

# SCSS

## Teacher Handbook



2016-2017

Stewart County Schools has implemented a *Drug Free Workplace Policy* in compliance with federal regulations.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
Our Beliefs	4
Our Mission	4
Our Goals	6
Purpose of This Handbook	7
SCSS Handbook Effective Date	7
Non-discrimination Statement	7
Equal Employment Opportunity Disability and Religious Accommodation	7
Handbook Content and Revisions	8
Your Responsibility Regarding This Handbook	8
Personnel File	8
Eligibility For Benefits	8
ID Badge	8
Changes in Personal Information	9
Suspension/Dismissal of Tenured Teachers	9
Job Duties and Work Assignments	9
Work Hours	9
Work Calendar	9
Homebound	10
Disability Accommodation	10
Confidentiality	10
Employment Verification and References	10
Media Relations	10
Solicitation	11
Pay Period	11
Direct Deposit	12
Correction of Payroll Errors	12
Payroll Deductions and W-2S	12
Social Security (FICA)	12
Insurance Benefits	12
Health Insurance	13
Prescription Drugs	13
Dental Insurance	13
Cobra	13
Qualifying Events	14
Your Responsibilities Under Cobra	14
Continuation of Benefits Under Cobra	14
Payments of Premiums Under Cobra	15
125-K Pre-Tax Plan	15

Sick Leave	15
Full-Time Employees	16
Restitution of Sick Leave Upon Reinstatement of Employment	16
Sick Leave Bank	16
Personal Leave	21
Retirement	21
403B (Tax Sheltered Annuities)	21
Leave of Absence	21
Discrimination	22
Harassment of, or by Employees, Students, Contractors and Vendors	22
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse	23
Smoking	23
Violence or Other Inappropriate Behavior	23
Personal Use of SCSS Property	24
Email	24
Management Access To Your Work Files, Computer, and Work Area	24
Use of the Internet Guidelines	24
Personal On-Site Visits	25
Personal Telephone Calls	25
District Tools and Equipment	25
Personal Use of District Supplies and Equipment	26
Recruitment for Vacant Positions	26
Seniority	26
Workers Compensation Insurance Benefits	26
Reporting Work Related Injury/Illness	27
Fraudulent Workers' Compensation Claims	27
Emergency Evacuation	27
Housekeeping	27
Parking	27
Renewal of Professional Teacher Licenses	28
Dress Code	28

## **OUR BELIEFS**

*In an effort to be a progressive Board of Education we believe:*

1. Education is the most essential service a community can provide.
2. All children can learn
3. Every child has the right to an equal education.
4. Children deserve good facilities
5. Schools should employ the best teachers and staff possible.
6. Schools should provide for children of varying abilities.
7. Employee's salaries should be competitive to surrounding counties.

## **OUR MISSION**

**To provide the highest quality education for all  
students**

# OUR GOALS

## #1 Instruction

Improve learning through effective instructional and organizational design.

## #2 Facilities

Improve facilities and plan for future growth.

## #3 School Climate

Create a safe environment for all students and personnel.

## # 4 Staff Development

Provide teachers and staff with job-embedded staff development to insure school improvement.

## # 5 Personnel

Employ and retain the most effective teachers and staff

## #6 School and Community

Educate the public about the importance of education.

## #7 Technology

Provide every student and teacher access to technology

# Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with the Stewart County School System and to provide you information about working conditions, employee benefits, policies and procedures, and some of the practices affecting your employment with us. It describes many employee responsibilities and district practices, and also outlines programs developed for your benefit.

This handbook is not intended as an employment contract (express or implied) and accordingly should not be considered as such. Nothing in this handbook should be relied upon as a guarantee for certain privileges, working conditions, or continued employment.

Questions pertaining to personnel policies and procedures should be directed to your immediate supervisor.

## **SCSS HANDBOOK EFFECTIVE DATE**

This handbook supersedes all prior Employee Handbooks (which should be discarded), verbal communications, staff meeting minutes and/or management memos, which may have been previously issued on subjects addressed in this handbook.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the Stewart County School System not to discriminate against any student, employee, or applicant on the basis of sex, marital status, race, color, creed, national origin, or handicapping condition. SCSS will ensure that no student will be excluded from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities, or other school resources based on unlawful discrimination. SCSS will take all necessary steps to ensure that each employee of SCSS, including any persons representing SCSS, shall intimidate, threaten, harass, coerce, discriminate against, or commit or seek reprisal against anyone who participates in any aspect of the discrimination complaint process associated with this policy.

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY DISABILITY AND RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION**

We are an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE). Accordingly, we promote equal opportunity in the areas of employment, training, development, transfer, and promotion. Our employment practices are without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, disability or medical condition, national origin, and veteran status, and all other categories protected by federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws.

Additionally, in keeping with the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we will make appropriate accommodations for employees with qualified disabilities or religious needs whenever possible as long as the accommodation does not cause SCSS or other employees undue hardship.

## **HANDBOOK CONTENTS AND REVISIONS**

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question. Accordingly, SCSS may need to change the practices and guidelines described here. Revisions may include changing, rescinding, or adding to any procedures, benefits, or practices described in this handbook.

### **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING THIS HANDBOOK**

Employees are expected to read, understand, and comply with the guidelines set forth in this handbook.

### **PERSONNEL FILE**

We maintain a personnel file for each employee. Personnel files contain basic personal information (e.g., name, address, phone number) and employment-related information such as copies of performance appraisals, etc. Your personnel file is the official record of your employment with us.

If you wish to review your personnel file, please contact your Principal who will arrange a time to review the file with you during normal work hours. You may request a single copy of any document in your personnel file. You will be charged for additional copies. Personnel files are the property of the district and, therefore, cannot be removed from the school premises or the Stewart County Board of Education Building.

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS**

You will be eligible for benefits according to the following schedule:

<b>BENEFIT</b>	<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>
Group Health Insurance	1 <sup>st</sup> Day of the month following your first month

### **ID BADGE**

You will be issued an ID Badge that you are required to wear at all times while on the job or on any school grounds. You will be required to return the badge when resigning your position or upon termination of your position with the school system. Lost badges are replaced at the expense of the employee. Badges are occasionally replaced taking into consideration the “wear and tear” on them.

## **CHANGES IN PERSONAL INFORMATION**

To ensure that needed records are accurate and up-to-date, it is necessary for you to notify your Principal and the Payroll Clerk in writing, whenever changing the following:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Marital status, number of dependents (for tax withholding and insurance coverage), or beneficiary for life insurance.
- Emergency contact name, relationship, and daytime phone.
- Education and training completed.
- When a dependent child reaches age 19 (if not a full time student), or age 25 (if a full-time student).

\*Please note a copy of your new Social Security Card is required before name change will take effect.

## **SUSPENSION/DISMISSAL OF TENURED TEACHERS**

(See Board Policy)

## **JOB DUTIES AND WORK ASSIGNMENTS**

To ensure that our schools are provided the best possible service, work assignments are based on matching employee qualifications with school and district needs. From time to time it may be necessary to reassign you to a different grade level subject, or job responsibility. In addition to routine job duties, you may be assigned special projects.

## **WORK HOURS**

Work hours may differ with each of our school and work center locations and each job hours performed.

## **WORK CALENDAR**

Each public school system shall maintain a term of not less than two hundred (200) days, divided as follows:

1. On hundred eighty (180) days for classroom instruction/inclement days.
2. Ten (10) days for vacation with pay.
3. Five (5) days for in-service education.
4. Three (3) days for teacher-parent conferences.
5. Two (2) other days as designated by the local Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Director of school.

To validate these activities a written record of attendance/participation must be maintained in the central office. (Sign in sheet)



## **HOMEBOUND**

Our homebound policy is designed to provide most appropriate educational experience possible while a student is confined to home due to medical reasons. A physician must provide written documentation to the school system in order for a student to receive homebound services. Forms are available through the board office. A teacher providing homebound services to a student must provide three hours of direct instruction per week. The three hours of instruction does not include travel time to and from the student's residence. The homebound rate of pay is \$30.00 per hour for a total of \$90.00 per week. Payment for travel time to and from the student's residence is included in this rate.

## **DISABILITY ACCOMODATION**

If you require accommodation for a medical condition or disability, contact your Principal so that we can evaluate if and how we may accommodate your needs. We will make every effort to handle your request for disability accommodation sensitively and to protect the confidentiality of the information you share with us whenever possible.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your work assignments may involve work of a confidential nature. Some or all aspects of your work may involve contact with confidential student information. You may not disclose to outsiders any information that is not in the public domain as referred to in FERPA.

## **EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION AND REFERENCES**

From time-to-time you may need the school system to verify your employment for loans or to prospective employers. All employment verification/reference requests must be directed to the Payroll Clerk. To protect confidentiality, we will only release the dates of your employment, job title, and compensation data unless we have written authorization from you to release additional information.

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

Because much of the information we work with is confidential or sensitive, all contacts by media representatives will be referred to the Director of Schools. If contacted by the press about work-related matters, refer the media representative to the Director of Schools.

## **SOLICITATION**

“There shall be no solicitation of employees or students for any purpose during working time. Distribution of literature and notices during work time or on district premises is not allowed.” Any exception to this policy must be routed through the Principal and approved by the Director of Schools.

Working time includes all time during which you are paid to perform duties for the district excluding breaks and meal periods.

Persons who are not employees of the district will not be permitted to come upon or remain on the premises for the purpose of selling products or services, making solicitations, postings or distributing cards, literature, notices or other paper.

If you must make an appointment with a vendor for personal business, you should meet with him or her outside of the office on your own time (e.g., before or after work, or during your lunch break.)

For privacy, legal and/or security reasons, employees are not allowed to give out other employees' addresses, phone numbers and/or other information about employees or former employees. Request for such information should be directed to the Board Office.

## **COMPENSATION AND PERFORMANCE RELATED PROGRAM**

### **PAY PERIOD**

Certified employees and Administrative Employees will be paid on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month (exceptions noted on your pay schedule). When a holiday, weekend or scheduled vacation day coincides with the 20<sup>th</sup>, the payday will be the last working day prior to the 20<sup>th</sup>.

All paychecks or vouchers will be delivered to the location where you work during normal workdays.

### **DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Direct deposit is mandatory for new employees. The stub of the paycheck will be sent to you as a receipt of deposit at your work location.

Contact the Payroll Clerk for further information. We require a pre-printed deposit slip or voided check to accompany the required forms for direct deposit.

## **CORRECTION OF PAYROLL ERRORS**

You are expected to review each paycheck carefully, and immediately report suspected errors to the payroll clerk. The payroll clerk will pay underpayments due to an administrative error either by manual check or adding the difference to your next paycheck. When we discover that you have been overpaid, we reserve the right to make appropriate payroll deductions for repayment of the overage. If you leave our employ before the overage is repaid, the balance due will be deducted from your final paycheck.

## **PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS AND W-2S**

We are required by law to make certain deductions from employee paychecks each pay period. These include: Federal Income Tax (FIT), Federal Social Security (FICA) and Medicare Tax. The amount of these deductions is summarized on a W-2 form and provided to all employees no later than January 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. To ensure that your W-2 is accurate and received on time, changes of name or address should be reported to the Payroll Clerk.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY (FICA)**

Employees are eligible for benefits under Social Security (FICA). To provide these benefits, we match employee contributions dollar-for-dollar. Some of the benefits under Social Security include retirement income, Medicare benefits at age sixty-five, benefits for permanent disability, and dependent survivor benefits.

## **INSURANCE BENEFITS**

We offer a benefits package that is designed to protect your (and your family's, if dependent coverage is elected) health and welfare. These benefits are intended to assist with the financial impact of health care, catastrophic health conditions, and other catastrophic events.

Available Insurance Coverage:

- Health Insurance
- Prescription Drug
- Dental Insurance

Although we provide insurance coverage for employees and dependents, conditions covered, claims processing, and actual benefit payments are between you and the insurance carrier. You are responsible for submitting claims and directly resolving with the insurance company any problems that may occur with claims processing.

## **HEALTH INSURANCE**

The Stewart County School System offers health insurance coverage through Blue Cross-Blue Shield of Tennessee. This coverage is optional, and if elected by the employee, the school system will pay a portion of the premium.

In the event that a person terminates employment, his coverage will terminate at the end of the period for which he/she has already been paid.

Major medical forms can be obtained in the payroll office or you may reach BCBS directly at 1-800-565-9140 or visit their website at [www.bcbst.com](http://www.bcbst.com). Most questions can be answered in a booklet, which can be obtained from the Benefits Office at the time of in-processing.

## **PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

Drugs must be prescribed in writing by a licensed physician, dispensed by a licensed pharmacist and not be available for purchase without a prescription. Selection of generic drugs is always recommended. Your pharmacist will automatically file your claim.

## **DENTAL INSURANCE**

The Stewart County School System offers dental insurance coverage. This coverage is optional and may be elected without the medical coverage. In the event that a person terminates employment, the coverage will terminate at the end of the period form which he/she has already been paid.

## **COBRA**

When you are no longer eligible for regular coverage under our health and dental insurance plans, you may be eligible for continued coverage if you pay the full monthly premium for the coverage. This is guaranteed to you under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) if:

- You are covered under the group plan at the time of a qualifying event (see below for a list of qualifying events);
- You are not eligible for Medicare;
- You are not eligible for coverage under another employer's group plan; and,
- You have not applied to convert your group coverage to an individual health insurance policy.

## **QUALIFYING EVENTS**

You have the right to choose continuation coverage (COBRA) if you lose your group health insurance because of a reduction of hours in employment or the termination of your employment.

A covered spouse or dependent child has the right to choose continuation coverage (COBRA) if coverage is lost for any of the following reasons:

- Your death;
- Termination of your employment or reduction in hours of employment;
- Divorce or legal separation;
- You become eligible for Medicare; or
- Your child is no longer considered a “dependent child” under the terms of our insurance policy.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER COBRA**

Under the law, you or your family member has the responsibility of informing our Benefits Manager within 60 days of a divorce, legal separation, or Social Security disability determination that a qualified beneficiary was disabled at the time of your termination or reduction in hours, or when one of your children loses eligibility for dependent status.

## **CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS UNDER COBRA**

If you elect COBRA, you will receive identical coverage provided under the plan to similarly situated employees or family members. Your right to continue coverage under COBRA will continue for at least 18 months, and in some situations up to 36 months. You will be advised as to the maximum length you may continue COBRA coverage at the time of your election.

Once your COBRA rights have expired, you are entitled to convert your coverage to an individual plan as provided under the insurance policy in effect at the time.

Under COBRA, your continuation of coverage may be cut short for any of the following reasons:

- We no longer provide a group health insurance coverage to our employees;
- You do not pay your monthly premium on time;
- You or your dependent(s) become covered under another group health plan that does not include a pre-existing condition clause that applies to you or to a covered dependent; or
- You become covered under Medicare.

## **PAYMENT OF PREMIUMS UNDER COBRA**

If you elect to participate in COBRA you will make all payments directly to Blue Cross-Blue Shield.

## **125-K PRE-TAX PLAN**

USABLE Life administers this plan, which allows an employee to realize tax savings and an increased take home pay. Premiums for any of the plans are deducted from the employee's pay before income tax is calculated. USABLE Life also offers supplemental Insurance Plans such as Disability, Career, Heart, and Life.

## **SICK LEAVE**

Our sick leave policy is designed to provide "paid time off" for personal illness or injury, or the illness/injury of an immediate family member, or the death of a member of the immediate family of an employee. This is a benefit that is intended to help you maintain a stable base pay during short periods of non-occupational illness or injury.

As used in these policies "immediate family" means the employee's:

- Spouse
- Children
- Parents
- Brothers
- Sisters
- Grandparents
- Grandchildren
- Dependents living in the employee's household
- In-laws

Sick leave is not an entitlement for extra days off, but rather a benefit to be used only in time of need.

If you are frequently absent, or out for more than three consecutive days, you may be required to provide a physician's statement confirming the illness or injury, and that you are released to return to work.

Sick leave may only be used for your own or an immediate family member's illness, or medical/dental appointments. An employee will be allowed to use all or a portion of her accumulated sick leave for maternity leave purposes for a period not to exceed the employee's accumulated sick leave.

**FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES** earn sick leave at the rate of (1) day's regular pay for each month employed. A regular day's pay is defined as the pay an individual

earns for his normal day's work. You may use the amount of sick leave that you will accrue during the school year.

If you have no accrued sick leave, you may use accrued vacation for absences due to illness or injury. In the event that you have neither sick leave your absence will be without pay.

Under no circumstances can sick leave be exchanged for cash. Unused sick leave is not cashed out at termination of employment. Any employee of the district who has unused accumulated sick leave on the date of his retirement may receive one month of retirement credit for each 20 days of unused leave. Sick leave is not recognized for retirement purposes until the member has retired and the employer has certified the sick leave.

Using sick leave for reasons other than those outlined under these guidelines can result in disciplinary action. If after receiving sick leave pay, it is found that your absence did not qualify for coverage by sick leave, we will deduct the erroneously paid sick leave from the next paycheck.

## **RESTITUTION OF SICK LEAVE UPON REINSTATEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT**

Employees who are rehired by the school system may be granted restitution of any sick leave that was terminated at the termination of employment, provided official records reflect such leave was terminated.

## **SICK LEAVE BANK**

### **Sick Leave Bank Guidelines**

#### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of the Sick Leave Bank is to provide leave to contributors who have suffered an unplanned personal illness, injury, disability or quarantine and whose personal sick leave is exhausted.

#### **II. Administration**

The Sick Leave Bank shall be administered by a Committee of Trustees. The Committee shall be composed of six (6) members: one (1) member appointed by the School Board from its membership, four (4) members appointed by the School Board from its membership and the Director of Schools who shall chair the Committee.

#### **III. Rules**

1. Any certified personnel employee shall be eligible to participate in the Sick Leave Bank, however, a minimum participation of thirty (30) employees shall be required to establish the Bank.

2. Any teacher who elects to participate in the Bank shall initially have one (1) sick leave day deducted from his/her personal accumulation and deposited to the Sick Leave Bank. Teachers electing to participate shall do so during the month of September. Donations of sick leave to the Bank are nonrefundable and nontransferable.
3. If at any time the number of days in the Sick Leave Bank is less than thirty (30), or at any time deemed advisable, the Committee shall assess each member one (1) or more days of accumulated sick leave. If a member has no accumulated sick leave at the time of assessment, the first earned days shall be donated as they are accrued by the teacher.
4. By prior written notice to the Committee, a member may withdraw from the Bank participation on any June 30. Membership withdrawal shall result in forfeiture of all days contributed.
5. Members of the Sick Leave Bank shall be eligible to make application to the Bank for sick leave only after having been a member of the Bank for thirty (30) calendar days.
6. A participant shall not receive any sick leave from the Bank until after having exhausted all accumulated sick leave, personal leave, and/or annual leave, including all paid Board extensions.
7. Leave grants from the Bank, recommended by the Board of Trustees shall be in units of no more than twenty (20) consecutive duty days for the individual applicant. Applicants may submit requests for extensions of such leave grants before their prior grants expire. The maximum number of days any participant may receive as a result of any one or the same illness or accident is sixty (60) days.
8. In the event a member is physically or mentally unable to make a request to the Sick Leave Bank for use of sick leave days, a family member or agent may file the request.
9. If the Committee determines it necessary, they may require a physician's certificate of condition from any member requesting additional leave. Refusal to comply will result in denial of the pending request for use of sick leave days from the Bank.
10. Sick Leave granted a member from the Bank need not be repaid by the individual except as all members are uniformly assessed.



11. Grants of sick leave from the Sick Leave Bank shall not be made to any member of the participants family or during any period the member is receiving disability benefits from social security or the state or local retirement plan.
12. A member shall lose the right to obtain the benefits of the sick leave bank by:
  - a) Resignation or termination of employment.
  - b) Cancellation of participation which is effective on June 30.
  - c) Refusal to honor such assessment as may be required by the Committee.
  - d) Being on approved leave of absence with the exception of personal or disability leave.
  - e) Retirement.

#### **IV. Procedures**

1. Contributions to the Bank must be made on a Sick Leave Bank Donation Form.
2. All requests to draw upon the Bank must be made upon a Sick Leave Bank Request Form and submitted to the Committee of Trustees within thirty (30) calendar days of the first date bank usage is requested. In extreme and unusual cases exceptions may be approved.
3. The Committee shall act affirmatively or negatively on all applications within five (5) calendar days of the application.
4. All requests to draw from the Bank must be accompanied by a physician's statement on the approved form confirming the cause of illness or injury and must be signed by the physician.
5. Any person submitting a request to draw on the Bank must have made his/her proper contribution for the fiscal year in which the request is made.
6. All records of the Sick Leave Bank shall be kept in the central office of the school system that handles regular sick leave records. The Committee shall inform this office of all applications they approve and the amount of additional leave granted the member.

# STEWART COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

## Sick Leave Bank Request

Name of applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ SS # \_\_\_\_\_

Leave grant from the Bank shall be in units of no more than twenty (20) consecutive days. Applicants may submit requests for extensions of such leave grants before their prior grants expire.

A participant shall not receive any sick leave from the Bank until having exhausted all accumulated sick leave and/or personal leave, including all paid Board extensions.

Number of days requested: \_\_\_\_\_ days from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Please check if applicant will be receiving any disability benefits during the date of the requested Sick Leave Bank days from:

\_\_\_\_ Social Security \_\_\_\_ State or local retirement plans \_\_\_\_ Workman's Compensation

Please have a physician complete and sign the questions below pertaining to the nature of applicant's illness.

Signature of applicant or applicant's agent: \_\_\_\_\_

If applicant's agent is making request, please designate:

a) relation to applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ b) agent's phone \_\_\_\_\_

---

### PHYSICIAN'S STATEMENT

Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief description of cause of illness or nature of injury: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Estimated time to return to work: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# STEWART COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

## Sick Leave Bank Enrollment Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to become a member of the Stewart County Sick Leave Bank and hereby contribute one (1) of my sick leave days. By signing below, I acknowledge the following:

1. I am aware of the provisions of the Bank and do hereby relieve the Board of Education and/or the Stewart County School System Association from any liability as a result of action by the Sick Bank committee.
2. I understand that the Sick Bank committee may assess an additional day or days when the number of days in the bank is less than one per member enrolled.
3. I understand that this donation and subsequent assessments are “final” and will not be returned unless the Bank is terminated and I am a member at the time of its termination.
4. I understand this authorization will remain in effect for this and subsequent years unless cancelled in writing. Cancellation would be effective on the following June 30<sup>th</sup>.
5. I understand that enrollment in the Bank is necessary to be eligible to make application for withdrawals.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
School

\*\*\* This form must be returned to the Central Office by September 30<sup>th</sup> of the applicable year to be enrolled in the Sick Leave Bank.\*\*\*

## **PERSONAL LEAVE**

Personal leave can be taken at the discretion of the employee. All certified personnel employees are granted two personal leave days per fiscal year.

Personal leave does not accumulate from year to year. Unused days will convert to sick leave.

Except in cases of emergency, request forms should be submitted not less than 24 hours in advance of date the leave is expected to begin. Personal leave taken without prior approval could result in loss of pay for time missed.

## **RETIREMENT**

All permanent full-time certified employees of the Stewart County School System must be enrolled in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS).

Classified employee contributions are paid by the Board as part of their salary, and are credited to the member's account. Employees who made personal contributions prior to July 1992 may withdraw these contributions upon termination of employment. Forms for filing for withdrawal of such funds are available at the Payroll Office.

Membership and contributions are not effective until the classified employee has been employed for six (6) months you are eligible to receive credit for probationary time. Forms are available from the Payroll Office. Most questions can be answered in a booklet, which can be obtained from the Payroll Office at the time you in-process.

Certified personnel are required by Tennessee State to participate in TCRS with a 5% pre-taxed contribution deducted each paycheck.

## **403B (TAX SHELTERED ANNUITIES)**

SCSS will provide a list of approved financial representatives that participate with the 403b plan. This program allows an employee to have his/her pay reduced by a specified amount before income taxes are calculated. The money is deposited into an annuity or mutual fund that draws interest and is classified as a retirement type fund. Therefore, there is a penalty for withdrawal if done before age 59 ½. Questions regarding 403(b) should be addressed to the Payroll Clerk.

## **LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

A leave of absence allows an employee to take time off from work, with or without pay. A leave of absence is designed to help employees balance their work and family responsibilities by allowing them to take reasonable unpaid leave

for certain family, education and medical reasons. A leave of absence must be pre-approved by your Principal and Director of Schools. Positions vacated for less than twelve (12) months by employees on leave will be filled with an interim employee for such time as the employee is on leave. Upon return of said employee within twelve (12) months, the interim employee will relinquish the position and the employee can return thereto. If the leave exceeds twelve (12) months, the employee is placed in the same or comparable position upon return from leave. Twelve (12) month extensions are granted for one (1) time only. A leave of absence will not affect the employee's hire/seniority date but will affect their retirement credit if leave is without pay. See Stewart County Board Policy and/or the Payroll Clerk for more information.

### **DISCRIMINATION**

This procedure outlines the process for filing allegations of discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, race, color, creed national origin, sexual preference, or handicapping condition, against the Stewart County School System or systematic, local protocol for the resolution of complaints and does not supersede the complainant's right to file charges directly with the United States Office of Civil Rights.

If you feel that you are a victim of discrimination, **immediately** report it to the principal even if you have discussed it directly with the individual(s) involved. Please provide the following information when reporting discrimination.

- 1.) Date(s), time(s), and location(s) of the incident/incidences that took place;
- 2.) Description of each incident: e.g., was any physical contact made? What was said and/or done?, etc.
- 3.) Name(s) of anyone present during each incident; and,
- 4.) Anyone with whom you've discussed the incident/incidences.

All complaints of discrimination will be investigated and the results of the investigation will be reported to the complaining party. Retaliation against an employee who complains or alleges discrimination is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

### **HARASSMENT OF, OR BY EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS, CONTRACTORS AND VENDORS**

The law does not permit, nor will we tolerate harassment of employees by other employees, or by our students, contractors or vendors. Likewise, we will not tolerate harassment of a student, contractor or vendor by any employee of the district. Such conduct by an employee may result in corrective action.

Employees should be aware that they might be held **personally liable** for monetary damages if they are found guilty of harassment.

If you feel that you are a victim of harassment, or observe harassment of another employee, student, contractor or vendor, immediately tell the person displaying offensive behavior to stop. He or she may not be aware that his or her conduct is unwelcome or offensive. We encourage employees to address harassment directly when it occurs. Also, **immediately** report any incident of harassment to the principal AND the Director of Schools even if you have discussed it directly with the individual(s) involved.

All complaints of harassment will be investigated and the results of the investigation will be reported to the complaining party. Retaliation and/or discrimination against an employee who complains of harassment are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

### **REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

State law specifies that every citizen has a duty to report suspected brutality, abuse, neglect or child sexual abuse. Accordingly, any school system employee who suspects child abuse must report that suspicion directly to the Department of Children's Services (DCS). As permitted by Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) 37-2-403(b), the school system has specific procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

Persons who make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect are presumed to be acting in good faith and are immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that may be brought in a state court action. Such person's identity will remain confidential except when the juvenile court in which the investigation report is filed determines the testimony of the person reporting to be material to an indictment or conviction. Their name will not be released to any person other than DCS and school administrators on a need to know basis as required by state law and that may be needed to "Protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals."

### **SMOKING**

All buildings are smoke-free by law. Employees wishing to smoke may do so only in designated outside areas. Questions regarding appropriate places and times to smoke should be directed to your building Principal. Smokers are expected to keep smoking areas clean and to use appropriate receptacles to dispose of smoking materials. These same regulations apply to the use of smokeless tobacco.

### **VIOLENCE OR OTHER INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

Threatening employees, students, visitors, contractors or vendors, or engaging in threatening or violent behavior in our workplace is a serious matter. Employees engaging in such activities will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to

and including termination of employment, and perhaps legal action from the victim(s) of their conduct.

### **PERSONAL USE OF SCSS PROPERTY**

To protect data and software on our computers, employees are prohibited from loading personal software onto district computers without the express permission of information systems. Computers are for district business only, and must not be used for personal business. You may not copy district software for personal use.

Our stationery must not be used for personal correspondence, since any type of communication sent out on our stationery might be considered an official communication. Violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action.

### **EMAIL**

E-mail is also considered district property and is to be used for district business only. Personal emails should be limited. Employees are reminded that e-mail messages do not always remain private. Accordingly, use discretion when using email to communicate sensitive matters.

### **MANAGEMENT ACCESS TO YOUR WORK FILES, COMPUTER, AND WORK AREA**

During the course of conducting normal business, management may from time to time review manual work files or access computers, desks or other storage areas you may use, with or without your knowledge. You are reminded that facsimile transmissions coming into our office are often accessible to other employees.

### **USE OF THE INTERNET GUIDELINES**

The most important prerequisite for someone to receive internet access is that he or she take full responsibility for his or her own actions. All users must assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions.

The Stewart County School Systems takes no responsibility for any information or materials that are transferred through Internet.

The Internet is vast in size and many kinds of materials find their way onto the system. Should a user happen to find materials that may be deemed inappropriate while using his or her SCSS internet connection, he or she will refrain from downloading this material, and will identify or share the location of this material. Be aware that the transfer of certain kinds of materials is an illegal Federal offense, and punishable by fine or jail sentence.

The Stewart County School System makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. SCSS will not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the Internet connection.

SCSS reserves the right to examine all data stored in computers or servers involved in the Internet Network to make sure that all users are in compliance with these regulations.

No user will use the Internet to perform any act that may be construed as illegal or unethical, including, including the use of the link to Internet unauthorized access to other systems on the network.

The SCSS administration reserves the right to change these rules at any time without notice.

The SCSS strongly condemns the illegal distribution of software, otherwise known as pirating. Anyone transferring such files through Internet, and whose accounts are found to contain such illegal files, will immediately have their accounts permanently revoked. In addition, all users should be aware that software piracy is a federal offense and is punishable by fine or imprisonment.

Finally, all users should keep in mind that when they use Internet, they are entering a global community, any actions taken by them will reflect upon the school system as a whole. As such, all users must behave in an ethical and legal manner.

#### **PERSONAL ON-SITE VISITS**

No employee's family members or friends shall be allowed to regularly visit the employee while he is on the job.

#### **PERSONAL TELEPHONE CALLS**

Personal telephone calls should be limited in both in time and nature so as not to interfere with your responsibilities.

#### **DISTRICT TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT**

When using district equipment you are expected to use such items with caution so as not to injure yourself or others. Also, you are expected to operate such items in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications so that the tools and equipment will not be damaged. When in doubt as to how to operate something, please refer to the manufacturer's User's Manual, or ask your supervisor for assistance. Immediately inform your supervisor of any tool or equipment malfunctions.

In some cases, you may be assigned certain equipment, which is necessary to properly perform your job duties. You may be asked to sign for receipt of such



items. It is possible that you may be held financially responsible for any lost equipment, which have been issued to you. Upon termination of employment, all equipment issued to you must be returned to the district. Failure to do so could result in your paycheck being held or legal action against you.

When taking equipment to a work site, be sure that you bring back the same item. If you damage equipment, immediately inform your supervisor so that repairs and/or replacement can be arranged.

### **PERSONAL USE OF DISTRICT SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT**

Personal use of district supplies without express approval from your supervisor is strictly prohibited. This includes using computer equipment and software.

### **RECRUITMENT FOR VACANT POSITIONS**

It is our practice to recruit within the school system first; however, if applicants are not deemed highly qualified we reserve the right to recruit from the outside. Employees desiring new opportunities within the school system or who wish to be considered for future transfer to a new position should contact their Principal and the Director of Schools.

### **SENIORITY**

Seniority is defined as the length of service of any employee acquired by continuous service from the last date of hire.

## **WORK RELATED INJURIES/ILLNESSES**

### **WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE BENEFITS**

We provide worker's compensation insurance for all employees at no additional charge. This benefit is for employees who are injured on the job while in the course of their daily duties.

Workers' compensation benefits include partial payment of lost wages and/or payment for required medical treatment. Wage benefits generally begin several days after disability occurs. The insurance company, in accordance with state law, determines the benefit amount.

You are not eligible to use sick leave, personal leave, etc. while earning workers compensation benefits. You will continue to earn these days while receiving workers compensation benefits. No contributions will be made toward your retirement during this time. However, you will be eligible to buy back the time 30 days after you have been fully released by your physician.

If you are not able to work due to your work-related injury or illness, your leave of absence will be combined workers' compensation/FMLA leave. Your time off will count toward the 12 weeks leave which you are entitled under FMLA.

### **REPORTING WORK RELATED INJURY/ILLNESS**

In the event of work-related injury or illness, you are required to contact your principal. This notification is required even if the injury/illness seems minor and/or time is lost from work. This is necessary to ensure that any subsequent claim is handled correctly and to comply with legal reporting and record maintenance requirements. Failure to immediately report such injury or illness also may result in a claim being denied by both the workers' compensation and our medical insurance companies.

### **FRAUDULENT WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS**

While it is our intent that employees who have legitimate claims will receive benefits due under workers' compensation, we also strongly support all laws designed to protect us against fraudulent claims or fraudulent extension of claims. Workers Compensation is a valuable, but expensive benefit and we ask your help in protecting it by promptly reporting any evidence of fraudulent activity related to workers' compensation.

### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

You will find the Evacuation Plan for your school posted in each classroom. Please take time to become familiar with this plan.

Familiarize yourself with the Crisis Response Manual that is provided at your work location for all emergency situations.

### **HOUSEKEEPING**

Good housekeeping by all of us is important to maintain a safe and healthy work environment. It means better and more pleasant working conditions, helps reduce accidents, adds to the efficiency of our operations, and contributes to the quality of our work and the services we provide.

The appearance of our workplace and our employees is very important to our efficiency, and to conveying the right message to prospective employees and others.

### **PARKING**

Parking at our facilities, or when driving on district business is at your own risk. We do not assume liability for theft or damage to your car or personal belongings.

## **RENEWAL OF PROFESSIONAL TEACHER LICENSES**

A Professional Teachers License must be renewed every ten years. For renewal information visit the State of Tennessee Department of Education website at [www.state.tn/education/](http://www.state.tn/education/).

Click on the Educator Development, next on Teacher Licensing, next on Licensure Forms, and finally Renewal of Professional Teacher License Application. It is the responsibility of the employee to make sure his/her license is current.

## **SCSS Employee Dress Code**

The administration believes that SCSS employees should meet and exceed standards of dress required of students. Since proper etiquette, social customs, and good grooming are part of the educational process for students, it too should be a requirement of the professionals who support the educational process.

Supervisors should exercise the primary authority in determining appropriate dress and grooming for employees in their respective departments and buildings. They will make these determinations based on efficient completion of job duties, employee safety and generally accepted principles of professionalism.

It is not the intention to restrict an individual's right of expression as long as that expression is within the norms outlined above. Individual expressions in conflict with these guidelines may be considered appropriate if they are religious in nature or are required as a disability accommodation. In these situations, the employee should discuss the request for an exception with his or her Supervisor.

Below are the dress code guidelines:

- Attire must not be destructive to school property (i.e. body chains, spikes)
- Headwear or hair rollers are prohibited inside buildings. Extreme hair styles or colors that are distracting to the educational process cannot be worn.
- Bare midriffs, see-through garments, undergarment type shirts, bare backs, halter tops, low-cut blouses and low-cut pants, mini-skirts, tank tops, and cut-offs are prohibited.
- No spandex or exercise wear is permitted (exceptions may be made for PE teachers and coaches when appropriate).
- Leggings are permissible when worn with outer garments that are longer than 4 inches above the knee.
- Skirts and dresses must be longer than 4 inches above the knee.
- Obscene, profane, provocative, or inflammatory words or pictures on body/skin, clothing or jewelry, or clothing advertising alcoholic beverages, drugs, drug paraphernalia or tobacco products are prohibited.

- Visible body piercing jewelry, with the exceptions of earrings, is prohibited by employees at their work station or at school-sponsored activities and in SCSS building serving the public.
- Body art, jewelry ornaments or accessories which distract from the educational process or which present a safety concern will not be allowed.
- Clothes with holes in them are not permitted.
- Two days will be designated as jean day. Those days will be Wednesday and Friday.