

Newton County School System Classified Employee Handbook



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Message from the Superintendent,

We are pleased that you have chosen Newton County School System as the place to begin or continue your career. Our belief is that you are now part of a system of highly qualified and highly effective employees. You have been selected as a part of our workforce because we believe that you have the skills, experiences, and desire to assist our system in meeting its mission.

The Human Resources Department has prepared this handbook to highlight opportunities and benefits available to you as an employee and to inform you of Newton County Board of Education policies and procedures related to your employment. Complete system policy and procedure manuals are available at each work site, and can also be accessed by visiting our website: www.newtoncountyschools.org.

It is our belief that an informed employee has a greater potential for efficiency and excellence. Therefore, we will update this handbook as necessary. We have the expectation that you read and be familiar with the contents of the *NCSS Employee Handbook* and other information which may be available to you.

Sincerely,

Samantha M. Fuhrey, Ed.S.
Superintendent

Performance Evaluation

Newton County School System is committed to performance assessment that encourages continuous quality improvement for all employees. All personnel shall have their performance evaluated annually. Classified employees are assessed using locally developed evaluation programs. Specific questions about the NCSS evaluation program should be directed to your building level administrator or supervisor.

Certification/Licensing

All paraprofessionals must hold a Paraprofessional Certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Certification requirements may be found at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission web site, <http://www.gapsc.com/>.

All nurses should possess licensure at the minimum of an LPN.

Questions regarding certification should be directed to the Newton County School System Certification Office. Please see the NCSS telephone directory for phone numbers and email addresses.

Driver's License

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

Compensation

To attract and retain the most qualified teachers and support personnel, Newton County School System maintains competitive salaries by conducting regular individual job and market analysis of Griffin RESA and Metro Atlanta school districts as well as other employers.

Payday/Direct Deposit

All employees are paid monthly with earning statements issued on the last workday of the month, with the exception of November and December when employees are paid prior to the Holiday break. Direct deposit to a bank account is available to all benefit-eligible employees. However, direct deposit slips are no longer printed and distributed on payday. Employees can access and view their direct deposit information online from any NCSS network computer by clicking on the link <http://ng-4263-b/dsviewer/>.

Annual Leave Days and Holidays

Employees who earn annual leave (12 month employees) will accumulate days at a rate of 0.84 days per month for a total of ten (10) days per year.

Vacation is earned at the rate of one day per twenty-three (23) days worked. Vacations may be taken at any time after the days have been earned subject to approval by the immediate supervisor and the Superintendent.

Holidays observed by classified employees are scheduled on the appropriate employee work calendar.

Benefits

Benefits are a large part of the total compensation package and are designed to meet the most important needs of Newton County School System employees. In order to meet the ever-changing needs of our employees, we are continually reviewing and updating these benefits offerings. The following pages are an overview of the benefits provided by Newton County School System. Because of the importance of the benefits package, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the details of these plans from a variety of sources including booklets, information sheets and our system website at www.newtoncountyschools.org under the Employee Benefits section.

Insurance Benefits

Insurance benefits become effective on the first day of the month following the completion of work for one full calendar month and a proper payroll deduction.

Temporary employees or employees who work less than halftime are not eligible for benefits.

Health Insurance

NCSS employees have the opportunity to subscribe to group health insurance. Both individual coverage and family coverage options are available. Employees may choose between several types of health plans.

Complete packets of information on all plans are available from the Employee Benefits Clerk in the Business Office.

Open enrollment is a period of time each year when employees may enroll or change options or coverage, subject to the conditions described in the plan. The open enrollment period, unless otherwise announced, usually occurs mid-October through mid-November. Coverage for changes or enrollments become effective the following January 1.

Dental, Hearing and Optical Plan

NCSS provides an optional Direct Reimbursement Plan for all full-time employees which cover 50% of most dental, optical, and hearing expenses up to a maximum of \$2,000 in annual reimbursements. Beginning July 1, 2012, full time NCSS employees may select from the following coverage options: Employee Only for \$16.80/month; One Spouse or Child for \$52/month, and Two or More Dependents for \$74.40/month. These premiums are paid pre-tax under the Section 125 Plan.

Life Insurance

NCSS provides free life insurance for each full-time employee in an amount equal to an employee's annual salary (rounded up to the next thousand) plus \$5,000. In addition to the coverage provided by the NCSS, a full-time employee may purchase an additional 1 to 3 times annual salary coverage (the cost of coverage is determined by your age). Coverage for a spouse and children is also available.

Supplemental Critical Care Insurance

NCSS offers, through Allstate, a supplemental policy for critical illness. The optional premium-based critical illness policy covers heart attack, stroke, and cancer. Employees of the NCSS may purchase the coverage at a monthly cost for the individual and/or family. These premiums are paid pre-tax under the Section 125 Plan.

Short Term Disability Insurance

Short-term disability insurance is available to all eligible employees on a payroll deduction basis. The weekly salary benefit equals 66.67% of the employee's basic salary, rounded to the nearest dollar, up to \$1,000/Weekly. If approved, short-term disability benefits begin on the 8th day after total disability occurs and will extend up to 25 weeks from the disability date. Pregnancy or its complications are covered as any other condition.

Long Term Disability Insurance

Long term disability is paid for by the school system for all full-time employees. A disabled employee would begin receiving benefits 180 days after the date the disability begins. If an employee is disabled the benefits would last until age 65. The amount of a disability benefit would be the lesser of 60% of monthly earnings to a maximum of \$6,000 or 70% of monthly earnings less any deductible sources of income.

Workers' Compensation

Employees may be entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits if injured on the job. The injury must arise out of and in the course of employment. *The injured employee must provide notice of the injury immediately, no later than three (3) days after the accident,* to the employer, the employer's representative, or the employee's immediate supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the loss of benefits. The injured employee may select a medical care provider from the panel posted by the Board of Education. Only those providers listed are authorized to provide medical care for a work-related injury. The panel of physicians is posted in conspicuous places in all locations maintained by the Board of Education and may also be obtained from the Worker's Compensation Representative in the Business Office. Please note that should an employee choose to receive medical care from a physician who is not on the approved list, such care would be considered unauthorized and the school system would not be responsible for the cost. Absences designated as worker's compensation injuries will run concurrently with FMLA. Employees who are absent from work on an approved leave of absence (STD, LTD, LWOP or Workers Compensation) for one (1) year and are unable to return to work in a 12 month period, will be terminated from employment with NCSS. This separation will be considered a voluntary separation from employment due to failure to return from a leave of absence; however, employees will have the option to reapply should they obtain clearance from their physician to return to work at a later date.

Generally, employees are not eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits for injuries sustained: Going to or coming from work; during deviations from the scope of employment (e.g., a person making a delivery drives to a place unconnected to the employment); as a consequence of imported danger (e.g., an employee's own attire or a personal weapon causes injury to the employee); when an employee engages in a prohibited act; when the employee engages in horseplay; during recreational or social activities; if an employee is found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol; and during times in which the employee is not subject to the employer's control (e.g., not on the premises, not during the regularly scheduled work day). Any questions should be addressed to your immediate supervisor or the Worker's Compensation Representative in the Business Office.

Section 125 Plan (Cafeteria Plan)

Employees of Newton County School System participate in a plan that uses before-tax dollars to pay for benefits. Benefits that are included in the Section 125 Plan are medical, dependent care, and supplemental insurance. This will have the result of reducing an employee's gross taxable salary so that less federal and state taxes are paid.

Flexible Spending Reimbursement Accounts

Newton County School System provides two types of flexible spending accounts to be deducted before taxes. The Dependent Child Care Spending Account provides up to \$5,000 reimbursement for day care center and baby-sitter expenses or after-school care. The Medical Reimbursement Spending Account provides up to \$2,500 for reimbursement of medical, dental, vision, OTC medication and/or hearing expenses not covered by insurance. Please contact the Benefits office for more information or see additional information provided on our Benefits website at www.newtoncountyschools.org.

Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS)

Teachers, administrators, supervisors, clerical employees, paraprofessionals, and various Central Office staff are eligible members of TRS. Benefits become available after 30 years of service, regardless of age, at 25 years of service with early retirement penalties, or at age 60, after ten years of service. Employees who have 9 ½ years of service earn disability retirement benefits if permanently disabled, as well as survivor's benefits that are paid to a beneficiary. Members must contribute 6% of their salary. A booklet detailing the plan is available from the Newton County School System Employee Benefits Office. You can also gather additional information from the website <http://www.trsga.com/>.

Public School Employees Retirement System of Georgia

Bus drivers, food service employees, custodial personnel, and other regular full-time employees not eligible for membership in TRS are eligible for membership in the Public School Employees' Retirement System. Retirement benefits are available for members who are 60 years of age with at least ten years of creditable service. Members contribute \$4.00 per month for nine months, and the state makes the employer's contribution. For further information call 404-352-6400.

Supplemental Retirement Savings Plan

Beginning in October 1988, the Newton County Board of Education began a supplemental retirement program for all full-time employees. **The Board will contribute 2.5 percent of the employee's annual salary to the supplemental retirement savings plan and employees are required to contribute at least one-half (0.5) percent to a supplemental program (403b Plan).** All employees are required to participate in the supplemental retirement savings plan.

Medicare

All employees hired after April 1, 1986, are required to pay Medicare contributions. Medicare provides the medical benefits within the Social Security Administration.

Credit Union

The Newton County School System is a participant in the Georgia United Credit Union. Services include share savings accounts, share draft checking, insured money market

accounts, a variety of loan programs including mortgage and home equity loans, access to the AVAIL automated teller machine network, convenient payroll and deductions and more.

Leave

Newton County School System recognizes that our employees will encounter personal situations that may require employees to take time away from their job. Our leave options are designed to meet the needs of employees and to comply with legal leave requirements.

Sick Leave

Sick leave for full time employees is earned at the rate of 1.25 days per month times the number of months worked. Sick leave days may be accumulated. Please refer to [Board Policy GARH, Employee Leaves and Absences](#).

With the supervisor's approval, an employee may use sick leave for absences due to the following reasons:

- Illness or injury
- Exposure to contagious diseases which might endanger others
- Illness or death in employee's immediate family (spouse, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, in-law equivalents of the above and any relative residing in the employee's home).

Sick leave unused at the time of retirement may be applied to service credit with TRS, or purchased from employees according to current Board policy with the following stipulations:

- Employee must have been employed full time for a minimum of nine months.
- Employee must request payment for unused leave within one year or forfeit all monies due.
- Employees who have transferred sick leave from another Georgia school system must work for Newton County School System for at least one contract year to be paid for unused sick leave.

Personal Leave

Up to three days of accumulated sick leave may be used each year for personal or professional reasons. Approval of the supervisor is necessary prior to the date of the planned absence. The employee is not required to disclose the specific purpose for the leave.

Personal leave may not be taken when the presence of the employee is considered essential for effective school/school system operation. Employees may not take personal leave on the day before or after a student holiday. Specific dates when personal leave is not permitted are published in Board Policy. Personal leave may not be carried over from year to year. Unused personal leave will be carried over as accumulated sick leave. Please refer to [Board Policy GARH, Employee Leaves and Absences](#).

Military Duty Leave

Employees will be paid for a maximum period of 18 working days for ordered military duty. Applicable federal and state laws will be followed. Please refer to [Board Policy GARH, Employee Leaves and Absences](#).

Returning From Leave

When returning from medical/disability leave, the employee must submit to the supervisor a release from the physician stating that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of the job.

An employee who is returning to work after an approved leave of absence must notify Human Resources in writing in advance regarding their intention to return to work. Employees who have been on an extended leave without pay and did not participate in the annual benefits open enrollment process must contact the Benefits Office. If the employee's position has been filled prior to their return to work, the employee may request reinstatement to an equivalent position or choose to resign from employment with NCSS.

Effective January 1, 2011, employees who are absent from work on an approved leave of absence (STD, LTD, LWOP or Workers Compensation) for one (1) year and are unable to return to work in a 12 month period, will be terminated from employment with NCSS. This separation will be considered a voluntary separation from employment due to failure to return from a leave of absence; however, employees will have the option to reapply should they obtain clearance from their physician to return to work at a later date.

Jury Duty, Subpoena, and Other Court Order

All employees of the Board of Education are encouraged to serve as jurors when selected to do so. They will be paid their full salary during the time they serve and may retain any remuneration received from the court. Please refer to [Board Policy GARH, Employee Leaves and Absences](#). Employees who are absent from work due to having been subpoenaed regarding their employment with Newton County Schools will be paid their full salary during the time they are absent, but any remuneration will be assigned to the Board of Education. Employees will not be required to pay for a substitute while being served subpoenas related to their employment.

Family and Medical Leave Act

Newton County School System is in full compliance with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. The FMLA grants qualified employees twelve weeks of unpaid leave every twelve months, which may be used for the purposes listed below:

1. for incapacity due to the pregnancy, prenatal care, or the birth of a child;

2. to care for the employee's child after birth, or placement of a child by adoption or foster care;
3. to care for the employee's spouse, son/daughter, or parent with a serious health condition;
4. for the employee's own serious health condition;
5. to take leave during a family member's active duty due to a qualifying exigency; or
6. to care for an injured service member with a serious injury or illness (up to 26 weeks).

To be eligible for FMLA, an employee must have been employed by the school district for at least 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours during the prior twelve-month period.

The school system requires that any leave request based on a family member or employee's own serious health condition be supported by an approved health care provider's statement. Additionally, an approved health care provider's release to return to work will be required for all employees who were on leave due to their own serious health condition.

The employee must provide at least 30 days notice of their intention to take leave when possible. If 30 days notice is not feasible, the employee should submit a request for family/medical leave to their supervisor when they have been absent for five (5) or more consecutive days. Please note that the employee is also responsible for notifying the school/department of their absence and following their supervisor's normal leave procedures. The employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule any treatment related to the serious health condition in a manner that will not unduly disrupt the operations of the school district.

With limited exceptions, any eligible employee who takes leave under FMLA is entitled to be restored to their job or an equivalent position in the school system.

Detailed information concerning FMLA is available through the Newton County School System Human Resources Department or [Board Policy GBRIG, Family and Medical Leave](#).

Medical Leave

Employees will be placed on Medical Leave due to a serious illness of the employee ONLY. FMLA eligibility will be determined based on the employee's length of service within the school system. Medical Leaves are granted to employees with less than one year of service or who have exhausted their 12 weeks of FMLA with the Newton County School system. Employees should complete the FMLA packet and return the leave request form to their immediate supervisor and the Human Resources department for processing. Medical leaves will not be granted to employees for the care of their family members. [The maximum leave period for medical leave is 12 months, but such leave may not extend beyond the current school year.](#) Employees who are absent from work on an approved leave of absence (STD, LTD, LWOP or Workers Compensation) for one (1) year and are unable to return to work in a 12 month period, will be terminated from employment with NCSS. Employees will have the option to reapply should they obtain clearance from their physician to return to work at a later date.

Policies and Procedures

Newton County School System recognizes the importance of meeting employee needs and utilizing employee abilities. For the effective operations of Newton's schools, it is necessary that sound personnel policies are known and understood by all employees. These policies ensure consistency and fairness for all employees.

Policy changes and clarifications are subject to change. These changes are made known to employees through supervisors, meetings, memos, email correspondence, and system publications. Policies summarized in this book are meant to provide employees with only a general overview of Board policy related to personnel.

This handbook, the salary schedule, and references to the number of days to be worked should not be considered an employment contract. It is the responsibility of each employee to understand NCSS Board policies and administrative procedures. However, if clarification of information contained in policies and procedures is needed, contact your immediate supervisor for assistance.

A listing of each section of NCSS Board Policies can be accessed on the NCSS web site at www.newtoncountyschools.org under the Board of Education heading and sub-heading NCSS Policy Manual.

Equal Opportunity Employment

The Newton County School System will not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, color, disability, religion or national origin in the recruitment and selection of any school system personnel. It is the express policy of the NCSS Board of Education to comply with all appropriate laws and regulations relating to discrimination. Please refer to [Board Policy GAAA, Equal Opportunity Employment](#).

Employee Fingerprinting (Criminal Background Checks)

All personnel employed on or after July 1, 2000, must be fingerprinted. Fingerprinting of all employees will also occur on or before every 5th year of employment. Fingerprinting will run concurrently with the submission of certification renewal applications to the Professional Standards Commission for certificated employees. Non-certificated employees will be fingerprinted every five years based on their last digit in their hire date. Please refer to [Board Policy GAK \(1\), Criminal Background Check](#), for further details.

Classified Personnel Transfers and Separations

A reduction in force could result from changes in the size or nature of the student population, changes in the curriculum, consolidation of positions, or budgetary limitations. The determination of employees to be demoted or terminated is based on approved procedures established by the Board of Education and school system administration.

Employees who do not have a written contract are classified as “at-will” employees. Either the employee or the employer can terminate employment of “at-will” employees at any time with or without cause.

School Based Employee Transfers

Employee Requests for Transfers

Employees having been employed for three consecutive years in the same school or department are given the opportunity to request an intra-system transfer by use of the Transfer Request Form that is distributed each spring. It is not necessary to determine the existence of an opening prior to listing a school as a preference. A list of personnel desiring transfers to a particular school will be available to each principal.

Principals will consider requests for transfer when filling positions for the upcoming school year. It is the responsibility of the employees desiring a transfer to contact the Principals regarding available positions when posted on the vacancy list. The deadline for intra-system transfers that do not require approval by the losing Principal will be announced each year. Transfers granted after May 1st require the approval of the losing Principal. Please refer to the Transfer Process guidelines found on SharePoint and on the NCSS website.

Lateral Transfers to New or Existing Schools

The Board of Education has the right to make lateral transfers in personnel when it becomes necessary due to the following reasons:

- Overstaffing within the teaching field or grade level;
- Change in attendance areas;
- Change in program or staffing within a program;
- Any reason that the Board of Education (within the limits of its authority to manage and control the school system) deems necessary for the orderly and effective management of the school system. *Please note that this may include lateral transfers of immediate family members employed by the NCBOE who are assigned at the same work location, school, or central office facility. Such transfers will be conducted based upon appropriate guidelines and NCSS standard operating procedures.*

The following criteria will be observed in effecting these transfers:

1. The needs of the instructional program and after-school activities of the school(s) involved must be considered.
2. A teacher must hold a valid Newton County contract and valid teaching certificate in the field in which the transfer is being considered.
3. When the need for a transfer is known, volunteers will be given top priority. Principals must inform qualified teachers of the vacancy and accept voluntary transfers when offered.
4. If there are no volunteers, involuntary transfers will be based upon seniority* within the building (elementary) or subject matter field where the transfer is needed except as follows: Teachers receiving or scheduled to receive a supplement for after-school activities may not be required to transfer.

*Seniority within the system takes precedence over seniority within the school.

Conflicts of Interest

Employees should be aware of situations and activities that may be construed as a conflict of interest. The Newton County Board of Education is committed to the employment and assignment of employees in a manner that best meets the needs of the school system. In keeping with this commitment, the Board realizes the importance of eliminating any question of impropriety in personnel practices which have the potential to foster staff conflict of interest,

charges of favoritism or otherwise adversely affect the orderly operation of the school system. Please refer to [Board Policy GAG, Staff Conflict of Interest](#).

Child Abuse Reporting

Newton County School System employees are considered mandated reporters. Thus, any employee who has reason or cause to believe that a child is being or has been abused shall notify the principal or the school system's designee, who shall report that abuse immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. Any such reports of "suspected" child abuse are required to be reported in accordance with Georgia law and the protocol for handling child abuse cases for Newton County, Georgia. Please refer to [Board Policy JCI, Child Abuse or Neglect](#).

Non-School Employment

Newton County School System employees are reminded that their job assignments within the school system are their first obligation and if outside employment is affecting their performance, the employee could be forced to choose between their primary employment with the school system and outside employment.

Each Principal/Administrator has direct responsibility for evaluating the effects of outside employment on personnel assigned to their operation.

Dual Pay

Newton County School System employees are prohibited from receiving dual pay for services rendered during their regular working hours. The employee must forfeit either the regular pay or the pay from the other agency, organization or individual. Employees may receive payment for services rendered while on a non-paid leave of absence or for services performed other than during the regular working day.

Political Involvement

The Board recognizes that employees have the same civic responsibilities and privileges as any other citizen including the privilege of campaigning for and holding public office and actively supporting candidates and causes in the political arena. The Board also recognizes that the school system is entrusted by the citizens of the county and the State of Georgia with a vitally important public mission and that an employee's political activities must not interfere or conflict with an employee's job or with the best interest of the school system.

An employee who participates actively in a political activity cannot be promoted, demoted, transferred, or terminated solely because of his/her political participation as long as such actions follow the guidelines stated in this policy. Please refer to [Board Policy GAHB, Staff Political Activities](#).

Personnel Attire

It is the expectation of the NCSS Board of Education that all personnel employed by Newton County Schools will dress in a professional manner. Dress should be appropriate for the position.

Personnel Time Schedule

All full time employees of the Board of Education work a minimum of 40 hours per week. The Principal or Supervisor sets a schedule within this policy for the time of arrival and departure of all employees assigned to their operation. Please refer to [Board Policy GBRC, Work Load](#).

In order for an organization to achieve its desired goals, good attendance and punctuality are necessary. Therefore, regular and prompt attendance is expected and required of all employees. If it is absolutely necessary to be absent or late to work, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor at least one day in advance if possible.

Each employee is responsible for reporting absences and tardiness based on the protocol set forth by their immediate supervisor. If you are absent for at least three (3) consecutive days due to illness, you will be responsible for providing a doctor's excuse upon your return to work. However, if you fail to call in and notify your supervisor of your absence after three (3) days of consecutive absence, we will presume you have abandoned your position, and you will be removed from the payroll. If you must leave work for any reason before the end of the day, you must inform your supervisor. Violation of time and attendance guidelines will result in the employee being placed on an attendance plan in order to improve tardiness or absenteeism.

In case of emergency or other circumstances when it is impossible to give advance notice, employees are responsible for contacting their supervisor or designee prior to the time to report to work.

Health and Safety

The Board recognizes the school system's responsibility for ensuring the safety of all employees. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to take all practical steps to develop and implement a safety program for all employees which will provide and maintain safe and healthful working conditions, adequate protection equipment and develop operating procedures and practices that are in compliance with federal, state, and local legislation pertaining to accident prevention.

To help ensure this, an employee is responsible for the following activities:

- Knowing the potential hazards of the job;
- Learning and following the safety practices required by management;
- Using health and safety devices required by the job (the Newton County Board of Education has adopted a policy regarding Infectious Diseases; all employees are required to be familiar with [Board Policy GANA, Communicable Diseases](#));
- Correcting and/or reporting safety hazards immediately;
- Reporting immediately to supervisor any accident or injury;
- Obeying "No Smoking" regulations. All students are prohibited from tobacco use on campus or at school activities, functions, or events. While fulfilling their duties as school district employees, staff members shall not use tobacco in the presence of students or on school system property;
- Operating machinery or equipment only if qualified to do so;
- Maintaining good housekeeping practices including keeping all fire exits clear and firefighting equipment accessible.

Drug Free Workplace

The Board provides a drug-free workplace and professes that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of tobacco and alcohol is wrong and harmful.

Employees are prohibited from using or displaying drug, alcohol and tobacco products in front of students while the employee is on duty, during the normal school day or while on duty at any school or system sponsored function. Please refer to [Board Policy GAN, Employee Tobacco Use](#).

Personnel Use of Illicit Drugs

For criminal drug statute convictions of employees for violations occurring in the workplace, the following steps must be followed:

- a. Employees must notify the Newton County School System administration in writing of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace (in NCSS buildings and vehicles and at school sponsored activities) no later than five calendar days after such conviction.
- b. The Newton County School System will take one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice with respect to any employee who is so convicted:
 - (1) Take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and/or
 - (2) Require such employee to participate satisfactorily in drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state or local health, law enforcement or other appropriate agency.

An on-going drug-free awareness program is provided to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse. See NCSS [Board Policy GAMA, Drug-Free Workplace](#), for the penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace and drug and alcohol counseling, rehabilitation, and re-entry programs.

Personnel Smoking(Tobacco Use)

Employees are prohibited from using or displaying tobacco products in front of students while the employee is on duty during the normal school day or while on duty at any school or system sponsored function. Tobacco use is banned from all school system vehicles and shall not be used in any school system facilities. Please refer to [Board Policy GAN, Employee Tobacco Use](#).

Arrest Reporting Procedures

All employees of the District are required to notify their immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Department within five (5) business days or on the *first* day back at work following the arrest (whichever is earlier). The term arrest shall include physical arrest by law enforcement and/or any charges filed against the employee not resulting in a physical arrest.

Complaint Procedures

The purpose of this is to provide a way for the Board and its employees to reach solutions to problems, disputes, or controversies that may occur. The system's chain of command is designed to promote the overall effectiveness of school programs. If there is a question or problem to be resolved, staff at the school level shall follow the chain of command established by their principal. The Principal is directly responsible to the Superintendent.

System-wide personnel shall follow the chain of command established by their immediate supervisors.

Harassment Policy

The Board is committed to providing a workplace free from distractions caused by sexual harassment and all other forms of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin or handicap; or inappropriate or offensive conduct. It is the Board's expectation that all personnel conduct themselves in a highly professional manner and respect coworkers, students, parents, and customers. In this regard, the Board prohibits sexual harassment, all forms of discrimination, and other unprofessional conduct. Sexual harassment in the school environment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated or condoned.

Sexual Harassment may include, but may not be limited to:

- unwelcome sexual advances;
- requests for sexual favors;
- verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including subtle pressure for sexual activity, touching, pinching, patting, or brushing against;
- comments regarding physical or personality characteristics of a sexual nature;
- sexually oriented “kidding”, “teasing”, double-entendres, and jokes;
- demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual’s employment or educational status

Please refer to [Board Policy GAEB, Harassment](#).

Personnel Records

It is the responsibility of employees to inform Human Resources when there are changes in the home address, phone number and number of dependents. It is important to be aware of the person named as beneficiary of the employee’s life insurance and retirement plans and to notify the Benefits Department should a change in beneficiary be desired.

Information contained in an employee’s personnel file is not made available to others except as may be required by law, requested by the employee, or to those school personnel in an official capacity on a need-to-know basis. Otherwise, requests for information not specifically approved by the employee will be referred to the Director of Human Resources. Georgia’s Open Records law lists certain records that are protected from public disclosure. Among those listed are medical records, home address information, Social Security Numbers and confidential evaluations.

The Newton County School System will release, with written approval from the employee,

information about the employee's current salary, dates of employment, job title, and work location.

The employee may review personnel information, except for confidential references, contained in the employee's personnel file. In order to review this file, an appointment with the appropriate representative in the Human Resources department is required.

Any personnel records kept by principals or immediate supervisor shall also be kept confidential with access only to those school officials on a need to know basis in an official capacity. The immediate supervisor of active employees may retain a copy of the individual performance and evaluations records. Please refer to [Board Policy GAK, Personnel Records](#).

Use of Electronic Resources

The Newton County Board of Education recognizes that electronic media provides access to a wide variety of instructional resources in an effort to enhance educational opportunities for staff and students. **Use of electronic resources must be in support of assigned responsibilities.** All electronic, telephony, and communications transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems are the property of the Newton County School System. Users of such systems shall have no expectation of privacy. Inappropriate use of these systems may result in disciplinary action. Please refer to [Board Policy IFBG, Internet Acceptable Use](#).

In addition, employees are not permitted to tape record conversations or meetings without the express permission and knowledge of other personnel and employees. Therefore, employees without official authorization to do so, should refrain from tape recording meetings, conferences, and other sanctioned events on NCBOE school grounds and/or property.