human Resources Standard Operating Procedures.

See School Board Policy 1124, 3124, 4124, and 4162. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

DISTRICT OFFICE
919 N. Broad Street - Brooksville, FL 34601
Phone: (352) 797-7000

Academic Services.....	797-7051
Benefits Department	797-7007
Central Printing Services.....	797-7023
Communications & Government Relations.....	797-7009
Exceptional Student Support Services (ESSS).....	797-7008
Equity.....	797-7019
Facilities Department.....	797-7050
Facility Rental.....	Call Site
Finance Department	797-7004
Fire Inspector	797-7054
Food and Nutrition Department	797-7028
Hearing Impaired Telephone Line – County Office	544-6404
Hernando County Adult Ed	797-7018
Hernando Instructional Television (HITV) – Communications/Public Relations	797-7009
Human Resources Department.....	797-7005
Maintenance Department.....	797-7071
Parent Academy.....	797-7315
Payroll	797-7012
Purchasing Department.....	797-7060
Safe Schools.....	797-7233
Safety and Security Department	797-7054
School Choice.....	797-7000
Student Services Department.....	797-7008
Substance Abuse (ESSS Department)	797-7008
Technology and Information Services Department (TIS).....	797-7006
Teen Parenting Program (ESSS Department)	797-7008
Title I.....	797-7051
Transportation Department.....	797-7003
Volunteers in Education Program	797-7005
Warehouse and Property Inventory.....	797-7061

**CONTACT THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ZONES AND BUS ROUTES**

(352) 797-7003 or www.hernandoschools.org

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Live on Spectrum Meetings are held on
Tuesdays at 6p.m. Refer to District
website for meeting dates and streaming
options

ADDITIONAL DISTRICT INFORMATION

In addition to this Employee Handbook, please review the following documents/resources:

School Board Policies

School/Department Procedural Handbooks

www.hernandoschools.org

Collective Bargaining Agreements

School Board Policies

Information about our district and school board policies can be accessed from our website at: [Hernando County School Board Policies](#)

School/Department Procedural Handbooks

Many district departments produce informative handbooks pertaining to the services and procedures applicable to their departments. Schools produce the handbooks/handouts specific to the campus and population of the individual school. These handbooks are a source for specific policies and procedures, available instructional material, and campus “whereabouts.” It is important to note that all policies and procedures in school/department handbooks must align with applicable statutory requirements, school board policy and collective bargaining agreements. Please visit our school district website at hernandoschools.org.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

For information specific to your own position, refer to your respective Collective Bargaining Agreement. A copy of each Agreement is available for your review on our website at hernandoschools.org. The Agreements are very detailed regarding procedures and provision applicable to your position with the District. Two Agreements exist with the Hernando County School District:

HCTA – Hernando Classroom Teachers’ Association – Represents teachers and instructional personnel excluding paraprofessionals.

HUSW – Hernando United School Workers – Represents non-instructional support personnel

Staff Handbook

Section 2

Policies and Procedures

Americans with Disabilities Act	Leave of Absence
Anti-Fraud	Meetings
Arrests/Self-Reporting Arrests	Parking
Athletics/Academics	Payroll Information
Attendance	Payroll FAQs
Care of Building, Furniture and Equipment	Personnel Records
Certification	Probationary Period
Change of Address	Public Records Requests
Communications	Reappointments and Employment Contracts
Computer Software	Resignations
Conflict of Interest	Safe Driver Plan
Copyrighted Materials	Safety and Security
Dress	Suspensions/Dismissals
Duty	Tobacco-Free Environment
Employee Assistance Program	Toxic Substances at Work
Equity	Use of School Facilities & Equipment
Evaluation/Assessment	Visa Purchasing Card
Grievances	Volunteers/Sponsors
Higher Degree Payment	Weapons/Firearms
Hours	Work Experience
Internal Funds	

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Hernando County School District will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals who have a disability so that they can perform the essential functions of their position. In order to make a determination about the nature of the employee's medical condition and whether the employee might be considered a qualified individual with a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA), a Request for Accommodation Form must be completed and submitted to Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department. This information is treated confidentially, is not maintained in the employee's main personnel file, and will be used only by authorized individuals. The Request for Accommodation Form can be found on the district website under "Employment."

See School Board Policy 1122.01, 3122.01 and 4122.01. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

ANTI-FRAUD

Fraud and fraudulent activity is strictly prohibited. This applies to any fraud, or suspected fraud, involving elected officials, employees, consultants, vendors, contractors, outside agencies and employees of such agencies, and any other parties with a business relationship with the District.

See School Board Policy 8700. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

ARRESTS/SELF-REPORTING ARRESTS

As per School Board Policy, employees **shall self-report** any and all arrests and convictions (including misdemeanor citations), regardless of the level of the charges, within forty-eight (48) business hours of same. Please note this includes arrest citations – these will register as arrests in the state database.

Employees shall report to their supervisor.

Failure to report arrests and/or convictions as required by policy shall be grounds for termination of employment.

See School Board Policy 1121.01, 3121.01, and 4121.01. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

ATHLETICS/ACADEMICS

Staff will not be permitted to conduct supplemental activities before the end of the contractual workday without the approval of the principal and/or designee. Prior to beginning coaching activities, the individual must be either cleared by Human Resources or must be a registered volunteer through Safety and Security. No one will receive compensation for any coaching activity prior to being cleared to work by the Human Resources Department. The Athletic Handbook governs student participation in athletics.

See School Board Policy 3120.03 and 4120.03. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

ATTENDANCE

All employees are expected to be present during all working hours. Absence without prior approval (also called absence without authority –AWA) from an administrator or supervisor, chronic absences, absences without paid leave, habitual tardiness or abuse of designated working hours are all considered neglect of duty and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Sick leave and leaves made necessary by sudden emergencies may be granted if the employee makes a prompt report to administration concerning the absence.

See School Board Policy 1430, 3430, and 4430. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

CARE OF BUILDING, FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

School administrators and/or designee will provide staff members with an inventory sheet for their room at the beginning of the school year. This sheet is to be completed and returned to the administrator and/or designee. Each room is equipped with the necessary furniture as far as circumstances permit; therefore, furniture and equipment may not be moved from one room to another without the approval of the principal and/or designee and recorded on the inventory sheet. The furniture is assigned to the room, not the teacher. The condition of the furniture and equipment in any classroom is the direct responsibility of the teacher and any damage or defacing of same must be reported in writing to the principal and/or designee immediately.

Furniture and equipment may not be moved from one campus to another without the approval of the principal and/or designee, recorded on the proper form (SO-PC-009) and forwarded as an attachment to the Property Department to schedule transfer via entry through the School Dude program. Furniture and equipment purchased with Federal Funds may not be moved from one campus to another without the approval of the Director of Federal Programs or designee.

Furniture and other district owned property are not to be left outside the school overnight unless arrangements have been made directly with the Property Department. If the property has been deemed no longer in safe useable condition by the Property Department, instructions will be given as to how the items are to be handled.

CERTIFICATION

The state Certification Office processes applications for initial certification, certain add-ons, and all other services for non-employees. The district certification office processes renewals, certain add-ons, name changes, and duplicate certificates for district employees. The state Certification Office approves all coursework for certification purposes. Teachers must call the toll free number 1-800-445-6739 with the following information: the name of the institution; the course prefix, number and title; and the certification requirement they are attempting to satisfy by completing the course. This line is extremely busy during registration periods, so be sure to plan ahead. Also, you can e-mail the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) at edcert@fldoe.org. Please include your name and social security number in your e-mail.

You may access the FLDOE website, <http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/>, for the following services: Certification Lookup, Application Status Lookup, and Request Materials. If you click on Application Status Lookup, you will be prompted to create a Login I.D. and Password. Once you are on this site, you will be able to access the following information about your certification file: the status/progress of your valid application and Statement of Status of Eligibility; a record of any valid Florida educator's certificate that you hold; and the official transcripts, score report and information received from the district within the last calendar year.

Teachers who hold three-year non-renewable temporary certificates must follow their Statement of Status of Eligibility. This document is an individualized listing of all the deficiencies that you must satisfy in order to be issued a Professional Certificate. State law requires that you submit a passing score on all sections of the General Knowledge exam within the first twelve months of employment. If your Statement of Status of Eligibility reflects that you have specific testing requirements to meet, you must register for the exams at www.fl.nesinc.com. For more information about the requirements listed on your Statement of Status of Eligibility, you may visit the FLDOE website: http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/cert_types.asp.

For reappointment purposes, all of the deficiencies outlined on your Statement of Status of Eligibility **with exception of the General Knowledge exam**, must be completed and documented with the district

certification office no later than March 1st of the year of expiration of your **temporary certificate**. As a courtesy to our teachers, the district certification office sends reminder notices to teachers on temporary certificates throughout the validity period of the certificate.

Teachers who hold five-year Professional certificates must renew their certificates every five years. During the validity period of this certificate, you are required to earn either 120 in-service points to include 20 in-service points in teaching Students with Disabilities (SWD) or six semester hours of college credit to include one semester hour in teaching Students with Disabilities (SWD). Information pertaining to renewal requirements is available on the FLDOE website: <http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/renew.asp>. The earliest that the district certification office will accept your application for renewal is July 1st for the following June 30th expiration (in other words, 1 year before your professional certificate expires).

As a courtesy to our teachers, the district certification office notifies teachers of expiring professional certificates. Notification of expiring professional certificates is sent in July of the year your professional certificate expires.

If you are teaching out-of-field, proof of required in-service, coursework, or a passing score on the appropriate subject area exam and add-on application, must be submitted to the district certification office or the Florida Department of Education (depending on the type of certificate held) by your anniversary date each year. Refer to your Out Of Field documentation for more information

When you earn a higher degree from an accredited institution, you must submit an official transcript with the higher degree conferred to Certification in the Human Resources Department. If your degree major matches an area of certification on your certificate, a pay change will take effect as soon as official transcripts are received and processed by the Human Resources Department. The HCSD accepts all diplomas and degrees from sources accredited or approved by the Florida Department of Education, including foreign institutions. In other words, the Florida DOE requires the HCSD to reject any fraudulent or questionable diploma or degree from a disreputable source. Tendering a worthless diploma or degree constitutes just cause for termination for violating the Principles of Professional Conduct.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Current employees who need to report a change of address may do so by accessing the Hernando County School District website at hernandoschools.org. Click on Jobs and login to your Hire Enterprises account.

Update your “Transfer” Application address and then follow these directions to update your District file: Please submit form on HR Docs along the top bar. Click on HR Home, on the left side there will be another drop down box on the left side. Choose contact update information.

The following information is needed to **Update Contact Information**:

1. ____ Update Hire Enterprises– your online “Transfer” Application
2. ____ Update Contact Information
 - A. ____ select “MY HR Docs”
 - B. ____ select “My HR HOME”
 - C. ____ select “Update Contact Information”
 - D. ____ enter Updated Contact Information AND **Name Change if applicable**
 - E. ____ select an action/submit to Employment Specialist user (drop down menu)
 - F. ____ select User (drop down menu) Select Jennifer Barnes or Inna Young
 - G. ____ Signature – is your Hire Enterprises Password

H._____ Submit

The HR Department will process your request. If you have any questions or can't log into your Hire Enterprises account, please call HR for help at 352-797-7070.

Please be sure FRS has a listing of your current beneficiaries.

Note: The address that is printed on your paystub is the address that will print on your end of year W-2 statement. The post office will not forward W-2 statements so it's important that your information is up-to -date.

To update marital status please submit W-4, Benefit Election form and Employee Questionnaire.

COMMUNICATIONS

Employees are reminded that in all communications, including any electronic communication (text, email), they are to ensure that they meet the ethical standards required by School Board Policy, State Board Rules 6A-10.081 , and State Statutes (Chapter 112).

Refer to the Student Code of Conduct regarding student use of electronic devices.

The School District encourages positive and professional communication between staff and students. The School District has provided staff with the means to communicate electronically with students and/or parents concerning school matters. These means currently include school/teacher's website, the parent portal, school-level social media, school-approved messaging applications, and First Class and are sufficient for the purposes intended. For staff to communicate regarding school matters with students and/or parents by personal electronic means when sufficient District means are available exposes the School District to possible violation of its legal obligations. Such communication could cause the appearance of inappropriate association with students.

Staff communications via private electronic media concerning non-school related matters are governed by School Board Policy, Florida Statute and the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct. Violation of these policies may lead to disciplinary action.

Cell Phones - District

District cell phones are provided to specific staff members to use for school-related business as needed. No personal calls should be made or received using District cell phones which are the property of the school district. Employees who are assigned District cell phones are responsible for the proper care of the cell phone. Employees are responsible for the cost of replacing their District phone if it is lost, stolen, or damaged. Each case will be reviewed individually to determine if the employee acted with due diligence or if an unusual circumstance existed that may hold the employee harmless for replacement costs. The employee's cost for the replacement phone will be determined by the actual replacement cost the District incurs for the phone.

Cell Phones - Personal

Students and staff shall refrain from using cell phones for **personal use** during emergency situations. The use of cell phones by students and staff during emergencies could overload cell towers and hamper

emergency response personnel's ability to communicate.

Staff members should avoid the use of personal cell phones during student contact time.

Email

All staff members who have access to District email should check it at least once each morning and afternoon. The Hernando County email system is to be used for School Board related business and educational projects only. **District email is not for personal use.** These restrictions also apply to accessing the email system on Hernando County School Board computers. Communications reside on servers within the District and can be monitored by administrative directive. **District email is public record and can be viewed in accordance with public record laws.** It is advised not to use student names in email in a manner that violates School Board Policy, Florida Statute or the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct. It is important to check District email regularly because important information is distributed in this manner.

Internet & Network Usage

All staff users of the internet must acknowledge receipt of and adhere to the Hernando County Internet Acceptable Use Agreement. It is a requirement that all computers accessing the internet through the county-wide area network will start on the same homepage. The homepage is the District's homepage located at <http://www.hernandoschools.org>. Mailboxes

All staff members should check their mailboxes each day upon arrival at their site and again before leaving their site. Administrative approval is required before placing any material in the staff mailboxes or on any bulletin board and access to mailboxes is determined by the site administrator. If items being put in mailboxes were delivered by a representative of HUSW and HCTA, the items should be considered approved by those organizations.

Passwords

No staff member's computer passwords should be disseminated to students or any unauthorized person. Passwords are confidential and should not be shared unless directed to by a supervisor.

Phone Calls.

Telephones are provided for use during planning periods. Calls made during student contact time shall be for school related matters only.

Text Messaging

Staff may utilize text messaging for communicating with other staff using "transitory" messages only. A transitory message is defined by Florida law to be one which is created primarily to communicate information of short-term value such as scheduling appointments. They are not intended to formalize or perpetuate knowledge and do not set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction, or become a receipt. If there is any question about the type of information being sent, staff is advised to consult with their administrator before sending the information.

No employee may communicate with a student or students via text messaging. Electronic communication with students, if any, may only be made via District provided resources and only in compliance with the guidelines for such set forth in this Handbook.

Employees are advised that text messages, even if sent or received on a privately owned device, **may be considered public record and subject to review by district administration and possibly the public.**

Accordingly, staff are consenting to a review and/or search of their personal electronic device if such is

used for text messaging in violation of School Board Policy, Florida Statute and the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct.

See School Board Policy 7530.02, 7544, 7540.02 and 7540.04

Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

COMPUTER SOFTWARE

All staff members, prior to installing any computer software not purchased by the School District, must obtain approval for such by completing a donated property form, obtaining TIS approval and providing a valid license for the utilization of such software. In no event shall any such software be installed on any computer owned by the Hernando County School District without the required approval.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Any School District employee who also works for an organization doing business with the School Board must reveal such a contractual agreement, in writing, to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may approve such an arrangement; however, if the Superintendent determines the relationship to be a conflict of interest, a request will be made for the employee to terminate his/her employment with either the organization or the School District.

See School Board Policy 1129, 3129 and 4129. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

According to Board Policy 2531, staff shall abide by all provisions of the copyright laws. School Board

- Commercial materials, whether printed or non-printed, may not be duplicated without prior written permission from the owner or copyright holder.
- The School District does not sanction or condone illegal duplication in any form, the use of illegally duplicated materials, or the improper use of commercially duplicated materials.
- Procedures and guidelines for the legal duplication of materials for instructional purposes may be obtained from the school or the Academic Services Department.
- Employees who willfully infringe upon current copyright laws may be subject to disciplinary action by the School Board.
- Any staff member shall, prior to installing any computer software not purchased by the School District, obtain approval for such by completing a donated property form and delivering same and providing a valid license for the utilization of such software. In the event such software is not to be donated, the staff member shall lease the software to the School District at no cost to the District by denoting such on the donated property form. In no event shall any such software be installed upon any computer owned by the Hernando County School District without the approval required herein.

See School Board Policy 2531. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

DRESS

As professionals, employees are expected to dress professionally and appropriately for their job assignments. Personal hygiene and appearance set examples for students. When building-level questions arise, employees should contact their immediate supervisor. **All employees must wear name badges while on duty.**

DUTY

A duty roster and guidelines will be issued during pre-school and at other times, when necessary. Teachers will be assigned various types of duty on an equitable rotation basis, and rosters will be in accordance with the Hernando Classroom Teachers' Association (HCTA) bargaining agreement.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Behavioral health services are available to all permanent employees of the Hernando County School District and their eligible dependents through our group health plan with Florida Blue. For those employees and dependents not covered under our group health plan, assistance is available through BayCare Behavioral Health by contacting (800) 878-5470.

See School Board Policy 1170.01, 3170.01 and 4170.01. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

EQUITY

It is the policy of the School Board of Hernando County, Florida, not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or handicap in its educational programs or employment practices. By operating in this manner, the School Board adheres to the provisions of Federal Law and other applicable laws.

Specifically, Hernando District Policy states, "It is the policy of the Hernando County School Board not to illegally discriminate or to allow its employees to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex (including sexual orientation, transgender status or gender identity), marital status, disability, pregnancy, military status, ancestry, or Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) in its educational programs or employment practice." The District also provides equal access to its facilities to the Boy Scouts and other identified Title 36 patriotic youth groups, as required within 34 C.F.R. 108.9.

In accordance with Florida Administrative Code, national origin minority or English Language Learners (ELL) students shall not be subjected to any disciplinary action because of their appropriate use of a language other than English.

To file concerns, please follow the complaint procedures found in School Board Policy.

Compliance officers for Employee related issues are Ray Pinder, Director of Human Resources 352-797-7005 and Matthew Goldrick, Supervisor of Professional Standards 352-797-7019. Compliance officer for student related issues is Jill Kolasa Director of Student Services 352-797-7022.

See School Board Policy 1122, 3122 and 4133. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

Please refer to the appropriate employee evaluation manual for evaluation procedures for all employees. This information is available on the District website <http://www.hernandoschools.org/Page/3618>.

GRIEVANCES

Refer to the appropriate union or association contract for guidelines on grievances. Union contracts can be found on the District website <http://www.hernandoschools.org/Page/2518>.

HIGHER DEGREE PAYMENT

- Instructional employees hired prior to July 1, 2011 may receive additional pay if they earn a higher academic degree and provide a transcript with a conferred date within the guidelines of the applicable union contract and School Board approved salary schedule.
- Instructional employees and school-based administrators hired on or after July 1, 2011 may receive additional pay if they earn a higher academic degree if the degree matches their area of certification as per Statute. An official transcript must be provided along with the Request for Advanced Degree form.
- Administrative employees hired prior to July 1, 2011 may receive additional pay based on the degree earned in accordance with the School Board approved Administrative Salary Schedule.
- Administrative employees hired on or after July 1, 2011 may receive an additional amount if they earn a degree beyond that which their job description requires. An official transcript must be provided along with a Personnel Action Form.
- Confidential and noninstructional employees, who have acquired 60 semester hours or more, as verified by an official transcript, will be paid an additional amount per the School Board approved salary schedule.
- Professional/Technical/Supervisory employees may receive an additional amount if they earn a degree beyond that which their job description requires. An official transcript must be provided along with a Personnel Action Form.

Transcripts with a conferred date must be received in the Human Resources Department in order for the salary adjustment to occur. The adjustment will be made from the beginning of the pay period during which the appropriate documentation was received. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that the Human Resources Department receives the official transcripts and appropriate documentation in order for the higher degree payment to continue.

HOURS

Work hours for staff will be in accordance with School Board policy, the Fair Labor Standards Act and contractual obligations. **No staff member is permitted to leave earlier than the designated time unless they have notified and have permission from their supervisor or designee.** Please refer to the Hernando County School District Fair Labor Standards Act Compliance Manual and the HCTA and HUSW contracts for guidance.

School staff members are to be at their assigned stations to supervise students as directed by the school administration before, during and after student hours. All staff must follow the designated procedures at each site regarding the use of sign-in sheets and, if applicable, time clocks.

INTERNAL FUNDS

Internal/Student Activity funds are collected internally by the school. The school's internal account funds shall be used to benefit the students and those activities as authorized by the district. These funds generally come from field trips, fundraisers, and ticket sales. Internal funds shall be administered in accordance with Florida Statutes, State Board of Administrative Rules, Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida Schools ("[Red Book](#)"), Hernando County School Board policies, and the Internal Accounts Procedures Manual.

See School Board Policy 6610. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Cash Collections

All monies received by any club or school organization, other than PTA/PTSAs/PTOs and those

previously designated as a 501(c)(3) organization, should be deposited in the school's internal accounts. These funds must be properly safeguarded, and the person having custody of the money will be held fully accountable.

Monies collected from school activities are to be turned in to the bookkeeper at the end of the day. Collections made outside of normal business hours must be remitted to the school office no later than the next business day. If the bookkeeper is unavailable, monies collected should be placed in the school's safety drop box or given to the site administrator or designated backup. If there is no drop box or no administrator present, a note to that effect should be included with the supporting documentation turned in with the money. This is considered an extreme circumstance. **No monies are to be held by employees overnight except in the case of an extreme circumstance as noted (documentation required). Do not leave the money unattended in the Bookkeeping Office.**

- Persons responsible for collecting money must document the receipt in the following manner:
A pre-numbered teacher receipt must be issued when the money is received and verified.
- Do not rip out the yellow copy of the receipt
- A list of names, receipt numbers and amount of money collected from each individual is to be recorded on a Report of Monies Collected form [SO-FIN-28](#), along with the account to which the funds should be deposited, and turned in to the bookkeeper along with the money.
- **The bookkeeper will verify the money turned in agrees with the amount on the report of monies collected.** If the amount agrees, the bookkeeper will issue an official school receipt to the teacher, sign the monies collected form, and return the duplicate copy to the teacher.
- If voiding a receipt do not rip out the white and/or yellow copy. Keep both copies in the receipt book.

Make sure that the money is **delivered by a staff member** to the bookkeeper or school's safety drop box. Students and/or volunteers may not handle cash collections without direct supervision and monitoring of a teacher/sponsor.

Expenditures/Check Requisition

Funds from internal accounts are not to be expended for purposes other than those for which they were collected. All purchases require written approval before a purchase order is created or the P-card is signed out. The school will not be held responsible for expenditures that have not received the written approval of the principal and/or designee prior to the expenditure. The individual making the purchase will be responsible for the payment if the purchase was not pre-approved. Blanket Purchase Orders may not be issued to HCSD employees and all reimbursements to HCSD employees should be paid using Petty Cash funds and may not exceed \$50.00 for a single purchase.

All purchases from internal funds must be preapproved by administration and processed by the bookkeeper prior to purchase. Vendors with district bids or a state contract must be utilized first. Additional vendors may be considered when the requested item is unavailable. The following procedures are to be followed to make a purchase from internal accounts:

- The employee/sponsor requesting the purchase is responsible for obtaining a request for purchase from the bookkeeper.
- Three signatures are required for each purchase requested:
 - the employee/sponsor,
 - the bookkeeper and
 - the principal and/or designee.
- Purchases can be paid to a district approved bid vendor by a check or purchasing card.
- The bookkeeper is responsible for the issuance of all purchase orders.

Internal Accounts Financial Report

The bookkeeper will provide a month end Project Balance Report to the individual advisors. School advisors should review, sign, date and return to the bookkeeper. Any inconsistencies seen should be addressed with the school bookkeeper immediately.

Receipt Books

Receipt books issued to staff members during the year must be returned to the bookkeeper as part of the teacher check-out process. If an issued receipt book is not returned, the staff member is responsible for signing a letter of acknowledgement to that effect for review by auditor. See Red Book requirements.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

All staff are expected to be on duty each day unless there is a compelling reason why they cannot be in attendance. Questions concerning absences should be directed to the substitute coordinator at the site. The instructional employee is responsible for providing detailed plans for the substitute. When an employee is going to be absent in excess of ten (10) consecutive days, he/she must complete an Extended Leave Form [SO-PER-018](#) which can be obtained through the designated staff member at the site or the school district website. The Request for Extended Leave Form [SO-PER-018](#) must be completed by employee and approved by the site administrator, a Human Resources Administrator and the School Board prior to taking leave when need is known in advance and as soon as possible when leave is an emergency. Employees will be notified if any additional paperwork is required. If an employee is on a leave of absence without pay, he/she is responsible for his/her benefit premium payments. If the employee is deficient in paying premiums, the employee's benefits will be terminated.

It is imperative that staff members review and become familiar with the School Board policies governing leaves of absence. Leaves must be officially granted in advance and may not be granted retroactively. Absence without prior approval from an administrator or supervisor, chronic absences, absences without paid leave, habitual tardiness or abuse of designated working hours are all considered neglect of duty and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Sick leave and leaves made necessary by sudden emergencies may be granted if the employee makes a prompt report to administration concerning this absence.

When requesting a leave, the staff member must complete a Leave of Absence form [SO-PER-025](#) and return it to the site administrator and/or designee as stated in Board policy and bargaining unit agreements.

Any employee who is absent because of illness must file an appropriate sick leave claim within five (5) working days following return to work. This requirement is applicable to both sick leave and illness-in-the-line-of-duty leave.

All leaves, except sick leave, are to be approved in advance by the site administrator and/or designee. It is necessary to notify the appropriate personnel when a leave is canceled or if other changes are made from the original request.

See School Board Policy 1430, 3430 and 4430. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Absent Without Authority

All employees are expected to be present during all working hours. Absence from work without approval will be documented as Absent without Authority.

If an employee is absent without authority for more than five (5) consecutive days it will be considered job abandonment. The site will initiate correspondence with the employee. If an employee does not respond to the notice of job abandonment, it will constitute his/her voluntary resignation. The Superintendent will take the appropriate employment action.

Absence Without Leave or Excessive Absenteeism

Punctual and regular attendance is an essential function of employee's job. If an employee has extensive absences during a school year, the timekeeper should notify the site administrator as soon as the employee takes time off without pay. If the employee, or the employee's family member, has a serious medical condition that is contributing to the need for unpaid leave then a Request for Extended Leave [SO-PER-018](#) & Certification of Physician form [SO-PER-178](#) must be completed and forwarded to the Human Resources Department for consideration of intermittent or extended FMLA. Administrators should not approve leaves without pay (unless first approved by Professional Standards for extreme cases). Excessive absences, chronic absences and absences without leave are all considered neglect of duty and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

As required in the Family Medical Leave Act (see Appendix H), in order to qualify for FMLA, an employee must have worked for the Hernando County School District for at least twelve (12) months and at least 1,250 hours during the preceding twelve (12) months. The Family Medical Leave cannot exceed twelve (12) weeks for any employee within a twelve (12) month period. This leave can only be taken for specific reasons as required by law. Once the Human Resources Department is notified of a leave request that might meet FMLA requirements, the appropriate forms will be sent to the employee. A final determination of eligibility will be made by the Human Resources Department.

When an employee is on Family Medical Leave, continuous or intermittently, the School District will continue to contribute its portion of the employee's health and life insurance, and the employee is responsible for his/her portion and any other benefit premium payments. The premium payment should be made through the Hernando County School District, Attention Benefit Payments. If employee is deficient in paying premiums, the employee's benefits will be terminated.

Upon return from Family Medical Leave, the employee is entitled to be restored to the same position that the employee held when the leave began, or to an equivalent position with the equivalent benefits, pay and other terms and conditions of employment.

Employees who are the spouses, children, parents or next-of-kin of a service member may take up to twenty-six (26) weeks of leave under the FMLA to care for the service member who incurred an injury during military service when that injury results in the service member being unable to perform his/her duties. The employee requesting such leave will be notified by the Human Resources Department regarding eligibility.

[EMPLOYEES RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT \(FMLA\)](#)

See School Board Policy 1430.01, 3430.01 and 4430.01. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Personal Leave

All personal leave taken with pay is charged against sick leave and will reduce the employee's sick leave balance. Unpaid Personal leave will only be approved for reasons outlined in School Board Policy 1430.04, 3430.04 and 4430.04. Personal leave may or may not be approved for the days preceding or following school holidays as determined by the supervisor or principal. As per School

Board Policy, requests for extended leave to take another position for salary shall be denied unless there are extenuating circumstances that are acceptable to the School Board.

Any employee may request to take up to three (3) working days of leave from work in any 12-month period if the employee, or a family or household member of an employee, is the victim of domestic violence. This leave must be approved by the administrator if it meets the criteria listed below. This leave must be used to:

- seek an injunction for protection against domestic violence or an injunction for protection in cases of repeat violence, dating violence or sexual violence; obtain medical care, mental health counseling or both for the employee or a family or household member to address physical or psychological injuries resulting from the act of domestic violence;
- obtain services from a victim-services organization, including, but not limited to, a domestic violence shelter or program or a rape crisis center as a result of the act of domestic violence;
- make the employee's home secure from the perpetrator of the domestic violence or to seek new housing to escape the perpetrator; or
- seek legal assistance in addressing issues arising from the act of domestic violence or to attend and prepare for court-related proceedings arising from the act of domestic violence.

Except in cases of imminent danger to the health or safety of the employee, or to the health or safety of a family or household member, an employee seeking leave from work under this section must provide to his/her employer appropriate advance notice of the leave as required by the employer's policy along with sufficient documentation of the act of domestic violence as required by the employer.

See School Board Policy 1430.04, 3430.04 and 4430.04. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Sick Leave

The 1984 Florida Legislation states, "an employee who is absent because of illness must file an appropriate sick leave claim within five (5) working days following return to work." The immediate supervisor, director or administrator must be notified when an employee is going to be late or absent. If the employee cannot contact his/her immediate work supervisor, he/she must contact his/her office. Per School Board Policy 1430.03, 3430.03 and 4430.03, any claim for sick leave must be filed "within five (5) working days upon return of the employee to duty."

Note: In accordance with School Board Policy, any claim for sick leave shall be filed with the Superintendent, or his/her designee, within five (5) working days upon return of the employee to duty. Any leave that is not verified within the five (5) day limit may be recorded as "absence without authority" and may result in nonpayment. When an employee is absent in excess of ten (10) consecutive days, he/she must complete an Extended Leave Form [SO-PER-018](#) which can be obtained through the designated staff member at the site or the school district website under Print Shop Documents. The Request for Extended Leave Form [SO-PER-018](#) must be completed and approved by the site administrator, a Human Resources Administrator and the School Board. Employees will be notified if any additional paperwork is required.

See School Board Policy 1430.03, 3430.03 and 4430.03. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Sick Leave - Donation to Family Members

A district employee may allow his/her immediate family members to use his/her sick leave as outlined in Florida Statute and School Board policy.

Sick Leave - Donation to Other Employees

A district employee may authorize any district employee to use sick leave that has been accrued by the authorizing employee as outlined in Florida Statute and School Board policy 1430.03, 3430.03 and 4430.03. A request for donations must be made through the Sick Leave Donation icon on First Class after proper documentation is received per School Board Policy. Please refer to Appendix M: Frequently Asked Questions about Sick Leave Donation for additional information.

See School Board Policy 1430.03, 3430.03 and 4430.03. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Sick Leave – Donation to Sick Leave Bank for Instructional Personnel

Per HCTA contract: At the time of resignation, the employee may choose to donate or bank the sick leave balance. If no choice is elected upon resignation, as a default the hours will be donated to the sick leave bank.

Sick Leave – Transfer from Other Florida School Districts

An employee may transfer sick leave earned with another Florida school district to the Hernando County School District. However, no transferred leave shall be credited to an employee's account at a rate, or in an amount exceeding that earned while an employee of the Hernando County School Board. It is the responsibility of the employee to acquire and submit the required documentation to the Human Resources Department.

Temporary Duty Leaves and Reimbursements

Temporary duty may be approved for in-services, district meetings, conferences, competitions, and field trips. Any other request for temporary duty leave must be tied to position and must be of benefit to the District. Such activities require administrative approval. Any request for temporary duty that involves additional expenses such as registration, hotel, per diem, etc. must be approved in advance **and submitted within 30 days of the last travel date. School Board approval is required in advance for all out of state travel. Travel reimbursement for hotel stays will be reimbursed for one room at a single conference room rate for HCSD employees only.** Travel procedures can be found on the District website <http://www.hernandoschools.org>.

See School Board Policy 1440, 3440 and 4440. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Unpaid Extended Leave

If an unpaid extended leave is approved for any reason, it will only be approved for the current school year. Unpaid extended leaves will not be approved past the current school year except in cases of personal illness as verified by the Human Resources Department, or one (1) full school year to provide child care after birth or adoption. Extensions of such leave must be approved by the School Board. Military leave orders will be honored. Unpaid Personal leave will only be approved for reasons outlined in School Board Policy.

See School Board Policy 1430.04, 3430.04 and 4430.04. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Vacation Leave

The following schedule shall be used in determining the accrual of annual leave:

Employees on 12-month contracts are entitled to accrue leave as follows:

1 year of service	1/2 day per month
2 thru 5 years of service	1 day per month
6 thru 10 years of service	1 1/4 days per month
Over 10 years of service	1 1/2 days per month

Vacation days must be earned before they can be used and may be accrued without limit, however, as per School Board Policy, there is a limit on the number of hours that may be paid out upon resignation, retirement or if transferred to a position that is not eligible to earn vacation leave. The scheduling of vacation leave shall be by mutual agreement between the employee and his/her supervisor.

See School Board Policy 1430.06, 3430.06 and 4430.06. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

MEETINGS

Faculty meetings will be called primarily on the basis of need of either the administration or upon request from the faculty. **Attendance is required at all faculty meetings unless otherwise approved by the principal.** Meetings of other staff members shall be scheduled, as needed. Any staff member may make a contribution to the agenda. Please refer to HCTA and HUSW contracts for additional information.

See School Board Policy 1243 and 3243. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

PARKING

All staff must park in the designated area. Parking on grass, sidewalks or designated fire lanes may result in the vehicle being towed at the owner's expense. Towed vehicles may be recovered from the designated wrecker service.

PAYROLL INFORMATION

In compliance with federal labor laws, employees must accurately record daily work hours on the appropriate time log. Falsification of these payroll records is grounds for termination.

- Paychecks for regular employees are subject to mandatory payroll deductions for social security tax, FRS, Medicare tax and federal withholding tax, based on Forms W-4 and the tax tables furnished by the Internal Revenue Service. Payroll – Matters concerning salary, payroll deductions and pay date should be handled through the work site timekeeper or bookkeeper when possible.
- Personnel Action Form – Any change in information that affects pay must be submitted to the Human Resources Department five (5) working days before the payroll due date.
- Payroll Calendar – The payroll calendar, which designates payroll due date and pay dates, will be developed and issued annually by the Finance Department.
- Notices of Deposit – No Notices of Deposit will be released before payday. Notices of Deposit for substitutes will be mailed on payday and cannot be picked up at the District Support Complex.
- Substitutes, temporary and part-time employees [less than four (4) hours per day] will be paid an hourly rate.

Direct deposit is required for all employees. Employees who have direct deposit can change banks or account numbers but cannot stop direct deposit status. The inability to maintain a direct deposit account will result in the non-renewal of your annual employment contract.

PAYROLL - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **As a new hire, when can I expect my first paycheck?** If you begin work at the start of the school year, you should expect to receive your first check on the pay date according to the payroll calendars you will find online, as they are job specific. After the start of the school year, where your start date falls within the pay periods on the payroll calendars, determines when you will

receive your first check. After the first check, the pay date is every two weeks.

2. **What is “pro-rated” pay?** Employees who work for the HCSB will have their pay pro-rated, if applicable. The overall intent is to give employees as close to equal payments as possible. The paystub is designed to give employees useful information about how they are paid, including the amount earned for the pay period.
3. **What if my employment in a position did not begin until after the first day of the school year?** When your job is opened by H.R., the annual contract amount will be set according to the number of working days remaining in the current contract year. Payroll will send a letter of explanation along with your first pay stub explaining your bi-weekly pay.
4. **What if I have a change in my salary or a change in my work schedule?** Your bi-weekly pay will be adjusted for the number of working days left on the current school year, and you will be paid accordingly. You will receive a letter from the payroll department attached to your pay stub explaining the remaining bi-weekly amount to finish out the current year’s annual contract.
5. **When I terminate my employment with the school board, when may I expect to receive payment for unused sick leave, vacation leave, and extra pay earned but not paid due to pro-rata?** The termination date is the determining factor as to when payouts are paid. The Payroll Calendar shows the Pay Period and the corresponding Pay Date. If the termination date falls in the middle of the ‘pay period’ it is still calculated and paid out on the ‘pay date’.
6. **How will I be paid for my sick leave when my employment ends?** Sick leave pay-out is determined by the number of years worked with the District. Per School Board Policy: after 10 years and up to 12 years = 50% payout, 13 years or more = 100% payout. Once you’re termination date is entered by H.R., payroll will then calculate your sick leave pay-out. Your pay-out date is determined by the ‘end date’ that coincides with the pay dates on the Payroll Calendars. Teachers, Administrators, Professional/Technical and Confidential employees – Sick leave payout goes to Bencor.
7. **What if I have any unpaid absences? How will they affect my pay?** Unpaid absences are deducted from the payroll period during which the absence occurred which will result in your pay for that period being lower than normal.
8. **What if I want to put in extra time over 40 hours to get my work done?** If you are a non-exempt employee you may only do so with the prior approval of your supervisor. Employees who disregard this rule will be disciplined.
9. **What if my supervisor asks me to stay late to finish work?** You must first both agree that you will receive comp time for the extra time worked and an Authorization to Accrue Comp Time Form must be signed. If you prefer to be paid for overtime your supervisor must secure prior approval of the superintendent by having the Authorization to be Paid for Overtime Worked Form signed.
10. **What is the HCSB policy on Comp time?** Compensatory or “comp” time is given to any non-exempt employee who works over 40 hours in a workweek and follows Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) guidelines. See [FLSA Manual and HCTA and HUSW contracts](#) for additional information.
11. **What is the HCSB policy on Flex time?** Flexible schedules may be used either by non-exempt or exempt employees. All flexible schedules require prior approval by an immediate supervisor. Employees should request flex time on a temporary and infrequent basis.
12. **Do teachers earn comp time?** Teachers do not earn comp time. An administrator may give permission for a teacher to have some time off if the teacher has been asked to work beyond his/her normally scheduled hours. Supervisors must not allow time off on an hour-per-hour basis

for work performed by an exempt employee. Please refer to the HCTA contract for additional information on Alternate Schedule Time (AST).

13. **Do paras earn comp time?** Paras earn comp time (time and a half) if they are asked to work over 40 hours in a workweek. **When can they use it?** Paras can use comp time whenever they have prior approval of their administrator.
14. **Can I use comp time before it is accrued?** No
15. **How do I document that I have earned comp time?** Non-exempt employees will notate the hours worked on the Authorization to Accrue Comp Time Form and have it signed prior to working extended hours. The non-exempt employee will also note hours worked on his/her time sheet.
16. **Do I keep my comp time if I transfer to another site?** Yes. Your Comp Time Bank will transfer with you to any location. You are, however, asked to use the time before transferring to a new site, if possible.
17. **Can I choose to get paid time and a half instead of earning comp time?** Yes. It is your choice to receive pay rather than earn comp time, however, the Superintendent must pre-approve, in writing, any request for overtime pay in lieu of comp time. Request to accrue comp time must be mutually agreed upon by you and your immediate supervisor prior to working extended hours.
18. **I am a supervisor who has told my nonexempt employees to NOT come in early or stay late but they do so anyway. What should I do? Do I have to pay them overtime?** You must compensate them for any time worked over 40 hours even if your employees have been told not to work early or late. However they will be disciplined for insubordination and this discipline may lead to termination.
19. **A non-exempt employee asks to take his lunch hour during the last hour of the day. Can the supervisor allow this?** This change to lunch schedule should only be allowed when it does not disturb the work flow and is not done frequently by the same employee. The employee should sign out on a site/department sign out sheet indicating that lunch is being taken at the end of the workday. This sheet should be retained by the timekeeper. The employee should sign his/her timesheet indicating the correct time that he/she left.
20. **Is an employee permitted to change his/her work hours by taking lunch or break time at the end of each day and leaving early?** No.
21. **Do times on timesheets have to be exact?** Timesheets must accurately reflect the hours worked. Employees may sign in up to 7 minutes prior to the scheduled work time and sign out up to 7 minutes after the scheduled work time without the expectation of additional compensation. This does not permit employees to report to work later than the assigned time or leave prior to the end of shift.
22. **Where can I learn more?** Visit the U.S. Department of Labor's website at: www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/hrg.htm. Or review our [FSLA Manual](#).

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Personnel/employment records are processed and maintained in the Human Resources Department. All personnel files are public records and as such are available for public inspection. If you would like to review your personnel file, please contact the Human Resources Department for an appointment.

The School Board automatically exempts some confidential and sensitive personal information, such as social security numbers and medical information, from your personnel file before public disclosure in

accordance with the Public Records Law. An agency that is the custodian of the personal information specified shall maintain the exempt status of the personal information only if the officer, employee, justice, judge, or other person, or employing agency of the designated employee, submits a written request for maintenance of the exemption to the custodial agency. If you are a current School District employee who is either an active or former employee in one of the above categories, and/or you are the spouse of an active or former employee, you may exercise your right of exemption from certain Public Records laws. If you elect to exempt your address and telephone number from all School District public lists, please fill out the [Exempt from Public Record form](#) and return it to the Human Resources Department. For more information about this written exemption or to see if you qualify, please refer to Florida Statute 119.071. If you qualify, you will need to complete in writing the Exempt from Public Record form. If you need additional assistance, please contact Human Resources.

[Use of Social Security Numbers](#)

The Human Resources Department should be notified in writing of any changes in personal status such as changes in name, address or marital status. Please notify Risk, Benefits and Compliance regarding any changes in beneficiary for life insurance purposes and/or changes in the number of dependents.

See School Board Policy 1590, 3590 and 4590. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

New employees and current employees with employment unit changes work a probationary period during which they can be terminated without cause. There are five (5) employment units within the school system: Administrative, Confidential, Instructional, Noninstructional and Professional/Technical/Supervisory. For administrative (that require a Florida Educator's Certificate) employees, the probationary period is 97 work days as per Florida Statute. For instructional employees, the probationary period is one (1) year as per Florida Statute. For instructional staff who work less than one-half of their contract year, if reappointed, will be issued a probationary contract for the next full school year. If an instructional employee has a break in service they will be issued a new probationary contract upon return to active employment as long as the break in service was not for an approved extended leave. A break in service occurs when an employee resigns, retires, is terminated or is nonreappointed and is not re-hired before the first day of the teacher contract for the next school year. For all other employees, the probationary period is 60 work days. The probationary period begins on the first work day. The probationary period excludes weekends, paid/unpaid holidays and orientations.

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

WHAT IS A PUBLIC RECORD? Any document or record that is created or received by an agency in connection with official agency business, and not considered confidential.

- Email messages sent from and to the district network
 - Staff employment records
 - Staff discipline records
 - Social media posts to and from the district network
 - Staff Directory Information (addresses, personal phone numbers, email, etc.) unless exempt.
- While personal notes and/or emails are exempt from public record, the Hernando County School Board Policy states that employees are to use school board equipment for business use only.

All public record requests are to be forwarded to the Communications & Government Relations

Department. The Communications and Government Relations Department staff will work with the appropriate custodian of the record and respond to the requester in a timely manner.

REAPPOINTMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Employees who are classified as Confidential, Professional/Technical/Supervisory, Administrative, and Instructional (hired after July 1, 2011) are on Annual Contract status regardless of how long they have worked within the district.

Instructional employees are hired on a probationary contract. The employee will remain on probationary contract during the first full year of service. Once the employee is reappointed, after a full year of service, an annual contract will be issued in accordance with Florida Statute 1012.335. An instructional employee on probationary is not guaranteed reemployment each year and may be recommended for nonreappointment. Additional information regarding annual contract can be found in 8.105 of the Agreement between the Hernando County School Board and the Hernando County Classroom Teachers' Association. If a teacher was employed within the Hernando County Schools on a Professional Services Contract and is rehired after a break in service, he/she will be placed back on Probationary Contract, in accordance with Florida law.

Noninstructional employees gain tenure after completing three (3) years of service. A noninstructional employee without tenure is not guaranteed reemployment each year and may be recommended for nonreappointment by the site administrator. After successfully completing three (3) years of experience with the Hernando County School District, and being recommended for reappointment by the site administrator for the fourth consecutive year, a noninstructional employee gains tenure.

If an employee on an annual or probationary contract is not being recommended for reappointment, a reason or justification is not required due to annual contract status.

RESIGNATIONS

Any person who wishes to resign is expected to complete the online resignation process on the District's Application Management System or submit a written resignation that includes the date and time of the resignation to the immediate supervisor. Failure to submit a written resignation does not preclude the Superintendent from taking appropriate action. The Superintendent is authorized to accept resignations on behalf of the School Board. A resignation cannot be rescinded or amended by the employee after submission.

SAFE DRIVER PLAN

Driver

Employees of the School District or employees who volunteer to drive who, during the performance of their job assignments, operates a School District vehicle or regularly uses their personal vehicle for School District use are required to adhere to the Safe Driver Plan. All drivers shall sign a receipt acknowledging they have received a copy of the Safe Driver Plan and shall supply a copy of their driver's license to the Transportation Department so their driving record can be checked. For more information, please click here:

https://www.hernandoschools.org/cms/lib/FL02211909/Centricity/Domain/1048/Safe_Driver_Plan_2018_with_Board_Revisions-ACC.pdf

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Security cameras

All HCSD property is protected by security cameras. Video from such cameras is exempt from public record law. These security cameras may be used to monitor students, staff, and visitors while on HCSD property. All security cameras are digitally recorded 24 hours a day. Video generally remains available for approximately 30 days unless prior request to preserve video has been made through the Office of Safe Schools. Security cameras used to monitor activity may be installed by the Office of Safe Schools in any room or area with the exception of bathrooms and changing rooms in any school district facility. Video from HCSD buses and other video-equipped HCSD vehicles is generally available for 3 to 30 days, depending on the recording equipment used. The security cameras used in HCSD-owned vehicles record both video and audio input. Except for applicable School Board Polies and Federal law, there should be no expectation of visual or audio privacy from security cameras in any HCSD-owned vehicles or HCSD property.

Doors and Gates

It is the directive of HCSD that all classroom doors and gates are to remain closed and locked during the school day when students are present. Pedestrian gates are to be closed and locked unless manned for the periods of arrival and dismissal.

Drones

At all times, the use of drones on school board property is strictly prohibited unless as part of approved curriculum AND under the supervision of an HCSD staff member.

Emergency Notifications

In order to streamline the HCSD Emergency Notifications, a district contact has been assigned the task of receiving all emergency notifications during the school day and after hours. The lead site administrator or his/her designee will be responsible for ensuring the timely reporting of any and all incidents at each HCSD school. The Director of Safe Schools must be notified at the first opportunity. In turn, the Director of Safe Schools will immediately notify the Superintendent of Schools and any other required emergency response agencies or affected departments. If a facilities or maintenance emergency exists, notification must be made to the Director of Facilities Operations Division or his/her designee.

Each site will be responsible for calling 911 if the situation requires it and then calling the Director of Safe Schools at (352)797- 7233 or cell (352) 584-0833. It is essential that all other elements of the site's emergency plans are followed during an emergency. This includes, but is not limited to, evacuations, heightened security, active shooter events, and/or weather- related emergencies.

The principal, site administrator or designee is responsible to ensure that any incident involving first responders beyond the SRO on campus is reported to the Director of Safe Schools at (352)797-7233 or cell (352)584-0833 as immediately as possible.

Reportable incidents which should be called in as immediately as possible include:

- Evacuations (for any reason to include, but not limited to: fire, bomb, chemical spill)

- Active Campus Threat (Heightened Security, Lockdowns, Evasion)
- Weapons found, fired or reported on or near campus
- Sexual Battery
- Kidnapped or missing children
- Hostage situation
- Any threat or act of violence against a student, staff member, or site
- Any student, staff member or other person who is injured on an HCSD site AND is transported to the hospital
- Break-ins, vandalism or thefts of property from a site. The on-site arrest of any student, staff member or other person
- The death or attempted suicide of any student or staff member off site and student, staff member or other person on site (Baker Acts)

The contact numbers for reporting these incidents are: Director of Safe Schools: Office 352-797-7233, Cell Phone: 352-584-0833

- Any prolonged loss of utility service (electrical, water, phone, internet, digital radios and air conditioning) that creates a disruption of the school/site.
- Any motor vehicle accident that takes place on HCSD property or involves a HCSD owned, rented or leased vehicle on or off HCSD property. This includes golf carts, gators, tractors, and all other motorized vehicles.
- All other incidents that take place on or off-site that may cause a disruption to the normal operation of a facility or requires a response from an outside agency such as: Law Enforcement, Fire Departments, Emergency Management, Health Department, Hazmat Team or the Department of Environmental Protection.

The contact numbers for reporting these incidents are: Facilities Department (loss of utility and non-transportation accidents/incidents) 352-797-7054 OR Transportation Department Dispatch (bus incidents and transportation drivers),

Emergency Procedures

See your site administrator for site specific emergency plans/procedures.

Emergency Shelters

The following locations are made available for use by the general public in case of natural disasters (such as hurricanes or tornadoes) or man-made disasters and provide an orderly method of operating the facility should the need arise. The facilities named below have been designated as emergency shelters, should the County Director of Emergency Management determine it is necessary. These will be the only school facilities open to the public for this purpose unless the Superintendent of HCSD makes the decision to open other locations as needed:

Central High School
 Challenger K-8 School of Science and Mathematics (special needs and service animals only)
 Chocachatti Elementary School
 D.S. Parrott Middle School (Pet Friendly: accepts dogs and cats only at shelter)
 Deltona Elementary School
 Explorer K-8 School
 Fox Chapel Middle School
 F.W. Springstead High School
 Hernando High School

Moton Elementary School
Nature Coast Technical High School
Suncoast Elementary School
Weeki Wachee High School
West Hernando Middle School
Winding Waters K-8 School

These facilities will be supervised by Hernando County School District staff members as determined/directed by the HCSD Superintendent or designee. All general population shelters may be activated as a pet friendly shelter.

I.D. Badges

Employee ID badges are photo IDs provided by the Human Resources Department, and are free of charge to all employees. ID badges **must** be worn at all times by staff for security purposes. Replacement ID badges are provided for free to all employees. Employee ID badges can be kept year round for ID and discount purposes.

Issuing Electronic Access Cards

Electronic access cards are issued through the District's Safety and Security Department. Electronic access cards are assigned to specific staff members who are current in the HCSD Human Resources data base. There will be NO badges issued to persons not current in the HCSD Human Resources employee data base. Electronic access cards need to be requested through the site access coordinator.

Keys and Electronic Access Cards

Keys are to be secured through the principal and/or designee. Requests for additional or duplicate keys must be approved by the principal. **A request for additional keys must be requested through work order system. Keys may only be duplicated by the HCSD Office of Safe Schools only after approval is gained through the work-site administrator and Safe School's designated staff member.**

Staff may not issue or loan keys or electronic access cards to students or other staff members. Keys and electronic access cards are assigned to specific staff members who are responsible for the security of the areas to which they provide access. Staff may not unlock doors to other rooms at the request of students nor allow students to enter rooms unsupervised. Keys and Electronic Access Cards are to be kept secured at all times, so as to avoid the possibility of loss or theft.

Keys and electronic access cards for district equipment, vehicles and buildings are the responsibility of the staff member to whom the keys were assigned to. In the event an employee's assigned keys or electronic key cards are lost or stolen, the employee will be responsible for the cost of replacing them and/or the equipment associated with them (re-keying locks, key blanks, reprogramming locks, etc.). Each case of a lost or stolen key will be reviewed individually to determine if the employee acted with due diligence or if an unusual circumstance existed that may hold the employee harmless for replacement costs. The cost of replacing a damaged Electronic Access Card is free as long as the damaged card is available for review. The cost of replacing a lost or stolen Electronic Access Card is \$10.00. At the time Keys or Electronic Access Cards become lost or stolen, the HCSD Office of Safe Schools must be informed immediately so that the site administrator can be made aware and the electronic access card can be removed from the system.

The site administrator or his/her designee shall collect all keys, electronic access cards (specific for

that site) from any employee whose employment is ending with the HCSD, transferring to a different site, or on leave of absence. If keys and or electronic access cards are not retrieved, the HCSD Office of Safe Schools shall be notified immediately. Keys and electronic key cards of all employees who work less than 249-day contracts must be turned in to each school/site administrator at the end of each school year. Exceptions may be made on an individual basis as agreed upon by the site administrator and Office of Safe Schools Director or designee. Keys and electronic access cards will be reissued to employees returning for the following school year during pre-school week. When sending electronic access cards and payment for lost or stolen badges through the inter office mail the designated Office of Safe Schools transit bag must be used. All transactions utilizing the secured transit bag must go through the site access coordinator.

Opening and Closing of Rooms

Teachers and staff are responsible for locking the doors and windows of their classrooms at all times. Failure to follow this procedure would put students and staff at risk during any lockdown event. All electronic locks automatically lock at the end of the site's work day according to specific site hours. Any door unlocked after the end of the school day must be manually relocked by staff.

Vendors

Vendors who come on school campuses must have a current State and HCSD issued vendor ID showing they have been through the proper background check. Any vendor who does not have a valid HCSD vendor ID must be directed to the Facilities Department and must not enter school grounds. The V-Soft program cannot be used as a substitute for the required background check and School District issued Vendor ID.

All staff should re-direct vendors without the proper vendor ID to the front office where they will be given instruction on how to get the proper vendor ID. If vendor does not return or leave the premise staff are instructed to call law enforcement and have them remove from the premise.

See Appendix J for specific information about badge colors and requirements for vendors and contractors.

Visitors

A visitor's pass must be issued to all persons, including family members and parents/ guardians, who are on the campus. Staff members are to direct any persons without the proper visitor pass to the office. All visitors to school campuses during normal business hours must present a valid driver's license, State ID or military ID. The ID must be scanned through the V-Soft program to ensure that the visitor or volunteer is not a sexual offender or predator. No sexual offenders or predators may enter any Hernando County School District site unless they have been cleared by the Safety and Security Department and follows the restriction placed on them by the School District.

HCSD staff, who are wearing their HCSD identification badge should sign into the HCSD Staff Log Book provided by HCSD Office of Safe Schools. This book will serve as the visitor record for all HCSD staff not accounted for in the ESE and Maintenance/Facilities sign-in books. Any district staff member who is **NOT** wearing his/her badge **must** produce a driver's license and be scanned in through the visitor management software system.

SUSPENSIONS/DISMISSALS

Under certain conditions, a supervisor may recommend to the Superintendent the suspension or dismissal of an employee. Administrative Leave for immediate suspension or dismissal are outlined in detail in

your respective Collective Bargaining Agreement and School Board Policy.

See School Board Policy 3140, 3140.01 and 4140 Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

TOBACCO FREE ENVIRONMENT

Tobacco Use and E-Cigarettes

School Board Policies prohibit the use of any form of tobacco products anywhere on the campus of any facility owned or leased or contracted for the Board, including, but not limited to, practice fields, playgrounds, football fields, baseball fields, softball fields, pool areas, soccer fields, tennis courts, all open areas and in any area utilized by students or designated for student activities. Additionally, the use of tobacco products in any form in facilities, vehicles and areas designated for various student programs and activities is prohibited. This includes the use of e-cigarettes, “vapor”, or other substitute forms of cigarettes, clove cigarettes, or other smoking devices.

Nicotine Patches &/or Gum

The wearing of a nicotine patch &/or chewing of nicotine gum is allowed by staff when prescribed by a medical doctor. Patches should be worn under clothing, if possible.

See School Board Policy 7434, 1215, 3215, 4215 and 5512. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

TOXIC SUBSTANCES AT WORK

Employees have a right to know about exposures to toxic substances in the workplace. A list of toxic substances is listed at each school or District facility. Toxic Hazard Preparedness (THP) is the responsibility of the Facilities and Operations Division. Current files of Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) will be maintained for every hazardous material present on District property. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the Facilities and Operations Division may enlist the aid of county and municipal authorities and, if possible, the owners or operators of identified potential sources of toxic hazards.

See School Board Policy 8431. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Use of facilities is governed by Board Policy. Any individual or organization leasing Board facilities must comply with the Use of Facilities Procedures. Site administrators do not have the authority to waive Use of Facility fees. Events may not take place which will interfere in any way with regular school activities, adult education programs, or community school programs. Requests for use of facilities should be made in such a fashion to assure adequate time for consideration by the Superintendent to either grant or deny approval of a request. Final approval must be obtained before advertising the activity.

Employees should not use district-owned equipment for personal use.

The Loan of District Equipment form (SO-PC-002) must be completed by the employee when any type of district equipment is loaned (i.e., bringing a laptop computer home). Employees are responsible for the cost of any damages to, or the loss of, the equipment. Equipment loaned will be for business use only and shall not be used for gainful outside employment or private use of employees for personal gain, or by any outside group or organization, in accordance with School Board policy.

See School Board Policy 7510 and 7530. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Audio-Visual Equipment

Equipment will be available from the media center and can be checked out by the media center staff. Employees are responsible for the prompt return and care of the equipment.

VISA® PURCHASING CARDS (District and Internal Funds)

The district's purchasing card (P-Card) program is designed to improve efficiency in processing purchases (e.g. office supplies, cleaning supplies, etc.) by allowing approved district employees to purchase approved goods and services directly from a vendor using the P-Card as the payment vehicle. This program is an alternative approach to utilizing purchase orders and is in alignment with Best Business Practices.

The P-Card program works very much like a personal credit card. The administrator requests a card for an employee by completing the Individual Purchasing Card Holder's Agreement. In order to use the card, the employee must go through training and sign that he/she understands his/her responsibilities as a cardholder.

- **Purchasing Card Limitations and Restrictions**
Under NO circumstances is the card to be used to make personal purchases. See the Purchasing Card Policies and Procedures Manual for a list of unauthorized purchases.
- **Purchasing Card Security**
Individuals that are authorized to use a site purchasing card must properly sign out and sign the card back in when the card is returned. Each card holder is responsible for the security of his or her card. All precautions should be taken to maintain confidentiality of all information relating to the card, such as the card holder account number and expiration date. The card or the account number should never be left in a conspicuous place for others to access.
- **Turning in Receipts/Obtaining Copies of Lost Receipts**
Card holders are required to turn in signed packing slips or order confirmations, and receipts "Approved for Payment" by the next working day to the site coordinator. Repeated failure on the part of a card holder to turn in cash register receipts or order confirmations to the site coordinator may result in the employee personally reimbursing the district for the expenditure, revocation of the Purchasing Card privilege and/or possible disciplinary action. If receipts are lost or needed for any reason including dispute purposes, a copy may be requested by calling Regions Bank Service Provider, Wendover Financial at 1-888-934-1087.

Disciplinary Action Guidelines Unauthorized use of the Purchasing VISA® Card will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken pursuant to School Board Policy. The disciplinary action may range from a warning up to termination of employment.

VOLUNTEERS LEVEL I AND LEVEL II (A+)/SPONSORS

The following procedures shall apply to all individuals who provide volunteer service to the Hernando County School District. Before volunteering, applicants must complete the "Volunteer in Education" application which can be found at each school site, the District Office, or online. Volunteering in the school district is a privilege and not a right. Volunteers may be required to be background checked at different levels. [Security Badge Chart](#)

The following requirements are needed as part of the application process:

- All volunteers must possess a valid Florida driver's license, or Florida State issued ID.
- The initial application process requires all ID's of prospective applicants be scanned into the V-Soft program by the school volunteer coordinator or his/her designee.

- Be a Florida resident prior to applying.
- Be subject to a criminal background check based on board policy and state statute
- Be eligible to serve as a volunteer.
- Receive a copy of the Volunteer handbook and sign off on the acknowledgement page. School volunteer coordinators will maintain a copy of the acknowledgement at their cost site.
- Be recommended by the Superintendent to the School Board for approval.
- Be approved by the School Board.
- Failure of any prospective volunteer at time of application to disclose any arrest or criminal charge will result in that person being barred from volunteering for the district in any capacity for one year.

Once a volunteer is deemed eligible to serve, the District Volunteer Coordinator will notify the school through email via the V-Soft program.

- The cost center administrators will ultimately determine the number of volunteers and hours needed for their programs.
- The cost center administrator is responsible for the conduct of volunteers assigned to his/her center and can inform any volunteer that his/her services are no longer needed.
- Volunteers who work with student records must sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Level I volunteers must check in with the volunteer coordinator each time they want to volunteer at a school. At that time they will be issued a temporary badge which must be worn at all times while on school property.
- Level II (A+) volunteers must check in with the volunteer coordinator each time they want to volunteer at a school. At that time, they must be wearing their level II (A+) badge issued by the Safety and Security department.
- Volunteers shall act in accordance with District policies, regulations, and cost center rules.
- The District Volunteer Coordinator shall be notified and will be responsible for investigating and resolving complaints regarding volunteers.
- Level I volunteers shall work directly under the supervision of a Hernando County School Board employee.
- Level II (A+) volunteers do not require supervision by a Hernando County School Board employee.

All sponsors of any student group (athletic or academic) must apply for the sponsor position in writing and be approved by the district.

- Sponsors must meet all requirements of the School District.
- The district reserves the right to decline the services of any group or person.

See School Board Policy 2430.01. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

WEAPONS/FIREARMS

The School Board prohibits District employees from openly carrying a handgun or carrying a concealed weapon or firearm, in a school safety zone, into any elementary or secondary school, administration building, as well as into any Board meeting, any setting that is under the control and supervision of the Board for the purpose of school activities approved and authorized by the Board including, but not limited to, a school-sponsored event, or in a Board-owned vehicle. All persons, including school personnel, violating the provisions of this policy, shall be immediately reported to the proper law enforcement authority. As well, staff member shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Authorized school programs requiring the usage of firearms or a firearm securely encased within the

interior of a private motor vehicle if the firearm or weapon is carried for a lawful purpose and is not readily available for immediate use shall be exceptions.

See School Board Policy 1217, 3217 and 4217. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

WORK EXPERIENCE – (salary purposes only)

Earning Years of Work Experience

Employees must work one (1) full day more than one-half (1/2) of the contract year (assigned to their position) in order to earn a year of experience. If an employee does not earn a year of experience, he/she will remain on the current salary schedule step until the following school year ends.

Work Experience Granted for Military Experience

Professional/Technical/Supervisory and Administrative personnel will not be granted military experience unless the military experience is deemed like to said PTS or Administrative job description.

Instructional personnel may receive up to ten (10) years of credit for military experience. A copy of the DD-214 must be submitted to the Human Resources Department.

Noninstructional personnel may receive up to three (3) years of credit for military experience. A copy of the DD-214 must be submitted to the Human Resources Department. A combination of work experience and military credit cannot exceed the maximum number of years of experience permitted [ten (10) years].

The DD-214 form(s) must be received in the Human Resources Department within 45 calendar days of the employee's start date to be retroactive to the employee's start date. If the forms are received after the 45 days, the salary adjustment will be made from the beginning of the pay period during which the forms were received.

Work Experience Granted for Previous Employment

All experience must be verified by the former employer(s). Verification of Work Experience Forms are available on the Human Resources Department link on the HCSD website. The Work Experience Forms are also provided at the time of on-boarding. It is the responsibility of the employee to request these forms and provide the completed forms to the Human Resources Department.

The verification of employment forms must be received in the Human Resources Department within 45 calendar days of the employee's start date to be retroactive to the employee's start date. If the forms are received after the 45 days, the salary adjustment will be made from the beginning of the pay period during which the forms were received.

Instructional personnel may be granted up to ten (10) years of teaching experience if the following criterion is met:

- Must have documentation of a satisfactory evaluation rating in a full-time teaching position for each year verified
- Must have the previous employer listed on the occupational experience section of the application for employment
- Form(s) must be complete and signed by previous employer or employment agency and must include contact information (address, phone number, etc.)
- Previous position must have required a valid teaching certificate
- **Previous employer must have been an accredited institution**

Noninstructional, Confidential and Professional/Technical/Supervisory personnel may be granted up to ten (10) years of like experience if the following criteria are met (see union contract for additional information, if applicable):

- Must be like job experience (similar duties) as determined by Human Resources
- Must have previous employer listed on the occupational experience section of the application for employment
- Form(s) must be complete and signed by previous employer or employment agency and must include contact information (address, phone number, etc.)

Administrative personnel may be granted up to fifteen (15) years of administrative experience if the following criteria are met:

- Must be like job experience (similar duties)
- Must have been in a supervisory or administrative capacity
- Must have previous employer listed on the occupational experience section of the application for employment
- Form(s) must be complete and signed by previous employer or employment agency and must include contact information (address, phone number, etc.)

The employee may be required to provide additional documentation, such as a job description, if required by the Human Resources Department administrator. Previous experience can only be brought in one time for the entire duration of employment with the Hernando County School District regardless of employment changes. Employee has up to 30 days from the date experience is granted to appeal the number of years granted.

Staff Handbook

Section 3

Employee Benefits and Risk Management

Employee Benefits
Qualifying Event Change in Status
Retirement
Sick Leave Donation
Human Resources Frequently Asked Questions
Workers Compensation

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefit Elections

An election confirmation and enrollment form, provided as a downloadable document via the new employee orientation, must be completed and returned to Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department within thirty (30) working days from the first day of employment. Benefits will be effective on the first of the month following a sixty (60) day waiting period. If a packet is not completed during that time, the employee will automatically be enrolled in the District's group life insurance policy. The employee will not be eligible to make changes to his/her insurance until the open enrollment period unless he/she is experiencing a qualifying event as per IRC Section 125 regulation. If an employee elects to participate, premiums will be charged retroactively to the employee's effective date via payroll deduction. The effective date will be the 1st of the month following a sixty (60) day waiting period. Visit the [Benefits](#) page on our website for more information.

Benefits While on Unpaid Extended Leave of Absence

While on unpaid extended leave of absence, the employee is responsible for 100% of benefit premium payments. The life insurance must be converted to an individual policy. If the leave is due to illness, the employee may be eligible for a waiver of premium from the life insurance company. The employee's payment should be made through the Hernando County School District, Attention Benefit Payments. If employee is deficient in paying premiums, the employee's benefits will be terminated. It is the employee's responsibility to notify Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department and the life insurance company when he/she returns to active employment.

Benefits While on Family Medical Leave

When an employee is out on continuous or intermittent Family Medical Leave, the School District will continue to contribute its portion of the employee's health and life insurance premium, and the employee is responsible for his/her portion of any other benefit premium payments. The employee's payment should be made through the Hernando County School District, Attention Benefit Payments. If employee is deficient in paying premiums, the employee's benefits will be terminated. It is the employee's responsibility to notify Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department and the life insurance company when he/she returns to active employment. The employee will automatically be enrolled in the District's group life insurance plan on the first of the month following a sixty (60) day waiting period unless the employee elects differently by completing and returning the election confirmation and enrollment form within the first 30 days of returning to active employment status.

Benefits While on Military Leave

While on Military Leave, the employee is responsible for 100% of benefit premium payments. The life insurance must be converted to an individual policy. The employee's payment should be made through the Hernando County School District, Attention Benefit Payments. If the employee is deficient in paying premiums, the employee's benefits will be terminated. It is the employee's responsibility to notify Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department and the life insurance company when he/she returns to active employment. The employee will automatically be enrolled in the District's group life insurance plan on the first of the month following a sixty (60) day waiting period unless the employee elects differently by completing and returning the election confirmation and enrollment form within the first 30 days of returning to active employment status.

Benefits While on Retirement

Retired School District personnel and their eligible dependents may be able to continue participation in their current group insurance plans. Insurance premiums are paid by the retiree. Retirees will be required to have their benefit payments deducted from their FRS Pension check. If the employee is not receiving a pension check because they elected the Investment Plan option or if their pension check is not sufficient to be able to deduct the benefit payment, the retiree may pay the benefit premium direct to the Hernando County School District, Attention Benefit Payments. If the retiree is deficient in paying premiums, the retiree's benefits will be terminated. Contact Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department for more information. When a retiree reaches Medicare Eligibility age (65) he/she will be offered COBRA for an additional 18 months. This will allow time for the retiree to apply for a Medicare supplement. At the end of the 18 months the retiree's benefits will end with Hernando County School District's Group coverage.

Benefits While on Suspension With or Without Pay

While on suspension with or without pay, the School District will continue to contribute its portion of the employee's health and life insurance. The employee is responsible for his/her portion of any other benefit premium payments. The employee's payment should be made through the Hernando County School District, Attention Benefit Payments. If the employee is deficient in paying premiums, the employee's benefits will be terminated. It is the employee's responsibility to notify Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department and the life insurance company when he/she returns to active employment. The employee will automatically be enrolled in the District's group life insurance plan on the first of the month following a sixty (60) day waiting period unless the employee elects differently by completing and returning the election confirmation and enrollment form within the first 30 days of returning to active employment status.

Benefits While on Worker's Compensation Leave

When an employee is out on Worker's Compensation Leave, the School District will continue to contribute its portion of the employee's health and life insurance. The employee is responsible for his/her portion of any other benefit premium payments. The employee's payment should be made through the Hernando County School District, Attention Benefit Payments. If the employee is deficient in paying premiums, the employee's benefits will be terminated. It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Employee Benefits Department and the life insurance company when he/she returns to active employment. The employee will automatically be enrolled in the District's group life insurance plan on the first of the month following a sixty (60) day waiting period unless the employee elects differently by completing and returning the election confirmation and enrollment form within the first 30 days of returning to active employment status.

Dependent Eligibility Verification

When an employee is adding an eligible dependent to his/her plan, the employee must provide documentation verifying that the individual(s) is the employee's dependent. An eligible dependent is the employee's spouse, child, stepchild, foster child, and a child for whom the employee has legal guardianship. Documentation requirements are Marriage Certificate, Birth Certificate, Adoption Decree, Total and Permanent Disability Certification, Order of Guardianship. Dependent verification will be required when adding the eligible dependent and during open enrollment.

Termination of Benefits

An employee will continue coverage via the Hernando County School District's group insurance policy until the end of the month in which he/she terminates. A COBRA election notice will be sent

with directions on how to continue benefits.

Waiver of Benefits

If an employee does not choose to enroll in the health, vision or dental plan, the employee will automatically be enrolled in the District's group life insurance plan and will not be eligible for benefits until the next open enrollment period unless the employee experiences a qualifying event as described in IRC Section 125 regulation. The employee will have thirty (30) days from the date of the qualifying event to make changes. [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 \(HIPAA\)](#)

QUALIFYING EVENT/CHANGE IN STATUS

What is a Qualifying Event/Change in Status?

A Qualifying Event/Change in Status is an IRS permitted mid-year plan election change.

Can I change my benefits during the year?

In general, during the plan year, under limited circumstances as provided by the District School Board of Hernando County's plans and IRS regulations, a Change in Status event may permit you to change a benefit election or vary a salary reduction amount if you, your spouse, or dependent gained or lost eligibility for coverage under an employer's plan.

What type of changes can I make?

The IRS requires that mid-year plan election changes must be on account of and corresponds with a change in status that affects your own, your spouse's, or your dependent's eligibility. The IRS requires mid-year plan election changes be on account of, and consistent with, a permitted event. Mid-year plan election changes are not automatic. Even if you experience a permitted Change in Status election change event under IRS regulations, your employer's component plans' insurance contracts may not allow (or may limit) mid-year plan election changes.

How do I know if I have experienced a change in status?

The 2-Step Rule: You can only change your benefit election(s) during the plan year if:

1. a qualifying change in status event has occurred and
2. the requested election change(s) corresponds with the event

What are qualifying events?

1. Change in your legal marital status – including marriage, death of a spouse, or divorce.
2. Change in number of tax dependents – including marriage, birth, death, adoption, or placement for adoption.
3. Change in employment status that affects your own, your spouse or dependent's eligibility – including termination or commencement of employment, commencement or return from unpaid leave of absence.
4. The gain or loss of a dependent eligibility status – such as attainment of specified age; student status; marital status; or any similar circumstances which satisfy or cease to satisfy eligibility status.
5. Change of residence of employee, spouse, or dependent that affects his/her eligibility for coverage.

When can I complete paperwork to add my newborn?

You can enroll your newborn by completing and returning the necessary paperwork to the Employee Benefits office within 30 days. If you do not enroll your newborn within 30 days of the birth date, the newborn's claims will not be paid and you will have to wait until the next open enrollment to enroll him/her in the Board's health care plan.

Can I add other dependents when I add my newborn?

Yes, you can add existing dependents whenever a dependent gains eligibility because of a qualifying change in status event.

If one of my dependents becomes eligible for Medicaid/Medicare, can I cancel coverage for all of my dependents at this time?

No, you may cancel coverage for that dependent only.

If my dependent becomes eligible for Florida KidCare can I drop my dependent coverage mid-year?

Yes, you may drop coverage for the covered dependent.

If my dependent loses eligibility for coverage under Medicaid or Florida KidCare, can I enroll them in health coverage?

Yes. If you or your dependent(s) lose eligibility for coverage under Medicaid or Florida KidCare or become eligible for premium assistance, you must notify the Benefits Department within 30 days.

If I purchase an individual policy from an outside provider. Can I drop my dependent coverage mid-year?

No, IRS regulations do not allow a cafeteria plan participant to cease participation if he or she becomes eligible for a plan other than an employer sponsored group plan, Medicaid, Medicare or SCHIP (*Florida KidCare*).

Can I change my benefits at any time after I have experienced a Change in Status?

No, you must notify the Benefits Department within 30 days of a qualifying change in status event.

What happens if I fail to notify the Employee Benefits Department of my change in status event within 30 days?

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Employee Benefits Department of a change in status that affects the employee's, his/her spouse's, or his/her dependent's eligibility. Failure to notify the Employee Benefits Department within 30 days will result in your benefit election(s) continuing until the next plan year. You can make such changes during open enrollment to be effective January 1, or the next calendar year. It is the School Board's policy not to refund overpayment of premiums.

Mid-Year Plan Changes Qualifying Events:

1. Marriage
2. Divorce
3. Adoption
4. Birth
5. Over-Aged Dependent
6. Court Order
7. Change in Employment
8. Gain Employer, Federal or State Coverage
9. Involuntary Loss of Coverage
10. Moved from Service Area

If you have experienced a qualifying event, you must:

Contact Employee Benefits within 30 days of such change to request the appropriate forms to stop or modify your benefit election(s) at (352) 797 – 7007. Complete and return the change in status request forms to Employee Benefits with written documentation of qualifying change in status event.

Management will determine if your change in status meets IRS regulations. If your change results from a qualifying change in status event, the change(s) to your benefit(s) will be made effective on the first day of the month following receipt of all properly completed paperwork and documentation, unless otherwise

provided by law.

Change in Status Documentation Requirements:

1. Marriage - Copy of Marriage Certificate
2. Divorce - A certified copy of the “Final Judgment”
3. Birth - Copy of birth certificate or social security card application “Notification Letter”
4. Adoption - Copy of adoption decree, placement for adoption papers or forms provided by the court
5. Death - Copy of Death Certificate
6. Legal Custody of Child - Documentation that the child is your legal dependent
7. Eligible for Medicare, Medicaid, or State Children Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP, i.e. Florida KidCare) - Copy of card or letter stating the effective date of coverage and names of individual eligible for coverage
8. Dependent Flexible Spending Account - Letter from provider stating the effective date of change and the rate of increase or decrease
9. Unpaid Leave - Letter from employer stating dates of unpaid leave
10. Significant Change in Coverage
 - a. Loss of Coverage - A letter from employer stating the date coverage terminates
 - b. New Eligibility - A letter from spouse’s employer stating date of newly eligible coverage
11. Change in Employment (Spouse)
 - a. New Hire – A letter from employer stating the date of hire and date eligible for medical coverage
 - b. Termination–Documentation stating the effective termination date of medical coverage
12. Ineligible Dependent
 - a. Employment – A letter from dependent’s employer stating date of hire and date eligible for medical coverage
 - b. Student – If dependent has graduated or dropped out of college, a letter from the college stating such
 - c. Marriage – Copy of marriage certificate
 - d. Plans that provide health coverage for dependents are required to extend the coverage of dependents (adult children) to age 26, regardless of their eligibility for other insurance coverage. Health Plans must provide coverage to all eligible dependents, including those who are not enrolled in school, not dependents on their parents' tax returns, and those who are married

RETIREMENT

NOTE: The information below is subject to change based on Florida Retirement System (FRS) guidelines.

Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP)

Employees who reach normal retirement age/years may elect to participate in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP). This program allows an employee to effectively retire under the Florida Retirement System (FRS) Pension Plan and begin accumulating his/her retirement benefits without terminating employment, for up to 60 months. While participating in DROP, monthly retirement benefits accumulate in the FRS Trust Fund. The earliest an employee may begin participation in DROP is the month they reach normal retirement date based upon age, or the month after the month of normal retirement date based upon years of service. If an employee delays application to participate in DROP, it may affect eligibility. Noninstructional employees must apply within one (1) year of reaching normal retirement age or participation will not be allowed. For instructional personnel, there is no time limit to participate after reaching normal retirement age. To apply for DROP, an employee must complete forms DP-11, DP-ELE, FRS-11o and SA-1. These forms can be

obtained by calling FRS at (844) 377-1888 or logging on to www.frs.state.fl.us. Contact Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department for more information.

DROP Extension Request

If an employee is in an instructional or administrative position as defined in section 1012.01(2)(a)-(d) of Florida Statute, he/she may be permitted to extend his/her DROP Participation. This extension must be authorized by the School District and approved by the Division of Retirement. The employee must be employed on a contractual basis in an eligible position at the time they complete his/her initial 60-month eligibility period and must remain in an eligible position during his/her extended DROP participation. To request an extension of DROP, the employee must submit a written request to Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department along with a completed FRS DP-EXT form prior to the end of his/her initial period of DROP participation. This form can be obtained by calling FRS at (844) 377-1888 or logging on to www.frs.state.fl.us. DROP extension requests will only be authorized through the end of the employee's current contract year. Contact Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department for more information.

DROP Reemployment

Before becoming reemployed in any capacity with any FRS employer after retiring or terminating DROP participation, the employee should contact the Bureau of Retirement Calculations Department for guidance at (844) 377-1888. DROP participation may end and the employee will not be considered to have retired. The retirement application will be voided and the employee must repay all retirement benefits that have been received, including any DROP accumulation.

Insurance

Insurance Benefits: School District personnel who have ended their employment by retiring may continue to participate in the current group health insurance program of the district provided the person also retires with the Florida Retirement System (FRS) within thirty (30) days of the last day of their employment and there is no interruption in insurance coverage. After completing an online Resignation/Retirement process on the District's website, the employee will receive a letter with instructions on how they can continue their insurance benefits. For more information contact Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department.

Intent

In addition to the requirements for FRS, the employee must advise his/her administrator of his/her intent to retire. The employee must complete the online Resignation/Retirement process on the District's website. For additional information, please refer to [Initiate Your Retirement Process](#) which outlines the retirement process.

Retirement Election

Effective July 1, 2002, new employees must choose to participate in the pension plan or the investment plan. If new employees do not choose between the pension plan and the investment plan, their plan will default to the pension plan. Contact MYFRS Financial Guidance Line at 1-866-466-9377 for free retirement planning.

Retirement Process

As per the Division of Retirement, to apply for Service Retirement or DROP via the Florida Retirement System (FRS), the employee must submit a signed and notarized application form to the Bureau of Retirement Calculations Department. Applications are accepted up to six (6) months prior **to the termination of employment date**. The law does not provide retroactive benefits for an

employee who delays completing an application, contact the Florida Retirement System with questions. It is the responsibility of the employee to initiate his/her retirement process. For additional information, please refer to Appendix D which outlines the retirement process.

Forms and assistance can be obtained via the Division of Retirement by calling (844) 377-1888, logging on to www.frs.state.fl.us or contacting a Financial Advisor. Contact the Human Resources Department for more information. **Please note that Risk, Benefits and Compliance personnel in the Human Resources Department serve strictly as liaisons between the Florida Retirement System and School District employees and cannot legally provide retirement advice.**

Vacation/Terminal Pay Benefits

Employees may be entitled to vacation and/or terminal pay benefits depending on years of service (see School Board Policy 1430.06, 4430.06, 1430.03, 3430.03 and 4430.03). Administrators, Instructional, Professional Technical and Confidential staff must request Bencor information by calling (888) 258-3422 option 1. Some/All of your sick pay may be sent to Bencor. You can request a payout or rollover form from Bencor 30 days after your resignation date by calling (888)258-3422 option 1.

See School Board Policy 1430.06, 4430.06, 1430.03, 3430.03 and 4430.03. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

SICK LEAVE DONATION

1. How do I ask for donations?

Submit a request through the Sick Leave Donation icon on First Class. Include your name, your job title and your site name.

2. When can sick leave be donated?

An employee may donate his/her accrued sick leave to another HCSD employee provided that the donation relates to a catastrophic illness or disability of the employee, maternity, or catastrophic illness or death of an immediate family member of the employee requesting leave donation. Immediate family member is defined as spouse, parent, or dependent child. The authorizing employee must retain at least ten (10) days of sick leave as of the time of donation.

3. May I donate to a family member?

Yes. Employees may donate to their spouse, child, parent or sibling if they are both full-time members of the HCSD.

4. Who must be sick in order for me to donate sick leave?

The employee requesting donation or an immediate family member as defined in #2 above.

5. What documentation do I need to supply in order to receive donated sick time?

Prior to requesting donations for the employee's own personal illness or for the illness of an immediate family member as defined in #2 above, the recipient employee must have provided appropriate documentation (Certification of Physician form) from a physician licensed to treat or provide service related to the condition requiring leave and the recipient must already be on an approved Extended Leave or approved Intermittent FMLA leave.

6. How many days of sick leave must I anticipate needing before I can participate in this program?

You must anticipate the need for at least 10 days of sick leave in order to receive transfers under this program.

7. Do I need to apply for extended leave if other employees are donating their sick time to me?

Yes. Only employees with a verified, catastrophic illness, accident or injury requiring an extended leave are eligible to receive donated sick leave. Please refer to question #2.

8. Can I use sick leave for the death of a family member as defined above?

No, refer to #2 above for use of donated sick time. However, employees may ask for three days of bereavement leave for the death of a family member. Employees must have exhausted their bereavement leave first and then may ask that subsequent days be counted as sick leave.

9. How do I know how much sick time I have accumulated?

Check each pay stub for the number of hours that have accumulated. Your site timekeeper also has this information.

10. May I donate to a family member?

Yes. District employees may allow their family members (spouse, child, parent or sibling) to use the sick leave that has accrued to the employee if the family members are also district employees. The family member can only use the donated sick leave when all of his/her sick leave has been depleted.

11. Do I have to donate full days or can I just donate hours?

There is no minimum number of "days" that have to be donated by an employee but the hours donated have to equal one day. Therefore, if an employee is donating time to someone who regularly works a 7.75 hour day, at least 7.75 hours must be donated. If the employee receiving donated time regularly works a 4 hour day then the donor must donate at least 4 hours. The District is unable to process a partial day. Please make sure that the donation form is filled in correctly by knowing how many hours the employee requesting time regularly works before submitting the paperwork. Any paperwork with an insufficient number of hours to equal 1 paid day will be returned for reprocessing. This may cause the employee, who is requesting the time, to not receive the donation. NOTE: Only hours for the current payroll should be submitted. Donors need to keep at least two (2) weeks in their sick leave balance.

12. When will sick leave donations be credited to my sick leave bank?

Donation forms are sent to the recipient's timekeeper. Once all documentation has been received and the employee is approved to receive sick leave donations, an email will be sent out on the Sick Leave Donation Icon. At that time, employees may donate leave time. Credit of transferred sick leave will only be applied prospectively from the date of receipt in the Payroll office. Requests shall not be processed retroactively. Timely submission of required documentation is required due to the time needed to review and qualify an employee to receive sick leave donations.

13. Is there a cutoff time when donations can no longer be accepted?

Yes, once an employee is out of time and no more donations have come in for the current payroll cycle, the employee will no longer be eligible for donations and no more donations can be accepted. After Human Resources closes the employee in Skyward he/she can no longer receive donations.

14. What forms do I use?

The forms are located at www.hernandoschools.org under HCSB employees, Print Shop Form Downloads, Finance.

To donate to an immediate family member: [SO-FIN-041](#)

To donate to another employee: [SO-FIN-025](#)

HUMAN RESOURCES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I obtain tenure status if I am a noninstructional employee?

- A noninstructional employee must work three (3) full consecutive years and be reappointed to a fourth year within the district in order to obtain tenure. If a noninstructional employee has a break in service, he/she returns on a non-tenured status. The only exception to this is made for Interim Food Service Assistant Managers due to the temporary nature of the position. A full year is defined as one day more than half of the contracted year.

How do I verify military experience? How many years of military experience can I bring in?

- In order to verify military experience, a copy of a DD-214 must be given to the Human Resources Department. Professional/Technical/Supervisory and Administrative personnel will not be granted military experience. Instructional employees can bring in ten (10) years of military experience and noninstructional employees can bring in three (3) years of military experience. If the DD-214 is received within forty-five (45) days of the employee's start date, the new pay will be retroactive back to his/her start date. If the DD-214 is received after the first forty-five (45) days of employment, the new pay will start at the beginning of the pay period in which it is received. The combination of military and previous experience cannot exceed ten (10) years for noninstructional employees.

How do I verify my previous experience? How many years of experience can I bring in?

- In order to verify previous experience, a Verification of Experience form must be given to the Human Resources Department. Professional/Technical/Supervisory employees can verify ten (10) years of experience. Administrative employees can verify fifteen (15) years of experience. Instructional employees can verify ten (10) years of prior teaching experience. Noninstructional employees can verify ten (10) years of experience. If the experience form is received within forty-five (45) days of the employee's start date, the new pay will be retroactive back to his/her start date. If the experience form is received after the first forty-five (45) days of employment, the new pay will start at the beginning of the pay period in which it is received. The combination of military and previous experience cannot exceed ten (10) years for noninstructional employees. Previous experience can only be brought in one time for the entire duration of employment with the Hernando County School District regardless of employment changes. Employee has up to 30 days from the date experience is granted to appeal the number of years granted.

Are there unions in Hernando County?

- Instructional personnel are represented by the Hernando Classroom Teachers' Association. Noninstructional personnel are represented by the Hernando United School Workers. Confidential, professional/technical/supervisory and administrative personnel are not eligible for membership in unions.

How do I transfer in sick leave?

- Sick leave can be transferred to the Hernando County School District from any accredited Florida school district. Employees must request that their previous district send their balance of sick leave to the Human Resources Department, 919 N. Broad Street, Brooksville, FL 34601. According to School Board Policy, no transferred leave shall be credited to an employee's account at a rate, or in an amount exceeding that earned while an employee of the Hernando County School District.

How do I find additional resources?

- In addition to this Staff Handbook, there are other reference sources including:
 - School Board Policies - *Click this link:* [School Board Policies](#)
 - School/Department Handbooks and Procedures – many district departments produce excellent and informative handbooks and/or procedures pertaining to the services and procedures applicable to their departments. Schools produce handbooks specific to the procedures applicable to schools and students. It is important to note that all policies and procedures in school/department handbooks must align with applicable statutory

requirements, School Board Policy and collective bargaining agreements.

- Collective Bargaining Agreements – for information specific to your own position, refer to your respective Collective Bargaining Unit Agreement. A copy of each Agreement is available for view on our website at www.hernandoschools.org. The Agreements are very detailed regarding the procedures and provisions applicable to your position within the District. Two Agreements exist:
 - HCTA – Hernando Classroom Teachers’ Association – represents all instructional classified employees.
 - HUSW – Hernando United School Workers – represents all non-instructional classified employees.
- School District Website - www.hernandoschools.org

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

The procedure for filing a Workers’ Compensation claim is listed below:

- An injured employee must report the incident to the site workers’ compensation coordinator. All injuries need to be recorded on the site’s Employee First Aid Log within thirty (30) days of the injury.
- If medical treatment is necessary, the workers’ compensation coordinator will do the following:
 - Complete First Report of Injury or Illness form
 - Complete Referral for Medical Services form for the injured employee
 - Fax copy of First Report of Injury or Illness form to Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department
 - Advise the employee that it is his/her responsibility to give the workers’ compensation coordinator all documentation from the treating physician
- Advise employee that in order to receive workers’ compensation benefits, he/she must stay within the assigned workers’ compensation network of doctors. All authorizations for specialty medical services must be approved by the workers’ compensation carrier.
- The employee must submit documentation from the authorized treating physician in order for time off to be considered as workers’ compensation paid in line of duty leave. Leave for any employee, as prescribed by law, shall be authorized for a total not to exceed ten (10) work days during any school fiscal year for an illness contracted or any injury sustained in the line of duty, or a total of ten (10) days for the same illness or injury. Once the employee has been released to return to work, he/she will notify his /her supervisor immediately. Failure to do so may subject the employee to progressive discipline that may include termination. Upon return to work the employee MUST provide a “release to return to work” from the authorized treating physician to the site administrator.
- If an employee with a worker’s compensation injury is out for 10 consecutive days, he/she must complete an extended leave form and follow extended leave procedures with Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department.

While on Workers’ Compensation Leave, the School District will continue to contribute its portion of the employee’s health and life insurance premium payments. The employee is responsible for his/her portion of all other benefit premium payments. The employee’s payment should be made through the Hernando County School District, Attention Benefit Payments. If employee is deficient in paying premiums, the employee’s benefits will be terminated. It is the employee’s responsibility to notify Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department and the life insurance company when he/she returns to active employment. Employees will automatically be enrolled in the District’s

group life insurance plan on the first of the month following a sixty (60) day waiting period unless the employee elects differently by completing and returning the election confirmation and enrollment form within the first 30 days of returning to active employment status.

Modified Duty Assignment

If an employee is placed on a modified duty assignment, the placement must be based on a condition that resulted from a workplace injury. The specific restrictions must be identified by an authorized workers' compensation doctor. The employee's supervisor then determines if the regular position can be modified to meet the specific restrictions. If the employee's regular job cannot be modified, the employee may be placed in a modified duty assignment by Risk, Benefits and Compliance. The employee will be paid at his/her normal rate of pay and benefits. Work hours may be modified. If the injured employee does not agree to work in the modified duty assignment, the employee will forfeit workers' compensation benefits and no longer be paid by the workers' compensation carrier or the School District. Medical benefits will continue until the employee reaches maximum medical improvement (MMI) as determined by the assigned workers' compensation doctor. If the restrictions are not able to be accommodated (as determined by Risk, Benefits and Compliance in the Human Resources Department), the employee will continue on workers' compensation, and will be paid by workers' compensation carrier and medical benefits will continue (if applicable). Modified duty assignments will be reviewed periodically. If an employee has not been released to regular duty at the end of a 120 day period, an assessment will be made regarding the employee's progress and employment status.

See School Board Policy 1430.05, 3430.05, 4430.05, 4124 and 8442. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

Staff Handbook

Section 4

Employee Policies & Procedures for Students

Attendance - Student
Bullying, Harassment and Dating Violence and Abuse
Child Abuse Reporting
Clinic
Confiscated Student Property
Cumulative Folders
Dropping and Transferring Students
Field Trips
Fundraising
Grades
Guidance Services
Instruction
Instructional Materials
Lesson Plans
Locker Room Security
Media Centers
Parent/Guardian Pick up
Passes
Reporting to Parents/Guardians
Return of Students to Classroom (Authority of the Teacher)
Student Absences
Student Access, Referrals and Interviews
Student Conduct Policies
Supervision of Students
Surveys of Students

ATTENDANCE - STUDENT

- Complete and accurate records of students' grades and attendance must be kept for every class. Based on each school's attendance procedure an automated phone call is made daily in reference to students who were absent and/or tardy. Grades and attendance must be up to date at all times and will be checked periodically by the administration.
- In order to receive a grade, a student's attendance must be in accordance with School Board policy.
- Students are not to take attendance.
- If a student is to be absent from a class for the purpose of helping a teacher to do work for the school (pictures, newspaper, band, etc.), approval must be given in advance by the student's assigned teacher.
- Attendance will be taken daily by the teacher. Students who have a school approved activity absence are not to be listed on the official record of absence but the absence and reason should be indicated in the teacher's record book. All other absences shall be reported in accordance with school procedures.
- **No student is to leave the school grounds to run an errand for any employee of the school system during the time they are under the jurisdiction of the school.**

See School Board Policy 5200, 1213, 3213, 4213. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT AND DATING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

The Hernando County School District is committed to creating a safe, healthy, learning environment for all students that is free from bullying and harassment. All employees are expected to model and support a school culture that promotes positive interactions and respect for others. Bullying is more specifically addressed in the [Code of Student Conduct](#) as well as School Board Policy.

Three criteria are necessary for an incident to be bullying: 1. Any behavior that is unwanted, offensive, threatening, intimidating, insulting, causes discomfort or humiliation, or that is severe or pervasive enough to interfere with the individual's school performance which results in the victim feeling stressed, injured, or threatened. 2. The behaviors are repeated. 3. There is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or cyber in nature.

Staff members who witness or become aware of bullying will immediately intervene in the following manner:

- Establish the safety of the victim of bullying.
- Report to administration. School administrators are required to investigate all allegations of bullying.

See School Board Policy 5516, 5517, 5517.01, 5517.03. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

CHILD ABUSE

Professionals in daily contact with children are the first line of defense against child abuse and neglect. **Florida Statutes require that anyone who suspects that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect is legally obligated to immediately call in their suspicion to the Abuse Registry Hotline at 1-**

800-96 ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). Child abuse reports can also be faxed to 1-800-914-0004 or reported online at www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report. **Penalties for those who suspect a child is being abused but fail to report it have been increased from a misdemeanor to a felony.** Additionally, the Ethics in Education Act requires mandatory reporting of child abuse. Failure to report child abuse is a breach of ethics and could result in job termination, as well as revocation of your teaching certificate. All reports are confidential; however, new revisions require that you provide your name, occupation, name of school and work number for contact by the Abuse Registry staff. As a professional courtesy, administration should be informed of any suspected child abuse that has been called in, but informing administration does not preclude the individual's duty to call in any suspected abuse. Florida Statute 1012.98 requires teachers in grades Pre-K – 12 to participate in continuing education training provided by the Department of Children Family Services on identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect. For further information contact the Professional Development Department.

See School Board Policy 8462. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

CLINIC

The clinic is maintained to provide emergency care for sick and injured students and emergency care only for staff. A student who is injured should be brought to the clinic immediately. If the student has suffered a major injury, do not move the student; instead notify the principal and/or designee and clinic at once. They will notify the parent or guardian of the details of the accident. **An accident report must be completed by the staff member who was present at the time of the accident and must be submitted prior to the close of the school day.** If an accident occurs after hours, a report must be completed and turned in prior to noon of the next school day.

Administration of EpiPens

Florida Statute 381.88 provides that teachers and others who have the likelihood to work with children who need EpiPens must be trained in the proper administration of the medication through an injection, should the child be unable to self-administer. The School Health Professional must advise teachers of any students in their class who carry an EpiPen and arrange for training in proper administration. If a teacher has a student in his/her class who carries an EpiPen and has not had training, he/she must contact the clinic immediately.

Biohazard Waste Disposal

Procedures for the disposal of biohazardous wastes are outlined in the "Biohazardous Waste Disposal Plan" which is distributed to clinic personnel and custodians.

Clinic/School Nurse Personnel

School Health Professionals are responsible for:

- assisting the Hernando County Health Department School Nurse Supervisor in carrying out a school health service program designed to promote, maintain and improve the health of students;
- administering first aid to ill or injured students according to American Red Cross Standards;
- administering medication to students, as per state statute;
- conducting health screenings and referring students with detected health concerns;
- helping to prevent and control diseases;
- providing comfort measures to students with minor discomfort and remaining with and giving comfort to ill or injured students until released to their parents or guardians; and insuring that all staff members know about student medical issues as appropriate and in compliance with the law.

Medication Policy (Prescribed and Over-the-Counter)

The Hernando County School District recommends that the administration of medications for students be scheduled before and/or after school hours. In the event that this is not possible, the following guidelines must be followed:

Authorized/trained school personnel may dispense and/or administer medication to students in compliance with the following procedures as approved by the Hernando County School District and the Hernando County Public Health Unit when:

- There exists a long term or chronic illness or disability that requires maintenance type medication, where failure to take *prescribed* medication could jeopardize the student's health, and **when the medication schedule cannot be adjusted for administration of medication at home.**
- An Authorization of Administration of Prescribed Medication/Treatment Form (SP-EE-051) has been filed with the school; complete with the physician's signed authorization (The physician must be licensed in the state of Florida and if not, the medication must be filled in the state of Florida in order for the school to be able to administer) and the parent's or guardian's signature. A copy of this form will be attached to the student's Cumulative School Health Record for each type of medication prescribed. This form will need to be filed one (1) time during the school year unless there is a change in the medication or the procedures under which it is to be administered.

All medication shall be **properly labeled in its ORIGINAL container** with the name of the child, prescribing physician, name of pharmacy and directions for administration including the time to be administered at school. The medication shall not exceed the dosage required for one (1) month. **ALL DATES MUST BE CURRENT.**

- Antibiotics shall be no older than thirty (30) days.
- Refrigerate as per manufacture's recommendations.
- Medications, will be retained in a locked cabinet in the clinic or locked box in the refrigerator.

Staff members' personal medication(s) must be secured where students have no access.

See School Board Policy 5330, 5335. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

CONFISCATED STUDENT PROPERTY

Staff members who confiscate inappropriate item(s) from students are responsible for the security of the items. Staff members who do not follow this procedure will be held liable for replacement costs. When weapons or potentially dangerous items have been confiscated by staff members a school administrator or the school resource officer are to be contacted immediately to retrieve the confiscated items from the staff member. At the end of the day, all confiscated items must be returned to the student or turned over to designated personnel for secure storage until a parent or guardian can pick them up. No illegal item will be returned. All staff members should know and follow their site's designated procedures for handling and turning in confiscated items.

CUMULATIVE FOLDERS

Cumulative folders will **remain in a designated location at all times**. Folders may be viewed by teachers when necessary. All materials must remain in the folder, unless otherwise directed by the principal and/or designee. Folders must be checked out for each use.

Maintenance and access to student records shall be in accordance with School Board Policy and Federal law. Per Federal law, parents have the right to review their child's cumulative folder. Student records are covered under the Family Education Right to Privacy Act.

See School Board Policy 8330. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

DROPPING AND TRANSFERRING STUDENTS

No teacher may drop any student from a class roster. When a teacher decides that a student is not properly placed, the request for transfer must be made to the appropriate personnel. The transfer is not complete until it has been cleared through the guidance office and approved by the administration.

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips must adhere to School Board Policy. Field trips shall use school buses, regular or special- purpose school vehicles for transportation on field and other District-sponsored trips. Transportation for all field and other District-sponsored trips may be limited by the availability of vehicles, drivers, and scheduling and will not be available when needed for general school purposes. The transportation for all field and other District-sponsored trips is to be by vehicles owned or approved by the District and driven by approved drivers. Exceptions must have the approval of the Superintendent. The Superintendent is authorized to establish transportation costs for school related and non-school related field trips. The transportation costs shall be reviewed annually by the Superintendent. This and additional information can be found in the Hernando County Schools Transportation Department Field Trip Manual.

See School Board Policy 8640 and 8660. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

FUNDRAISING

The purpose of fundraising projects is to contribute to the educational experience of the students. All fundraisers must comply with Hernando County School Board policies and should not conflict with the overall instructional program. The School Board does not permit the use of crowdfunding for District or school programs or activities, including co-curricular or extra-curricular activities.

All fundraising projects and activities must be submitted on a Fundraising Request Form/Recap located on the HCSD website. The application must be approved by administration and scheduled on the calendar in advance of the event.

- **All fundraising requests that include the sale of food or beverages must be approved by the Administrator.**
- **All requests for exempt fundraisers should be sent to the Food and**

Nutrition Department. (Information on determining what constitutes as an exempt fundraiser can be found on the District's website under Food and Nutrition.)

- **Elementary schools may not have door-to-door sales**
- **Selling candy and/or distributing candy as a fundraiser is not allowed on school grounds during school hours or on school buses.**

Elementary School Fundraising (K-5)

- Each elementary school may have no more than three (3) school-wide fundraising projects per school year.
- Each school should make an effort not to duplicate the activity of another school at the same time of year or season.
- All approved off-campus fundraising activities by a school, student club or class must have a teacher present at all times.

Secondary School Fundraising (6-12)

All students selling articles for any school, student club or class must have a current letter of introduction signed by the principal and/or designee. This applies to all organizations within the school, i.e., classes, clubs, athletic department, etc. Even if the project is connected with the school indirectly, the above procedure must be followed.

Charitable Drives

- High Schools: Student participation in charitable drives is limited to voluntary participation of clubs and associations in secondary schools.
- Elementary and Middle Schools: Participation in charitable drives cannot be done in lieu of work detail.
- Raffles and other activities of chance shall not be conducted by any schools.

See School Board Policy 5830, 6605. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

GRADES

Reports on the progress of students shall be made by the schools to parents/guardians at regular intervals throughout the school year. These reports will contain the information prescribed by the Superintendent of Schools. Notification of student progress and other home school communication should be made in a language understood by the parent unless it is not feasible. Each school has a designated translator for Spanish. If communication is needed in other languages that the school does not have resources to support, please contact your school's ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Lead Teacher for assistance.

- Report cards will be sent home within ten (10) school days after the end of the first three (3) nine- week grading periods. The report card for the fourth nine weeks grading period will be available for pick up at each school.
- In addition to the nine-week report card, weekly-biweekly electronic progress reports are available to parents/guardians on the Parent Portal of the district gradebook system. This is not to replace a teacher from notifying a parent/guardian more frequently if a problem is apparent.
- Teachers are required to follow the prescribed rules dictating updates to Parent Portal.

- Teacher/parent conferences and other means of personal contact will be used whenever possible to report the progress being made by students and to aid in developing understanding between home and school.
- Teachers are responsible for obtaining student's transfer grades from the Certified School Counselor. Certified School Counselors are responsible for obtaining transfer grades from transferring schools, or they can use the Florida electronic grade system.
- Teachers should check with the guidance department in order to give a student an appropriate report card when transfer grades are available to be considered with local grades
- Teachers are required to adhere to the adopted grading policies for each grade level.

See School Board Policy 5421. Click this link: [School Board Policies](#)

GUIDANCE SERVICES

Teachers are encouraged to use the Certified School Counselor services to meet the needs of all students.

INSTRUCTION

Teachers are responsible for using the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework as a guide to ensure effective instruction for ALL students. Instruction should be based on the appropriate grade level State Standards incorporating a variety of effective instructional strategies. Effective strategies that have been found to have a strong effect on student achievement include but are not limited to the following:

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Differentiated Instruction
- Setting goals and providing specific feedback
- Gradual Release lesson format that includes modeling
- Determination of appropriate intervention based on student need
- Use of collaborative structures and engagement strategies
- Summarizing, note taking, and use of graphic organizers

In addition, teachers are expected to:

- Utilize data driven decision making and problem solving (including all demographic groups)
- Document, monitor and communicate student progress
- Make data-based decisions regarding instructional interventions needed to support struggling students
- Assist students in the development of good study habits and time management skills
- Use effective classroom management strategies
- Consider the English language proficiency levels of ELLs (English Language Learners) when planning instruction and assessment

Please refer to the MTSS Handbook for further information. Link below:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11kQOYRbsCVDPwA2qDqkzqTCDOsqboN2w9ZJnUlp7KJ4/edit?pref=2&pli=1>

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Board Approved Instructional Materials

All primary instructional materials in grades K-12 must be School Board approved. All novels used for student assignment in grades 6-12 must be approved by the School Board and used in the grade level for which the novel was approved. Please refer to the Supplemental Reading List on the District website for approved novels.

Purchasing Textbooks

- All District adopted textbooks shall be consistent with District approved goals and objectives, State Standards, grade level expectations and course code descriptions.
- It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that all textbooks for instructional use have been School Board approved and are being used at the grade level(s) or ability level(s) for which they were designed.
- Purchase orders for growth and replacement are generated at the school site and must have the approval of the principal before submitting to the district office for purchasing.

Receiving Textbooks

- The principal and/or designee must carefully review an incoming textbook shipment to assure the accuracy of the order.
- If problems occur with the textbook order, the principal and/or designee should contact the supplier to correct the error.

Selection of Adopted Textbooks

The staff of the Academic Services Department is responsible for the textbook adoption and curriculum review process. The goal throughout the process will be the adoption of one (1) program choice for each division – elementary, middle and high. The following process will be used:

- A subject area Instructional Materials Review Team will be established.
- The Instructional Materials Review Team will adhere to the prescribed procedures for evaluating materials consisting of the following:
 - Review the historical and current research related to the subject area.
 - Review of the state approved instructional materials using the prescribed evaluation tool.
 - Evaluate the materials to assure compliance with the State Standards.
 - Reach consensus on the final two (2) program/publishers and make a recommendation to the curriculum supervisor.
- The instructional staff for the subject area at the schools will be given an opportunity to review the recommended materials and vote for one (1) program choice.
- The votes will be submitted to the appropriate curriculum supervisor.
- The curriculum supervisors will submit the Instructional Materials Review Team recommendation and instructional staff vote results to the Superintendent of Schools.
- The Superintendent of Schools will make a recommendation to the School Board, who will be asked to approve the instructional materials that have been selected.
- The curriculum supervisors and the principal designee will collaborate to generate the purchase orders of the approved instructional materials for each school.
- Professional development will be planned to assure successful implementation of the new instructional program.
- A review of student performance data will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and instructional materials adopted.

Textbook Management

- The principal's designee should properly label and add all new textbooks to the District adopted circulation system before distribution.
- Textbooks will be issued using the District approved electronic circulation system.
- The principal's designee will do an inventory of teacher assigned resources with each teacher during post-school or at the time a teacher terminates employment at the school.
- An annual inventory of all textbooks at the school site must be completed to determine the quantity and quality of supply.
- A notice of obligation must be completed for all lost or damaged books and noted on the electronic file.

The principal and/or designee has the responsibility to manage the use of instructional materials. As a part of that management, authority is given by Florida Statute 1006.28(3) (b) to collect, from students, payment for the full cost of lost or damaged materials. All funds collected for lost and damaged textbooks shall be remitted to the Finance Department with the school's monthly Internal Account checklist.

LESSON PLANS

A systematic plan for organization and presentation of daily delivery of instruction should be maintained.

- Lesson plans/outlines must include full use of available material (textbooks and supplementary materials) and should be based on and include State Standards and grade level expectations.
- Lesson plans must include the documentation of strategies, accommodations or modifications for students according to federal and state law, as stated in the student's Individual Education Plan and 504 Plans.
- Lesson Plans must include documentation of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) strategies, accommodations and/or modifications for English Language Learners (ELLs) being served under the ESOL Program. In addition, all the ESOL strategies, accommodations and/or modifications for an ESOL student should be noted on the Hernando County ESOL Strategies, Adaptations and Accommodation Form (Form SO-ESOL-019).
- Teachers are expected to appropriately differentiate instruction to meet individual student needs.
- Lesson plans should include emergency procedures, regulations, seating charts and special duty assignments.
- Lesson plans should be prepared as directed by the principal/supervisor at least one (1) week in advance. These plans must be available for administrative review upon request and also may be reviewed during the evaluation process.
- Lesson plans must be readily available for substitutes and should provide continuity of instruction when a substitute is needed. Lesson plans for substitutes should be developed in accordance with the requirements of the individual school.
- Lesson plans are the responsibility of Long Term Substitutes.
- Elementary teachers are expected to communicate grade level expectations to parents.
- Secondary teachers are expected to develop a yearly syllabus for the purpose of communicating course content and student expectations.

Electronic Media

All electronic media (Videos, CDs, DVDs, etc.) used in the classroom **must be related to the curriculum being taught**, be grade level appropriate and must be approved by school administration prior to viewing by students.

LOCKER ROOM SECURITY

To ensure proper supervision at secondary schools in the locker room, the principal and/or designee is to direct the Physical Education Department and Athletic Department to arrange their schedules so that a gender appropriate teacher, coach or paraprofessional is in the locker room at all times for supervision when students are present. When students are not in the locker room, the Physical Education Department and Athletic Department must be aware that they will be held responsible for making sure that locker rooms are locked and secure. When possible, it is recommended that two (2) staff members of the same sex be present for locker room supervision. Referees and anyone other than students may not use the locker room to change clothing or shower when students are present.

MEDIA CENTERS

Teachers at each site should become familiar with the procedures and resources at their site. The Principal or designee should develop a plan, to be approved by the principal, for collecting payment for lost or damaged items. When developing a plan for such items, the following guidelines are recommended:

- The plan must be consistent with F.S. 1006.28(3)(b).
- Items damaged beyond repair should be considered lost and may be discarded following the correct procedures for discarding.
- A student should pay for materials after receiving an overdue notice or parent letter. It may also be necessary to send a Notice of Obligation to the student's home by U.S. mail.
- The plan should establish procedures determining who will collect the money.
- Payment should be in the exact amount requested and may be paid in cash, check or money order as determined by the school. Checks must be made payable to the school.
- An individual receipt from a receipt book must be issued to the student. Receipt books can be signed out to the person receiving the money by the school's bookkeeper. It is recommended that the title, call number and barcode number be written on the receipt in case the item is later retrieved.
- If the staff member is collecting the money, he/she should list all monies received by receipt number and the amount received on the correct form and give it to the bookkeeper at the end of the same day.
- Accurate records of the lost and damaged books must be kept.

If a student transfers to another school within the district without returning a media item, the Principal or designee should notify the receiving school's Principal or designee. Every effort should be made to retrieve the item(s) or payment, and the students should be allowed to use media materials in the confines of media centers. A block preventing students from checking out media materials may be placed on the student's record through the checkout system until the material(s) have been returned or reimbursement has been received.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PICK UP

When a parent/guardian desires a student to leave school during the day, or when the parent/guardian wishes to pick up the student, the parent/guardian must make such a request in person or in writing. The student must be signed out in the office. All passes to leave school will be issued by the office. School personnel shall not release any student at any time **without proper authorization**. Students are not to be released from school at the request of any person other than those listed on the student info/emergency info card. The student must be signed out and the individual must have his/her Florida state issued ID checked through the districts V-soft system to ensure that the person is not a sexual offender, predator, or private alert.

PASSES

Students must have a pass when leaving a scheduled class or activity.

- To assure the safety of students, passes must be issued before students are allowed to leave the direct supervision of a staff member.
- Extreme discretion should be used by staff in giving a pass to a student. A real need should exist before the issuance of any pass by school personnel.
- A staff member shall not keep a student after class except with prior approval.
- As determined by administration, students in elementary schools should use the “buddy” system when leaving class.

REPORTING TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

In an effort to improve parent/guardian involvement and to ensure parent/guardian awareness of their child’s progress, each teacher should contact parents/guardians to inform them of their child’s progress. It is the teacher’s professional responsibility to be completely straightforward with parents/guardians concerning the academic progress of their children. Should a parent/guardian contact the teacher for specific information regarding his/her child, a teacher is to provide accurate information. If a teacher does not have the information available, the teacher should arrange to contact the parent/guardian at a time when the information is available. When parents/guardians call the school and ask that the teacher call them, every effort should be made to return their call within 2 work days or sooner.

Parents/guardians may make an appointment with the teacher before or after school, or the teacher may send home notes requesting a parent conference. If a conference is requested by the administrator during the teacher’s planning time, the teacher will be notified of such conference and the teacher is to attend (HCTA Contract, section 5.13 B). A record of contacts (i.e. conferences, telephone calls) should be kept by the teacher for reference (see School Procedures Handbook for details). Notification of student progress and other home school communication should be made in a language understood by the parent unless it is not feasible. Each school has a designated translator for Spanish. If communication is needed in other languages that the school does not have resources to support, please contact your school’s ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Lead Teacher for assistance.

RETURN OF STUDENTS TO CLASSROOM (AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER)

The principal shall make provisions for students to be removed from class when the continued presence of the student in the classroom is intolerable, in accordance with Florida Statute 1003.32. If a teacher makes the request that a continually disruptive student not be returned to his/her class, the principal may not return the student to the teacher’s class. The teacher and the Placement Review Committee must render decisions within five (5) working days of the removal of the student from the classroom.

Teachers should follow their school’s procedure for the removal of students who are acting out. Suggestions include: having an adult accompany the student from the class or requesting an administrator to come to the class. If the principal is recommending that the student be returned to the teacher’s classroom, then the case will be presented to a school-based Placement Review Committee which consists of three (3) teacher representatives [one (1) selected by the school’s faculty and one (1) selected by the teacher who removed the student] and one (1) teacher appointed by the principal. The principal must notify each teacher in that school about the availability, the procedures and the criteria for the Placement Review Committee as outlined in this section. If no teacher volunteers to participate in the Placement Review Committee, then the Hernando Classroom Teachers’ Association (HCTA) President will appoint

members to serve on that school's committee. If the Placement Review Committee's decision is contrary to the decision of the teacher to withhold consent to the return of the removed student to the teacher's class, the teacher may appeal the committee's decision to the Superintendent of Schools.

If the student is in Special Education, then the student should be referred to the Individual Education Plan (IEP) Committee for review per due process. If the IEP Committee feels that the most appropriate placement is with the referring teacher, that decision, with meeting minutes, is presented to the Placement Review Committee to serve as documentation.

The teacher who does not wish the student readmitted to the class may not serve on the committee, nor may the principal serve on the Placement Review Committee. The teacher and the principal may speak before the committee. Neither may be present when the committee members deliberate to reach their decision.

The Placement Review Committee has the authority to make alternative placement decisions within the frameworks of federal and state laws. The District Student Code of Conduct, Civil Rights provisions and availability of appropriate alternative placements must be considered in reaching a decision. If the decision of the committee is to remove a student from a particular class, due process procedures may require additional time to implement the change in placement.

Whenever the committee meets, records must be kept. These records must include the date and time of the meeting and any written statements provided. All decisions should be signed by the committee members rendering the decision.

Parents must be notified of their right to appear before the Placement Review Committee to present information. Parents need not be present for the committee to render a decision and they shall not be present when the committee members are deliberating. The committee serves to determine whether the principal's recommended placement is the best or only available alternative. If the committee determines that such placement is not the best or only available alternative, then the committee members will determine the placement of the student. The committee may also recommend the return of the child to the teacher's class. In those cases, the committee shall provide a written reason for this decision. All decisions of the Placement Review Committee must be made within five (5) working days of the student being removed from class.

STUDENT ABSENCES

Florida Statute 1003.26 requires the site administrator and/or designee to contact a student's parents for each unexcused absence or absence for which the reason is unknown. If, after three (3) days (or less if a pattern of excessive absences is evident) the reason for the absence has not been ascertained, the assigned staff member will notify the secretary assigned to attendance duties or designated personnel.

STUDENT ACCESS, REFERRALS AND INTERVIEWS

A student will not be allowed to leave school with any person other than the student's parent/guardian or a person with a parent's/guardian's verified authorization. The enrolling parent/guardian must provide a certified court order indicating sole custody or a restraining order if they do not wish the other parent/guardian to have access to his/her child.

- **Separated/Divorced Parents/Guardians:** The question of legal custody of a child is not the responsibility of our educational establishment. School personnel shall assume the enrolling parent/guardian has legal custody of a child.

- **Legal Authorities:** It may be necessary at times for legal authorities, such as law enforcement officials, to take a student into custody or question a student on campus during school hours.
 - When a student is subject to a criminal investigation for an offense that occurred off campus, the principal shall make an attempt to contact the student’s parent/guardian before allowing law enforcement officers to interview the student. The principal or designee shall document attempts.
 - If a parent cannot be contacted, the officer will be allowed to go forth with interviewing the student. The principal or staff member shall be present at such interviews. If a high school student requests that the principal or designated staff member not be present, such requests will be honored.
 - If the parent can be contacted, they will be informed that they may be present while his/her child is being interviewed as a subject in the investigation and a reasonable time will be allowed for them to appear at the school.
 - When a student is the subject in an administrative investigation, school officials, which includes the school resource officer, shall be permitted to conduct necessary interviews.
 - When a student is not the subject in a criminal or administrative investigation, but is being interviewed as a victim or witness, the principal shall permit such interview by police officers or administrative investigators. The principal shall make an attempt to contact the student’s parent/guardian before allowing law enforcement officers to interview the student. The principal and/or designee shall document attempts. If the investigation involves a suspected child abuse case, the principal and/or designee may be present, in accordance with Florida Statute for such interview, if requested by a student and/or the official conducting the interview. In suspected child abuse and/or neglect cases, school authorities are not to contact the parent/guardian. This is the sole responsibility of law enforcement and the investigating agency.
 - Each student has certain rights when an officer (defined as a police officer or an identified representative of the court) wishes to remove a student from school premises.
 - Should the officer request to take the student out of the school, he/she shall do so only with the consent of the parent/guardian or with a subpoena, which requires the student to be a witness. If the officer desires to make an arrest, either with or without an arrest warrant, he/she shall be allowed to do so without objection by the administrator or teacher in charge. If a student is removed by an officer, the administrator shall endeavor to notify the parent/guardian prior to the student’s removal from the school premises or as soon thereafter as possible.
 - If an officer demonstrates to a principal and/or designee that a child needs to be taken into protective custody, pursuant to Florida Statute 39.401, the officer shall be permitted to remove the student.
 - Referrals to outside agencies involving punitive action against a student shall be made on the referral form by the agency concerned.

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICIES

All student conduct policies are subject to School Board regulations. The Student Code of Conduct contains these regulations and is available to parents/guardians, students and teachers in both English and Spanish. **The Student Code of Conduct will be adhered to at all times.**

Homicidal Individual

ALL HOMICIDE THREATS/ATTEMPTS ARE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

Procedural Guidelines – A Homicide Assessment must be completed any time a student threatens to kill or harm another student or staff member. A Homicide Assessment should be completed by a certified school counselor, school social worker or administrator. If additional assistance is needed during the completion of a Homicide Assessment, the school social worker or Supervisor of

Exceptional Student Support Services should be contacted. A Homicide Assessment at the middle or high school level should be completed in conjunction with the School Resource Officer, if applicable. Each homicide threat should be assessed by at least two (2) people. The administrator should be notified of the assessment and the plan of action. In the event that any student is taken into custody, the Director of Safe Schools shall be notified. The Director of Safe Schools will notify the Superintendent and any affected departments.

Suicidal Individual

ALL SUICIDE THREATS/ATTEMPTS ARE TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLYProcedural Guidelines – The student or staff member should be taken directly to the Certified School Counselor’s Office. The child or staff member should not be left alone at any time. All suicide threats or attempts must be attended to **immediately**. If a certified school counselor or school social worker is not available, notify administration immediately and contact the Exceptional Student Support Services Department at (352) 797-7008. In the event that any student is taken into custody and subject to an involuntary Baker Act assessment, the Director of Safe Schools shall be notified. The Director of Safe Schools will notify the Superintendent and any affected departments.

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS AND GROUNDS

Employees are advised that they should not touch students in any way except for the protection of the health, safety and/or welfare of a student or for protection of themselves.

Notice of Limited Supervisory Times: The school will provide supervision to its students during regular school hours; and during the time the student is on the school premises participating with authorization in a school-sponsored activity; and during a reasonable time before and after a student is on the premises for attendance at school or for authorized participation in a school-sponsored activity. There is a rebuttable presumption that the term “reasonable time” means 30 minutes before or after the activity is scheduled or actually begins or ends, whichever is longer (Florida Statute). However, it is the policy of the Hernando County School Board to not leave students unattended at any time.

Do Not Leave Your Class Unattended: Teachers are responsible for students in their class at all times. If it is necessary to leave class for any length of time or if an emergency arises, contact the main office, principal and/or designee so that arrangements can be made for classroom coverage. **Teachers are not to leave their classes unsupervised at any time. Only school personnel may supervise students.** This includes, but is not limited to, students being placed in the hallway unsupervised for testing purposes and/or disciplinary reasons. Whenever a class is moved, notify the office and post a note on the regular classroom door. **Never send a student back to an unsupervised classroom for any reason.**

SURVEYS OF STUDENTS

Students are not required to participate in any survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas without prior written consent:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parents
2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student’s family
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the respondent has close family relationships
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers

7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parent
8. Income (other than required by law to determine program eligibility)

Parents have the right to inspect any survey before it is administered or distributed by contacting the school and making an appointment during regular school hours.

Individuals have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failure by the District to comply with the requirements of Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA). The address of the office that administers Family Educational Rights Privacy Act is: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-5920