



**2022-2023**

**CLASSIFIED**

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

# MORGAN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION



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Employees of the Morgan County Charter School System,

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! It is a pleasure to work alongside each of you on behalf of our students and the Morgan County community. You are part of a team that is deeply committed to our students, parents, educators, and community. By working together, we can reach our highest goals as we provide a world-class education for all students.

Please take an opportunity to review the contents of the 2022-2023 Employee Handbook. The primary purpose of this handbook is to assist all employees of the Morgan County Charter School System with overall expectations. Each of the sections in this document describes situations you may encounter with community, parents, students and colleagues. I trust that most of your questions are answered through the handbook.

The secondary purpose of the 2022-2023 Employee Handbook is to provide general direction and leadership relative to expectations of sound instruction and student support. These sections provide an overview of the reason we do what we do. The consistency we create in our daily practice is crucial to the overall vision of student achievement for all of our students.

Again, thank you for all you do, and we look forward to a wonderful school year! We are proud that you have chosen to be a part of the Morgan County Charter School System family.

With deep appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Virgil Cole, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. B. Virgil Cole, Jr.  
Superintendent, Morgan County Charter School System

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### **Introduction**

The Classified Employee Handbook contains important information about policies, procedures, and programs of Morgan County Schools. In addition, the handbook includes critical information about the duties and responsibilities of employees. Classified employees should read this handbook at the start of the school year and keep the handbook for future reference.

The Classified Employee Handbook is published annually and distributed to employees at the beginning of each school year. Inserts may be distributed as needed. Please direct questions or comments regarding the handbook to your immediate supervisor or contact the Human Resources Department at 706-752-4600.

### **Board Meetings**

The Morgan County Board of Education holds regularly scheduled public meetings at 6:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month in the Board of Education meeting room. Exceptions are noted on the annual schedule adopted each January.

### **Board Policies**

Please refer to the Morgan County Board of Education Policy Manual for a complete list of all policies. The policy manual may be accessed via the school system website at <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/index.aspx?s=4119> .

The Morgan County Board of Education does not discriminate in any educational, employment or other activity under its jurisdiction on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, veteran status, genetic information, or age in its programs and activities; and will honor all appropriate laws and regulations relating to discrimination.

It is the intention of the Morgan County Board of Education that in matters of employment the provisions of this handbook shall be the same as Georgia law. Where there is a conflict in the provisions of this handbook and Board policy or Georgia law, the provisions of applicable Board policies and Georgia laws will take precedence.

### **Accreditation**

All schools in the Morgan County Charter School System are accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission and by AdvancED/Cognia (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools).

### **Mission-Vision-Goals**

#### ***Learn. Lead. Thrive.***

Morgan County is dedicated to developing a robust strategic plan to drive the district for the next five years. Stakeholders in the planning process have chosen the key terms: Learn, Lead, Thrive as the cornerstones of each aspect of the plan. The term Learn focuses on both the student and the teacher as the system strives to develop lifelong learners. The word Lead provides clarity into the aspects of not only the day-to-day operations of a school but also financial transparency, first-class technological infrastructure, and planning for continuous school improvement. Finally, Thrive looks to promote and maintain a safe, innovative, and overall positive learning climate and culture in our schools. In each of these areas, we seek to collaborate, communicate, and excel with members of the staff, school, and the Morgan County community.

To review the complete strategic plan and annual report, please visit our website at: [www.morgan.k12.ga.us](http://www.morgan.k12.ga.us)

## EMPLOYMENT & EMPLOYMENT –RELATED DUTIES

### **Employment Opportunities**

All employment opportunities within Morgan County Schools are posted on the school system website under the Human Resources Department: [www.morgan.k12.ga.us](http://www.morgan.k12.ga.us).

### **At-Will Employment**

This handbook is NOT intended to create a contract of employment. Employment with the Morgan County Board of Education is At-Will and may be terminated at any time for any reason or for no reason at the will of the employee or employer. For additional information, please see local board policies GBL.

### **Recruitment**

The Morgan County Board of Education recognizes that the first step in implementing a quality instructional program is the employment of qualified professional personnel. The Board further believes that this can be best accomplished through implementation of recruitment procedures that utilize all appropriate resources, both in and out of the system, in identifying qualified professional personnel for employment. Available classified positions shall be posted within the school system and other recruitment websites or areas.

Recruitment activities shall be conducted so as to assure that employment requirements are met by personnel to be employed by the Board. In addition, recruitment activities shall be conducted in a manner that maintains the Board's position of being an equal opportunity and nondiscriminatory employer.

### **Position Vacancies**

To fill a vacancy, the administrator reviews applications on file, conducts interviews, and refers the most qualified applicant to the Superintendent and the Human Resources Department for consideration of employment. The Superintendent recommends applicants to the Board of Education for employment and the Board votes to approve applicants for employment.

### **Criminal Background Check**

All employees must submit to a fingerprint and criminal background check. Such requirements shall apply even though an employee may already have undergone fingerprinting and criminal background checks by another school district in Georgia or elsewhere.

### **Code of Ethics for Educators**

The Morgan County School District requires all classified employees to follow the Standards of the Code of Ethics for Educators.

### **Professional Ethics**

All employees are in a position to be knowledgeable of confidential information regarding students and staff members. Communicating such information at any time is considered a breach of ethics and, as such, is a dismissible offense. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in immediate termination.

### **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)**

Certain types of workers are exempt from the minimum wage and overtime pay provisions, including bona fide executive, administrative, and professional employees who meet regulatory requirements under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). For non-exempt employees, issues concerning overtime, compensatory time off and minimum wage, contact the Human Resources Department. Notification of rights under the FLSA is set forth in the employment posters displayed in a conspicuous place at the work site.

### **Definitions of Employment Status**

The following terms is used to describe the classification of employees and their employment status:

1. Exempt- Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and applicable state law and who are exempt from overtime pay.
2. Non-exempt- Employees whose positions do not meet FLSA and state exemption tests.
3. Benefits-eligible- Employees scheduled to work 20 hours or more per week (does not include substitute employees).
4. Part-time- Employees scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week (are not eligible for benefits).

5. Substitute- Employees who are hired for a pre-established period or on call as needed. They may work a full-time or part-time schedule. They are ineligible for benefits.

**Employment Eligibility**

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 is a federal law, which dictates that employers verify eligibility for employment for all new employees. The Act pertains to all employees hired since November 7, 1986.

Each individual employee is responsible for the correct implementation of this law. The Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9) form is the official document for use in this program. Morgan County Board of Education utilizes the E-Verify Program, in addition to the I-9 document, to verify employment eligibility.

**Employment Information/Records**

It is an applicant/employee’s responsibility to provide the Human Resources Department with personnel record information. Examples of personnel record information include, but are not limited to, contact information, employment I-9 and proof of citizenship, Social Security number, references, and tax withholding information. Work assignments will be made only after the required information has been submitted.

**Employee Integrity**

Employees should exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of employment with the Morgan County Board of Education. It is expected that employees will deal honestly, accurately, and responsibly with employment qualifications, work hours, absenteeism and tardiness to work, expense forms, personal property, school/activity funds or property, and all work-related issues. An employee who fails to act with integrity may be subject to discipline, including, but not limited to, termination from employment. Employees suspecting of fraud should contact the Director of Finance, orally or in writing.

**Notice of Equal Opportunity**

The Morgan County Board of Education maintains a policy of equal educational, athletic, and employment opportunity. The Morgan County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, veteran status, genetic information, or age in its programs and activities. If students and/or parents have concerns, then they should bring such concerns, in writing, to the attention of the principal. If employees have concerns, then they should bring such concerns, in writing, to the attention of their immediate supervisor.

The following have been designated to handle inquiries and concerns regarding the District’s non-discrimination policies:

<p><b>Kayla Andrews</b>, Human Resources Manager  <b>Title IX Coordinator</b>                  706-752-4609  <a href="mailto:Kayla.andrews@morgan.k12.ga.us">Kayla.andrews@morgan.k12.ga.us</a></p>	<p><b>Doug Connelly</b>, Director of Athletics  <b>Sports Equity Coordinator</b>                  706-752-4621  <a href="mailto:Doug.connelly@morgan.k12.ga.us">Doug.connelly@morgan.k12.ga.us</a></p>	<p><b>Jay Homan</b>, Assistant Superintendent  <b>Federal &amp; State Special Education Grants/Section 504</b>                  706-752-4617  <a href="mailto:jay.homan@morgan.k12.ga.us">jay.homan@morgan.k12.ga.us</a></p>	<p><b>Susan Tolbert</b>, Assistant Superintendent  <b>Federal Programs Director</b>                  706-752-4623  <a href="mailto:susan.tolbert@morgan.k12.ga.us">susan.tolbert@morgan.k12.ga.us</a></p>
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All employees are required to comply with our Equal Employment Opportunity Policy. Administrators and supervisors are expected to cooperate fully in meeting our equal employment opportunity objectives and their compliance with this policy will be monitored closely. For additional information, please see local board policies GAAA and GAEB, JAA, and JCAC.

## Employee Work & Holiday Schedule 2022-2023

<https://www.morgan.k12.ga.us/about-us/system-calendars>

**NOTE:** Principals and Supervisors may adjust the work schedules of employees on 210-day, 186-day, and 180-day to facilitate school/department operations. Employees on 230-day work schedules are eligible for vacation leave. All vacation leave must be pre-approved by the supervisor..

**Work Days**

Classified staff are employed for 180, 186, 190, 210 or 230 work days, dependent upon the assignment.

**Assignment and/or Transfer**

Assignments to a specific school site/department are made on the referral of a principal/supervisor to the Human Resources Department with the approval of the Superintendent and Board of Education. The Superintendent may reassign a staff member to another site at any time during the school year as the need arises. A principal/ supervisor may reassign a staff member within a school site. School assignment preference of the individual will be considered whenever possible. Employees who wish to be considered for transfers to other schools will be given the opportunity to do so through the TalentEd- Recruit and Hire applicant tracking system. Before an employee is offered the position, both principals must approve the transfer.

**Reduction in Force**

If it becomes necessary for the Morgan County Board of Education to reduce the number of personnel, the procedure outlined in Board Policy GBKA will be followed.

**Resignations**

Classified staff resigning a position are required to provide notice in writing to their principal or supervisor. It is requested that staff provide a minimum two-week advance notice. The principal or supervisor must provide a written notice to the employee and copy the Human Resources Department of their acceptance of resignation.

**Annual Performance Evaluations**

All classified staff must be evaluated annually. The Morgan County Schools evaluation instrument developed by the Human Resources Department is used to evaluate classified staff. Blank forms will be distributed to principals and supervisors annually.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS, SCHOOL OFFICE ASSISTANTS, SCHOOL BOOKKEEPERS, & OFFICE CLERKS**

**Qualifications**

Administrative assistants, school clerical, school bookkeepers, and school receptionists are required to have a minimum of a high school diploma or a graduate equivalency diploma (GED). Documentation must be provided at the time of employment. Proficiency must be demonstrated according to the position for which the person is applying. Telephone and technology skills are essential.

**Duties**

For a complete listing of the duties and responsibilities of your position, please see your supervisor for a copy of the job description approved by the Morgan County Board of Education.

Persons who hold these positions and who handle school money will follow school procedures for handling money, including writing receipts.

**Illness**

The administrator or his/her designee is to be contacted according to the established procedures at the school/worksites if the employee is too ill to report to work. Medical documentation may be required any time employees are absent due to illness or whenever questions arise concerning approval of requests for sick leave. Unsubstantiated and/or unapproved leave will be entered Leave without Pay (LWOP), and will be investigated for further employment action.

**CUSTODIAL/MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL**

The principal of the school supervises custodial/maintenance personnel with assistance from the Facilities Manager.

**Qualifications**

Applicants for Custodian and Maintenance positions must demonstrate the skills required for individual job descriptions.

### Duties

For a complete listing of the duties and responsibilities of your position, please see your supervisor for a copy of the job description approved by the Morgan County Board of Education.

### Illness

The administrator or his/her designee is to be contacted according to the established procedures at the school/worksite if the employee is too ill to report to work. Medical documentation may be required any time employees are absent due to illness or whenever questions arise concerning approval of requests for sick leave. Unsubstantiated and/or unapproved leave will be entered Leave without Pay (LWOP), and will be investigated for further employment action.

### Attendance Incentive Program- PSERS Employees

In an effort to reward attendance and curb absenteeism, the Morgan County School System provides an Attendance Incentive Program to employees contributing to PSERS retirement system. It is vital to our success that regular attendance is important to the efficient operations of our school district.

Effective July 1, 2018, sick leave balances will be rolled back to 75 days for employees that accumulated sick leave days greater than 75. At the end of the school year, employees will receive \$25 per day for each day over 75. This payment will be included in the employee's paycheck on the last workday of June. This payment is considered taxable income to the employee. **This is an on-going program that will occur each school year.**

Employees that resign or retire will be eligible for a sick leave payout of any remaining accumulated sick leave if they meet the following criteria:

- The employee is a member of PSERS.
- The employee is not eligible for membership in TRS.
- The employee resignation/retirement date is or beyond the last working day of the school year.
- The employee has not resigned in lieu of termination.

## PARAPROFESSIONALS

### Qualifications

Qualifications for employment of paraprofessionals are set by the state. All Georgia paraprofessionals must hold a valid state certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission. The Paraprofessional Certificate is valid for five (5) years and holders must be aware of the renewal requirements associated with this certificate. To be eligible for the Paraprofessional Certificate, the applicant must:

1. Pass a criminal background check;
2. Hold an Associate's Degree or higher in any subject; **OR** have completed two (2) years of college coursework (60 semester or 90 quarter hours with grades of "C" or above); **OR** have passed a PSC-approved paraprofessional assessment. If eligibility is established through the assessment, the applicant must also hold a minimum of a high school diploma or GED equivalent;
3. Be employed as a paraprofessional in a Georgia school system.

Paraprofessional certificates issued prior to September 1, 2006, did not have the eligibility requirements outlined above. Holders of Paraprofessional Certificates that expire on or after June 30, 2009, must meet these eligibility requirements in order to renew the certificate.

### Acquiring and Renewing a Certificate

**It is the responsibility of each employee to initiate and complete the process for obtaining a Georgia Educator Certificate including providing all forms, official transcripts, and other documents and information as may be required by the Morgan County Board of Education.**

The Paraprofessional Certificate is valid for five (5) years, with the beginning date of the first 5-year certificate to be the date of employment and the ending date to be June 30th of the fifth certificate year. For renewal of paraprofessional certificates expiring in 2018 or beyond:

1. The certificate holder must be employed by a Georgia school system or Local Unit of Administration (LUA);
2. Certificate holders who are employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring certification must have an individual Professional Learning Plan (PLP) or a Professional Learning Goal (PLG) coordinated with their supervisor and employing LUA. These PLPs or PLGs are developed and maintained locally, and must be aligned with individual educator evaluation results as well as with school and school system professional learning plans. To be acceptable for certificate renewal, the PLP or PLGs must be directly associated with the annual personnel evaluation;
3. The certificate holder must pass a criminal background check;
4. The employing school system applies for the certificate renewal.

Additional information regarding renewal requirements can be found on the Georgia Professional Standards Commission website at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com).

All school system personnel, including paraprofessionals, are encouraged to maintain a file containing copies of all licenses and documents pertaining to renewal.

#### **Certification “Drop-Dead” Date**

A Paraprofessional must have a valid state license issued and/or required credentials on file in the Human Resources Department no later than thirty (30) days following the effective date of employment. In the event an employee has not completed the certification application process for initial certification or renewal of certification, that employee will be paid on the basis of a daily substitute teacher until such time as a valid state license is received by the Human Resources Department. In the event a paraprofessional certificate is not provided to the Human Resources Department within thirty (30) days of the effective date of employment, an appointment must be scheduled with the Human Resources Department. During this conference, all steps for securing a license will be reviewed and assistance may be provided if needed. An appointment may be requested at any time prior to the thirty-day (30) period if assistance is needed.

#### **Certification Changes/Upgrades**

It is the responsibility of the Paraprofessional to notify the Human Resources Department upon completion of a higher degree. The employee's pay will be adjusted on the employee's next scheduled payday. Utilizing the effective date of higher education, the pay adjustment made in the employee's gross pay will be calculated based on the number of working days remaining in the school year.

In general, when a higher level certificate is received midyear, the salary is adjusted retroactively to an effective date on the certificate or to the date of employment, whichever is more recent. A salary adjustment will not be made retroactively to a previous fiscal year. To be paid for a higher degree earned in a fiscal year, the new certification must be issued by the Professional Standards Commission prior to July 1 of that year.

In general, verification of prior service will merit an appropriate salary adjustment. A salary adjustment will not be made retroactively to a previous fiscal year.

#### **Duties**

For a complete listing of the duties and responsibilities of your position, please see your supervisor for a copy of the job description approved by the Morgan County Board of Education.

The paraprofessional is to work directly with individuals or small groups of students in the classroom under the supervision of the assigned teacher. Other activities, such as preparing bulletin boards and instructional materials, may be carried out provided that they do not take away from school instruction time and are approved or assigned by the principal. When there is a substitute teacher, the paraprofessional will carry out the same duties as with the paraprofessional's supervising teacher. The media paraprofessional is to work under the supervision of the media specialist. Duties will include filing, assisting with the checkout of media materials, and other activities that contribute to student and teacher use of media materials.

The management and discipline of students is the direct responsibility of the teacher. Paraprofessionals are encouraged to discuss techniques for working with students with their supervising teacher so as to maintain good classroom behavior. Also, paraprofessionals should ask their supervising teachers if there is any student



disability of which the paraprofessional needs to be aware and what procedures to follow when the paraprofessional is working with the student.

### **Employment and Salary Levels**

Paraprofessionals will be paid either at the *Paraprofessional I*, *Paraprofessional II* and *Paraprofessional III* level. Employees who meet the qualifications to hold a Paraprofessional Certificate will be classified, as a minimum, as a *Paraprofessional I*. Employees who also have earned a minimum of 60 semester or 90 quarter hours of college credit are eligible for placement on the salary schedule as a *Paraprofessional II*. Employees who have earned a Bachelor's degree are eligible for placement on the salary schedule as a *Paraprofessional III*. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform the Human Resources Department that he/she is eligible, and to provide the Human Resources Department with all of the necessary documentation to verify and support such placement.

### **Reporting to Work**

Paraprofessionals are to follow the sign in and sign out procedures established by the school to which they are assigned.

## **SCHOOL NUTRITION PERSONNEL**

The Director of School Nutrition supervises school nutrition personnel with assistance from the principal of the school.

### **Qualifications**

The school nutrition manager is required to have a high school diploma or a graduate equivalency diploma (GED). Proficiency in performing duties is required.

### **Duties**

For a complete listing of the duties and responsibilities of your position, please see your supervisor for a copy of the job description approved by the Morgan County Board of Education.

The manager's duties will include supervision of school nutrition assistants, preparation and serving of food, bookkeeping pertaining to the operation of the school lunch program, and other such duties required to maintain high standards of safety and cleanliness in the kitchen. School procedures are to be followed in handling school lunch monies. Any problem or accident occurring in the kitchen or on cafeteria premises is to be reported immediately to the Director of School Nutrition.

Duties of the school nutrition assistant include following work schedules prepared by the school nutrition manager, preparing food, and operating and maintaining kitchen equipment. The school nutrition assistant is expected to adhere to sanitation requirements and to abide by safety rules and regulations.

### **Attendance Incentive Program- PSERS Employees**

In an effort to reward attendance and curb absenteeism, the Morgan County School System provides an Attendance Incentive Program to employees contributing to PSERS retirement system. It is vital to our success that regular attendance is important to the efficient operations of our school district.

Effective July 1, 2018, sick leave balances will be rolled back to 75 days for employees that accumulated sick leave days greater than 75. At the end of the school year, employees will receive \$25 per day for each day over 75. This payment will be included in the employee's paycheck on the last workday of June. This payment is considered taxable income to the employee. **This is an on-going program that will occur each school year.**

Employees that resign or retire will be eligible for a sick leave payout of any remaining accumulated sick leave if they meet the following criteria:

- The employee is a member of PSERS.
- The employee is not eligible for membership in TRS.
- The employee resignation/retirement date is or beyond the last working day of the school year.
- The employee has not resigned in lieu of termination.



**Illness**

The administrator or his/her designee is to be contacted according to established procedures if the school nutrition manager is ill and unable to report to work. The school nutrition manager is to be contacted according to established procedures if the school nutrition assistant is unable to report to work. The manager will be responsible for obtaining a substitute. Medical documentation may be required any time employees are absent due to illness or whenever questions arise concerning approval of requests for sick leave. Unsubstantiated and/or unapproved leave will be entered as Leave Without Pay (LWOP), and will be investigated for further employment action.

**Training**

School nutrition managers are required to complete a minimum of ten (10) clock hours of training each year. Training will be provided by the School Nutrition Director and online. All managers must also complete six (6) Manager Pathway online training courses as described by the Georgia Department of Education. Annual training requirements define a school year as a full year and runs July 1 through June 30. A classified manager who begins work after the first day of the school year has the rest of that school year and the following full school year to complete at least one year of Core TID training. Participation in training sessions is considered a job-related responsibility.

For school nutrition assistants that are full time, six (6) clock hours of in-service training are required annually. Part-time staff, four (4) clock hours of in-service training are required annually. Participation in training sessions is considered a job-related responsibility.

All new employees must complete orientation. This training is provided by the School Nutrition Director and Trainer from another school system and must be completed within the first (1<sup>st</sup>) year of employment. School nutrition employees are paid for the additional time required to attend this class.

**TECHNOLOGY SERVICES PERSONNEL****Qualifications**

Employees in Technology Services positions must demonstrate the skills required for individual job descriptions.

**Duties**

For a complete listing of the duties and responsibilities of your position, please see your supervisor for a copy of the job description approved by the Morgan County Board of Education.

Technology Services personnel must be available for on-call duties.

**TRANSPORTATION SERVICES PERSONNEL****Qualifications**

Bus driver requirements include having a high school diploma or GED, a CDL driver's license, having an excellent driving record, passing an annual physical examination, pre-employment and random drug testing, and attending the Driver's Safety Program provided by the Georgia Department of Education. Effective January 2021, CDL holders must register their CDL License with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. For other positions in Transportation Services, individuals must demonstrate the skills required for specific job descriptions.

**Duties**

For a complete listing of the duties and responsibilities of your position, please see your supervisor for a copy of the job description approved by the Morgan County Board of Education.

Persons employed as bus drivers are expected to enforce student bus conduct regulations set by the Morgan County Board of Education. A copy is given to each bus driver annually. Bus drivers are expected to obey state and local regulations regarding the operation of a school bus. The Transportation Manager or his/her designee should be notified immediately if there is an accident involving a school bus.

The duties of shop personnel include securing and being responsible for tools and equipment. Supplies that are needed should be requested promptly from the person's immediate supervisor.

### **Illness**

If a bus driver or other Transportation Services staff member is ill and unable to report to work, he/she should contact Transportation Services according to established procedures and within required timeframes. Medical documentation may be required any time employees are absent due to illness or whenever questions arise concerning approval of requests for sick leave. Unsubstantiated and/or unapproved leave will be entered as Leave without Pay (LWOP), and will be investigated for further employment action.

### **Attendance Incentive Program- PSERS Employees**

In an effort to reward attendance and curb absenteeism, the Morgan County School System provides an Attendance Incentive Program to employees contributing to PSERS retirement system. It is vital to our success that regular attendance is important to the efficient operations of our school district.

Effective July 1, 2018, sick leave balances rolled back to 75 days for employees that accumulated sick leave days greater than 75. At the end of the school year, employees will receive \$25 per day for each day over 75. This payment will be included in the employee's paycheck on the last workday of June. This payment is considered taxable income to the employee. **This is an on-going program that will occur each school year.**

Employees that resign or retire will be eligible for a sick leave payout of any remaining accumulated sick leave if they meet the following criteria:

- The employee is a member of PSERS.
- The employee is not eligible for membership in TRS.
- The employee resignation/retirement date is or beyond the last working day of the school year.
- The employee has not resigned in lieu of termination.

### **Training**

All bus drivers are expected to read the Classified Employee Handbook and the Driver's Manual. All bus drivers are required to participate annually in the Driver Safety Education Program provided by the Georgia Department of Education. Any driver who cannot attend the program must attend in another county. Annual training is a condition of employment.

## **COMPENSATION**

### **Salary Schedule**

Classified salary schedules are available on the Morgan County School's website under the Human Resources Department, [www.morgan.k12.ga.us](http://www.morgan.k12.ga.us). Placement on the professional personnel salary schedule is determined by position salary grade and years of creditable experience. Years of creditable experience is the total number of creditable years of experience in a position with comparable duties and responsibilities as defined in the job description. Employment outside of Morgan County School Systems will be evaluated for credit purposes upon written verification by a former employer that provides a detailed description of essential duties by the employee, dates of employment and other information that may be required. The formula to calculate annualized salary is [hourly rate] x [# of work hours] x [# of work days].

### **Experience verification for salary purposes- New employee**

For some positions, verification of prior service in the same position with an accredited public and/or private educational institution may merit an appropriate salary adjustment. However, a salary adjustment will not be made if the verification is received after sixty (60) days of the hire date. In any case, adjustments will not extend retroactively to a previous fiscal year.

### **Annual Advancement on the salary schedule**

To qualify for an advancement on the local salary schedule, a classified employee must have a satisfactory annual evaluation from the previous year.

### **Payroll Information**

Personnel are paid monthly. Pay history and W-2's may be viewed and printed on line by each employee at <https://etcentral.morgan.k12.ga.us/>. We encourage employees to enroll in direct deposit. If paper checks are

issued, the checks are to be picked up at the Central Office on the last working day of the month. Checks not picked up will be mailed to the home address. It is important that each employee keeps their address current with Morgan County Schools.

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Morgan County Charter School System offers a comprehensive and valuable benefits program to all eligible employees. Our benefit packages are designed to provide security and assistance during a time of need.

### **New Employees**

New employees have 31 days of employment date or benefits-eligible date to enroll in benefits. Benefit coverage begins on the first day of the month after having completed a full calendar month of enrollment. A benefits package will be provided to new hires from Morgan County Benefits Department once entered in the Payroll system. For questions or assistance, contact the Service Hub at [mybenefits@campusbenefits.com](mailto:mybenefits@campusbenefits.com) or 866-433-7661.

### **Benefit Changes**

Employee benefit elections are allowed as a new hire and during the annual open enrollment period (mid-Oct thru early November) for the next plan year. A qualifying life event allows eligible changes to benefit elections throughout the plan year. All qualifying events must be submitted within 31 days of the event date.

### **Social Security/Medicare**

All employees are covered by Social Security and Medicare and are required to participate.

### **Retirement Benefits**

Paraprofessionals, clerical and support positions, and non-certificated employees in a supervisory role are eligible to participate in the Georgia Teacher Retirement System. All other non-certificated personnel to include custodians, bus drivers and school nutrition assistants are required to participate in the Georgia Public School Employee Retirement System (PSERS). Retirement information is available upon request from the Human Resources Department. In the event an employee changes positions that will qualify them for Teachers' Retirement, it is the employee responsibility to contact the Human Resources Department for information.

### **Child of Morgan County School System Employee**

If the Morgan County School System employs a child's parent or step-parent as a full-time, benefit-eligible employee, the child or step-child of this employee may be enrolled in the appropriate grade level in a Morgan County School desired by the parent, as long as that child lives with the parent or step-parent. The transportation of students to and from school shall be the responsibility of the student's parents.

### **Deferred Compensation**

Valic is a voluntary supplemental retirement plan that offers a participant the opportunity to invest money toward securing the retirement that he/she envisions. Valic offers 403(b), 457(b), Roth 403(b) and Roth 457(b) plans in compliance with the Internal Revenue Code Section 457 to save for retirement on a tax-deferred basis. As of September, 2005, all participants in PSERS in Morgan County are eligible for a matching contribution by the Board of Education of up to \$20 per month in a tax free annuity plan to strengthen retirement benefits.

### **Health Insurance**

All benefits-eligible employees may choose to participate in the State of Georgia Health Benefit Plan. The state and local system contribute a major portion of the cost with the remainder of the cost being paid by the employee through payroll deductions.

### **Board Paid Benefits**

The Morgan County Board of Education offers, at **no cost** to the employee, the following for all full-time benefit-eligible employees:

- \$10,000 life insurance policy
- Long Term Disability Core Plan (40%) of salary

### **Voluntary Benefits Program**

The following optional benefits to be paid for by the employee:

- Dental
- Vision
- Life Insurance
- Disability
- Critical Illness
- Spending Accounts
- Accident
- Legal
- MedCare Complete
- Auto and Home

### **Athletic Event Free Admission**

All full-time employees of Morgan County Schools are eligible to receive free admission to athletic events. Employees must show a Morgan County School issued identification badge for entrance. Use of the free admission is limited to regularly scheduled Morgan County School District home athletic events. This is not valid for one-time events or events that are not regularly scheduled, including playoffs and tournaments, regardless of where these events take place. Employees are entitled to gain free admittance for themselves only.

### **Sick Leave Accrual**

Employees considered full-time, benefits-eligible earn 1 ¼ days of sick leave per month of service. According to state policy, new employees may transfer up to 45 days of sick leave from another Georgia school system or state agency. Employees may accrue unused sick leave days while employed in Morgan County Schools. However, the number of days accrued will not be applied in any manner that conflicts with Board policy GBRI: Professional Personnel Personal Leaves and Absences pertaining to limitations regarding the transfer of sick leave days.

### **Worker's Compensation**

Workers' Compensation is a state-mandated program that is paid for by Morgan County Schools. Any employee who is injured on the job must IMMEDIATELY report the injury to his/her supervisor. If professional medical care is needed for the injury, the law requires the employee to select from the Panel of Physicians posted at the school or facility. 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 related to Workers' Compensation will run concurrently with leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

### **Cobra Notification**

According to the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1985, in the event of termination of employment with Morgan County Charter School Systems or loss of eligibility to remain covered under a group health insurance program, employees and eligible dependents may have the right to continued coverage under a group health insurance program for a limited period of time at their own expense. Consult with the Benefits Service Hub for details.

## **TYPES OF LEAVE**

### **Sick Leave**

The following information and procedures reflect Georgia Department of Education policies, Morgan County Board of Education policies, and Georgia law:

1. Employees considered full-time benefit-eligible earn 1¼ days of sick leave per month of service.
2. Accrued sick leave may be used for the following:
  - a. Personal illness, physical disability (including disability related to maternity) or injury.

- b. Absence necessitated by exposure to contagious disease.
  - c. Absence due to illness or death in the employee's immediate family. For the purpose of sick leave, the term "immediate family" is defined as:
    - spouse;
    - child;
    - parent;
    - sibling;
    - grandparent;
    - grandchild;
    - in-law equivalents of the above; or
    - other relatives living in the household of the employee or any dependent as shown in the employee's recent tax return.
3. Sick leave days not used will be accrued.
  4. Sick leave earned after July 1, 1978, and not used, will be credited to employees and shall be transferred with employees when they change employment from the Morgan County Board of Education to another public school board of education in Georgia provided the employees' new position is covered by State policy. Not to exceed 45 days.
  5. Employees may not use more than three (3) days of their total sick leave accrual in a year as personal leave.
  6. For any absence lasting 10 or more days, or any possible Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) qualifying absence, an employee must apply for FMLA with the Human Resources Department.
  7. If an employee incurs ten (10) consecutive days of leave due to their illness, the employee must provide a release to return to work signed by their healthcare provider prior to returning to work.
  8. Sick leave will run concurrently with FMLA.

#### **Bereavement Leave**

Bereavement leave is available for full-time, benefits-eligible employees and may be used for absence due to death in the employee's immediate family. An employee shall be allowed up to five (5) consecutive days of bereavement leave for absence due to "family death" in the immediate family. Bereavement leave must be deducted from an employee's accumulated sick leave.

In the event of the death of any relative or friend not covered in the employee's immediate family, the employee may use personal leave days earned.

#### **Vacation Leave**

All 230-day employees earn vacation of five (5) days per year; in which are unpaid. Days are prorated based on employment date. Vacation does not roll over from year to year. Employees must use all of their vacation days each year or lose them. Any unused days at separation of employment will not be paid out. Vacation leave must be pre-approved through a supervisor. Vacation accrued from another school district is not transferable to this district.

#### **Personal Leave**

Employees may use up to three (3) days of sick leave for personal reasons. If an employee should not have sick leave available, then personal leave will not be available. Employees are responsible for securing prior approval from the principal or other supervisor in charge of leave prior to taking any leave. Personal leave will be deducted from the employees' accumulated sick leave. Contact your supervisor for additional information. Personal leave will not be permitted beyond 3 days except in unusual circumstances. Personal leave beyond 3 days can only be approved by the Superintendent. A written request must be submitted to the employee's supervisor then submitted to the superintendent for review.

#### **Professional Leave**

The use of professional leave requires prior approval by the employee's principal or immediate supervisor. Approved absences for professional purposes will not affect sick leave or personal leave days.

**Sabbatical**

For study or travel, leaves of absence may be granted to professional personnel who have completed three (3) years of service in the county. As a vacancy occurs in his/her specific field(s), she/he may return to that position. If a vacancy occurs, and if it is refused by the person on leave of absence or sabbatical, the board is released from any further obligation to rehire that person. When granting leaves of absence or sabbatical, the Board of Education may also determine the length of this leave of absence or sabbatical.

**Jury Duty and Subpoena**

Absences are not counted as personal leave if they are for jury duty, or a lawfully issued subpoena involving school-related matters.

**Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

Employees of the Morgan County Board of Education who are classified as full-time employees in their position/job title are eligible for up to sixty (60) days of unpaid leave per year under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides attendance, job, and benefit protection for up to 60 scheduled work days (hereinafter called 60 days) in a 12-month period. The 12-month period will be measured from the date FMLA leave is first used. Family and Medical Leave runs concurrently with Sick Leave, Vacation, Personal Leave, Workers' Compensation, and Leave Without Pay, except as otherwise required by law. Employees are required to use all available paid leave (sick/personal and/or vacation) while on FMLA (except as otherwise required by law.) Full-time employees are eligible for a maximum of sixty (60) days of paid and/or unpaid leave during a 12-month period in connection with the following:

1. When an employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.
2. To care for the employee's qualifying family member with a serious health condition.
3. The birth of a child to the employee.
4. The first year care of an employee's child.
5. The adoption or foster parent placement of a child with an employee.
6. Any period of incapacity or treatment for a chronic serious health condition of an employee which continues over an extended period of time, requires periodic visits (at least twice a year) to a health care provider and may involve occasional episodes of incapacity (intermittent FMLA).
7. Eligible employees whose spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.
8. FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is: (1) a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury of illness; or (2) a veteran who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran, and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness.

\*\* Qualifying Family Member:

- Employee's spouse.
- Child (biological, adoptive, step, or foster children, legal wards, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis of the employee.) Note: Child must be either under the age of 18 or age 18 and older and "incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability" and have a serious health condition as defined under FMLA for which he or she needs care at the time FMLA leave is to commence.

- Parent (biological, adoptive, step, or foster parent, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the employee when the employee was a son or daughter).
- For purposes of military caregiver leave under FMLA, next of kin of a covered service member means the nearest blood relative other than the covered service member's spouse, parent, son, or daughter in the following order of priority: Blood relatives who have been granted legal custody of the covered service member by court decree or statutory provisions, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins unless the covered service member has specifically designated in writing another blood relative as his or her nearest blood relative for purposes of military caregiver leave under FMLA.
- Note: In-laws, grandparents, siblings, and other extended family members are NOT covered.

If an employee meets one of the above qualifying reasons, or for any absences lasting for more than three (3) consecutive business days, the employee may apply for FMLA.

An employee MUST apply for FMLA upon incurring ten (10) or more (consecutive and/or cumulative) days of leave/absence. An employee who is absent for six (6) – nine (9) days out of a consecutive (ten) 10, then has subsequent multiple-day period(s) of absence and who has not applied for FMLA is considered to be avoiding applying for a leave of absence in violation of this handbook.

Ten or more days of leave (sick leave, leave without pay, etc.) cumulative and/or consecutive days, not covered by FMLA, is considered excessive and may result in an attendance and performance issue.

Failure by the employee to provide supporting documentation for an absence may result in all absence time applying toward the exhaustion of the 60 days of FMLA. No employee will be allowed more than a total of 60 days, paid and/or unpaid, for leave that qualifies under FMLA, unless otherwise required by law. In the event an employee's spouse is also employed with Morgan County Schools and is eligible for FMLA leave, the total combined time allowed to both employees for the birth, placement of a child or the care of a child or parent will not exceed 60 days in a 12-month period unless a longer period is required by law. The 12-month period will be measured from the date leave is first used.

A "Request for Family and Medical Leave" form should be completed and submitted to the Human Resources Department along with medical certification and/or appropriate documentation certifying the qualifying need for FMLA. The complete FMLA application must be submitted thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the effective date of the leave when the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable. When the need for FMLA leave is not foreseeable, this form should be submitted within two (2) days of when the need for FMLA leave becomes known to the employee. Failure to provide written notice in the form of the FMLA application (including supporting documentation such as medical certification) within 15 days of the first absence could result in automatic denial of FMLA and possible adverse employment action.

Employees who are approved for a FMLA leave due to their own serious health condition will be required to present a written medical release from their healthcare provider stating that the employee is medically able to return to work. Failure to provide such information will prevent the employee from returning to work.

Employees who have a full-time job with the Morgan County School District and have a secondary job with the Morgan County School District (such as individuals working in the "After-School Enrichment Program") must take FMLA from their full-time job. They are required to do the following:

1. Submit documentation to the Human Resources
2. Show the Department that their medical provider has cleared them to work their secondary job with the Morgan County School District.
3. Notify their secondary job supervisor of their FMLA status.

If an employee exhausts the 60 days FMLA maximum and their FMLA 12-month period ends prior to the employee's return to work, the employee must work 30 consecutive (scheduled work) days prior to qualifying for a new FMLA year.

If an absence extends beyond the 60-day FMLA maximum for the FMLA year, the position may be posted and the employee may be replaced by a permanent employee. If the absence is related to the employee's own serious medical condition, the employee may qualify for Approved Extended Leave which enables the employee to continue their benefits. Upon release to return to work by the employee's treating physician, the employee may apply for reinstatement through the Human Resources Department. Certified employees who are unable to return to work after they have exhausted their FMLA leave may or may not be recommended for a contract the following school year.

### **Restrictions and/or Requests for Accommodations**

Employees are expected to perform the full duties of their job until medical documentation signed by a healthcare provider is submitted to the Human Resources Department.

The medical documentation listing the specific restrictions/request for accommodations described in detail, must be submitted to the Human Resources Department. The Human Resources Department will submit to the Assistant Superintendent for review to determine if work is available to reasonably accommodate.

- If there is no work available to reasonably accommodate, the employee may be placed on FMLA (not to exceed the 60 FMLA day maximum per FMLA year) as a means of reasonable accommodation.
- If the leave extends beyond the 60 FMLA day maximum, Approved Extended Leave (AEL) will be considered.

### **Paid Parental Leave**

The Board of Education shall make paid parental leave equally available to all eligible employees of the Board of Education under the following terms:

1. An employee of the Board of Education shall be eligible for paid parental leave for qualifying life events upon satisfying the following criteria:
  - a. The employee is classified as full-time by the District and is eligible to participate in the TRS (Teacher Retirement System of Georgia) or the PSERS (Public School Employees Retirement System); and
  - b. The employee has six continuous months of employment with the Board, regardless of whether he or she is eligible for paid or unpaid leave under federal law. An employee paid on an hourly basis must have worked a minimum of 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested paid parental leave date.
2. A qualifying life event means:
  - a. The birth of a child of an eligible employee;
  - b. The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
  - c. The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee.
3. The maximum amount of paid parental leave that may be taken by an eligible employee during a rolling 12 month period is 120 hours, regardless of the number of qualifying life events that occur during such period.
  - a. The rolling 12 month period shall be measured backward from the date an eligible employee first uses parental leave.
  - b. Parental leave may be taken as needed and may be taken in increments of less than eight hours. The smallest increment of parental leave that may be taken is 4(four) hours.
  - c. Any unused paid parental leave that remains 12 months after the qualifying event shall not carry over for future use.
  - d. Unused paid parental leave shall have no cash value at any time of the eligible employee's separation from employment with the Board of Education.
4. Paid parental leave under state law shall run concurrently with any leave provided under federal law.
5. Eligible employees requesting paid parental leave must submit the district's designated form to the Superintendent or designee at least 30 (thirty) calendar days in advance of the requested leave start date.
6. The Superintendent or designee shall develop paperwork needed to administer paid parental leave, which shall specify the documentation required to establish the existence of a qualifying life event



**Expected Absences**

The following absences are not counted as sick or personal leave absences:

1. Jury duty or response to a lawfully issued subpoena involving school-related matters, or in response to civic duty.
2. Military duty (within limits prescribed by Georgia law and Georgia Board of Education policy).
3. Professional leave.

**Special Circumstances for granting leave**

The Board of Education grants the superintendent the authority to review individual cases and act in the best interest of teachers and staff with special circumstances. Where the superintendent finds that special circumstances exist, the superintendent may grant a waiver of or modification of the leave policy. Should the superintendent grant a waiver of the leave policy or modify the leave policy in such circumstances, he/she will file a report with the Board of Education at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The report will include the special circumstances and why the decision was made to waive or modify the policy.

**FINANCE ADMINISTRATION****Staff Conflict of Interest**

Staff members cannot use their positions to influence students or patrons of the Morgan County Charter School System for personal gain. Selling items to students, parents or community members as a result of the influence we have in our roles as educators is prohibited. Reference BOE Policy GAG

**Employee Cafeteria Charges**

All employees are encouraged to eat lunch in the school cafeterias. All meals meet state and federal nutritional guidelines. School employees are allowed to charge lunches, but these charges must be paid off by the first day of each month in order to charge again for the next month. Each cafeteria manager has access to the amount each employee has charged and will let the school employee know the amount he/she owes when asked. Employees will not be able to charge additional meals until accrued charges are paid off. Employees will be able to pay for meals with cash until their overdue charges are paid in full. Any outstanding charges remaining after the school year ends will be deducted from the employee's June paycheck.

**Financial Record**

For any amount received over \$20.00, teachers will provide receipts to students and parents using school-designed forms or from subsidiary receipt books purchased by the school. All collections should be given to the bookkeeper intact. Teachers must obtain a receipt from the bookkeeper whenever they turn in money. School volunteers are not authorized to take collections or to issue receipts. Only employees designated and student treasurers may do this. Cash receipts should always equal the sum of money for deposit. Money collected is NOT to be used to cash checks or make change. Money should be turned in to the office daily. Employees should never hold money overnight.

**Garnishment**

Salaries of employees of the Morgan County Board of Education shall be subject to garnishments as covered by the laws regulating garnishments. However, employees are expected to handle their financial obligations properly and not get into a situation where creditors take garnishment action.

**Gifts to and from staff members**

Pupils, parents, and other patrons of the school district are discouraged from the presentation of gifts to school system employees. No funds shall be solicited from students to buy gifts for school employees.

**Travel Request**

The most recent travel instructions and forms are available through the system website [www.morgan.k12.ga.us](http://www.morgan.k12.ga.us) under the Finance tab and Travel and Mileage Forms. These forms and policies are updated based on current state reimbursement rates. A copy of the travel expense statement for employees that only have mileage reimbursement and a separate form for employees with lodging and meal reimbursement along with mileage. Along with the forms is an instruction document that gives detailed directions for completing the form. Detailed receipts must be submitted with all reimbursement requests. A copy of the Hotel/Motel Tax Exempt form is on

file at the office. All travel reimbursement request forms should be turned in within 30 days of the date of the travel. Reimbursements for travel submitted 60 days after the date of travel will be reimbursed through employees Payroll check and reduced by Federal and State taxes.

### **Solicitation of/by staff**

No fundraising or sales by organizations will be permitted to solicit funds or sell products to staff members during the school day or on the school campus without prior approval of the superintendent. Staff members are not permitted to solicit funds or to sell products or services to other staff members or to students. This is a violation of the Professional Standards Commission Code of Ethics and could result in action taken against the employee's certificate.

## **TECHNOLOGY USAGE**

### **Technology Safety for Employees and Students**

The Morgan County Charter School System (MCCSS) is committed to providing all students and employees with appropriate access to technology. Simultaneously, the MCCSS is, as always, extremely concerned with protecting the physical and psychological well-being of the children and students of Morgan County. This policy provides guidelines for the use of devices and the Internet in the MCCSS that seeks to achieve both of these goals.

The State of Georgia and the United States have promulgated laws governing the use of devices and related technology. The Georgia Computer Systems Protection Act specifically forbids various forms of computer misuse and abuse, and the U. S. copyright laws govern the duplication of computer programs. By signing the Morgan County Charter School System Computer Use/Internet Agreement and using the computing resources of the MCCSS, the user agrees to abide by the referenced Georgia law, any and all other relevant laws of the United States and the State of Georgia, and the following guidelines and regulations regarding the use of devices and the Internet promulgated by the MCCSS. The School Library Media Specialist has information on the provisions of Georgia and United States laws.

### **Employee Device Agreement**

All certified staff and paraprofessionals will be offered a teacher device. By accepting a district owned device, MCCSS Employees accept full responsibility for the replacement or repair cost of the device due to neglect or misuse. Replacements and/or repairs will be exclusively managed by Morgan County Charter School District. Devices are assigned to the individual staff member. It is the employee's responsibility to maintain control and possession of the device at all times. ANY damaged, lost or stolen devices must be reported immediately to the District Technology Department via the Helpdesk Ticket.

### **Privilege**

Any individual's use of the computing resources of the MCCSS is a privilege, and as such is conditional upon the individual's compliance with any and all state and federal laws, school regulations, and the exercise of good manners. Inappropriate use may result in cancellation of those privileges, and conduct otherwise in violation of MCCSS policies or regulations may also result in disciplinary proceedings. The MCCSS reserves the right to regulate any particular use of these computing resources.

The computing resources in the MCCSS shall be fully accessible for instructional use only during normal school hours. On all MCCSS devices, student educational activities and research take priority over all other applications.

A signed parental permission form is required prior to all first-time use of the Internet by students. The signature of a parent or guardian acknowledges that the parent or guardian is aware that use of the MCCSS computing resources is a privilege, that the parent or guardian is responsible for their child's access and usage, and that they understand some materials available on the Internet may be unsuitable for their child.

### **Use**

The Purpose of the MCCSS computing system is to support research and education. However, the resources of the MCCSS are limited, and use of the MCCSS computing resources for purposes other than research and education necessarily detracts from the ability of other users to benefit from the MCCSS computing system's intended purpose. The following guidelines constitute a demonstrative listing of unacceptable uses; however, these guidelines are not exhaustive, and the MCCSS reserves the right to apply any and all policies, including, but not limited to, those elsewhere listed in this document, to the conduct and activity of any student or

employee engaged in use of a MCCSS computing resource.

The system operators will have the discretion to suspend or terminate any student or employee's access to and use of the MCCSS computing system upon the breach of these terms and conditions by the user. Prior to a suspension or termination, or as soon after as is practicable, the system operator will inform the user of the suspected breach and give the user the opportunity to present an explanation. After this point any grievance will be handled as designated in The Morgan County Board of Education Policy Manual Section G, Policy GAE, Personnel Complaints and Grievances.

### **Technology Devices**

1. Neither students nor employees shall use MCCSS devices for commercial business or profit or for solicitations or purchases of any kind.
2. Neither students nor employees shall use MCCSS devices to play non-educational games without approval from Technology.
3. Neither students nor employees shall use any personal software in MCCSS devices without prior approval, nor shall any user deliberately access, remove, or copy any program or file on a network belonging to someone else without specific authorization.
4. Neither students nor employees shall add programs to the MCCSS devices, delete programs, copy programs, or tamper with existing programs in any way.
5. Neither students nor employees shall use any MCCSS devices or computer network in such a way that causes it to stop performing computer operations or disrupts the use of the network by others.

### **Internet**

1. Neither students nor employees shall use an Internet connection provided by MCCSS for any commercial business or profit or for solicitations or purchases of any kind.
2. Neither students nor employees shall engage in any conduct, including chat activities, which harass, libel, or slander another individual.
3. No students shall access, display or send any materials that are vulgar, threatening, or indecent.
4. Neither students nor employees may disguise or hide their identity, including changing their name on the system. Only the system operator may change a user name and account.
5. Neither students nor employees shall create "home pages" or directories without approval by the system operator.
6. Neither students nor employees shall use MCCSS computing resources to access, display, or send materials that are obscene or illegal.
7. Neither students nor employees shall use MCCSS computing resources to advertise any product or to engage in political lobbying or advertising.
8. Under absolutely no circumstances should students arrange to meet an individual they have contacted while utilizing the MCCSS computing resources, and students should notify their parent or guardian and the system operator immediately upon an attempt by any user to arrange to meet them or upon a contact from any user for an illicit or suspicious purpose on the MCCSS computing system.

### **Privacy**

In no event shall any student give out their full name, home address, phone number, or other personal information while using MCCSS computing resources; nor shall any student or employee give out information of this kind regarding any other person. Neither student nor employee shall give out his or her password to anyone, nor shall any student or employee use the account or password of any other MCCSS account holder.

All users should remember there is no guarantee or reasonable expectation of privacy in electronic mail. Additionally, the system operators have access to all electronic messages and may in the course of maintaining the system be required to exercise this access. Any messages relating to or in support of illegal activities should be reported to the authorities and may result in loss of MCCSS computing resource user privileges, as well as civil and criminal liability.

### **Security**

No user shall deliberately view, remove, or copy the files of another user or the file or software of the MCCSS without specific authorization to do so. The ability to access a file or program shall not be interpreted as permission to access a file or program. Any effort by a user to bypass a preventative mechanism, including violating or changing a password, would be considered an inappropriate use of a computing resource and may lead to revocation of user privileges, as well as additional disciplinary or criminal penalties.

**Vandalism**

No user shall undertake any malicious attempt to harm, modify, or destroy the data, materials, equipment, or software of another user or of the MCCSS. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of any computer virus. Any software not provided by the MCCSS must be reviewed by the system operator before it can be used on any school device. Vandalism will result in immediate cancellation of privileges, as well as additional disciplinary action when appropriate.

**Safety**

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was signed into law on December 21, 2000. The CIPA is federal legislation that requires public schools and libraries to implement and enforce a policy of Internet safety which includes measures to block or filter Internet access to certain visual depictions. In order to comply with the CIPA, the MCCSS has selected and installed Internet filtering software.

**Sanctions**

Violations of the Morgan County Charter School System Computer and Internet User Policy will be handled as specified under The Morgan County Board of Education Policy Manual, Section J, Policy JCDA, in cases of students, and under O.C.G.A. 20-2-940 through 20-2-947, including any local board policies implementing these sections, in the case of staff. Such sanctions may result in:

1. Revocation of the privilege of access to the MCCSS computing resources;
2. Disciplinary action as otherwise appropriate under existing MCCSS policies and procedures, up to and including expulsion for students and termination for employees;
3. Notification of appropriate law enforcement agencies.

**Disclaimer**

The MCCSS makes no warranties of any kind, either express or implied, for the online services it provides. All users must assume responsibilities for their own searches, as the system operators are unable to control the massive, unpredictable contents of a world-wide computer network. The MCCSS will not be responsible for any damages suffered while using the services, including, but not limited to, loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, service interruptions, and/or exposure to offensive or threatening material. As always, users are encouraged to maintain backup files of all information that is not easily replaced. The MCCSS specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through these services. Use of any information obtained through the Internet is undertaken at the sole risk of the user, as the Internet is fundamentally unregulated; and the information found on the Internet has not been verified for accuracy. The MCCSS denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. All staff and students must complete a help desk request form to acquire about any hardware or software purchase or freeware

MCCSS provides employees and students with access to electronic communication tools for the purpose of promoting and supporting the mission, goals, and objectives of the school system. The policy and regulation on email, which governs email usage, content, and retention applies to full-time employees, part-time employees, contractors, interns, consultants, students and any other account holders of the system. Those who choose to use BYOD, the company isn't responsible for any damage, data corruption, software issue or other problems associated with the work-related use of a personal device.

These procedures are created to insure the maximization of the benefits of electronic communication and minimize potential liability to MCCSS and individuals. It is intended to address issues unique to MCCSS email communication and to bring clarity in regards to other policies and legal implications. Access to email is a privilege that carries certain responsibilities. Employees and students are expected to be ethical and responsible in their use and comply with local, state, and federal regulations, to include but not limited to the Copyright Act, Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, Computer Security Act, CIPA, FERPA, and HIPPA. Employees of the school system are strongly discouraged from using their personal email account for conducting official work. Any electronic devices storing MCCSS electronic mail is subject to inspection by the MCCSS, eDiscovery and possible equipment confiscation. Note: This proscription excludes web access to MCCSS email as all messages are kept on a central server as provided in this regulation.

**Email Usage**

Email is provided for the purpose of enhancing communication in day-to-day activities for MCCSS business and instructional use. It should never be used for commercial activities, profit making, chain letters, political or religious causes, solicit memberships, promote meetings or causes unrelated to supporting the vision, mission, goals, or objectives of MCCSS. Such uses are a violation of policy with regard to employee time commitments

and use of MCCSS equipment. All emails are subject to monitoring and public disclosure. Refer to the privacy clause for additional information. Any person using a portable email device, smartphone, PDA, laptop or the like shall immediately report the loss, theft or disappearance of such device to the technology helpdesk.

### **Email Content**

Email messages are temporary communications which are non-vital and can be discarded routinely. However, depending on the content of the email, it may fall under official records rules. Employees have the same responsibility for email messages as they do for paper records, and must distinguish between record and non-record information. The MCCSS prohibits employees' from writing and sending Email that contains defamatory, fraudulent, sexually explicit, vulgar, or harassing messages, or to engage in any illegal or wrongful conduct. Furthermore, the manipulation of email, titles, names, or information is prohibited.

Unless encrypted, under no circumstances is the Email system to be used to transmit confidential information. All emails that contain encrypted confidential information shall be flagged/marked as confidential. For example, a student's full name, social security number, medical information, and all IEPs are considered confidential.

### **Email Privacy**

Email messages created using the MCCSS email system are property of MCCSS and are not to be considered private. MCCSS reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review, and store at any time and without notice any and all emails. In addition, MCCSS reserves the right to disclose emails, attachments, and images to the courts, law enforcement, and other third parties without the employee's or student's consent.

Employees and students should assume that anyone can read what is sent and received and that permanent copies will be kept in accordance to the retention guidelines listed below. Account holders shall be held accountable for everything stated and therefore should not post anything that he/she does not want to see revealed to the public.

### **Email Retention**

The email system is a communication tool and not a storage mechanism. Senders and receivers are responsible for ensuring proper retention or disposal of emails sent within and outside MCCSS. Retention or disposition of email messages shall be related to the information they contain or the purpose they serve. Record emails shall follow the statutory retention period from local, state, or federal requirements.

When an employee leaves the system Human Resources shall notify the SIS Coordinator. The employee's email account shall be placed on hold for a period of 30 days. The employee's manager/supervisor can request access to the former employee's email during this time period to review messages for required retention. After the 30-day period, all emails, folders, and attachments shall be deleted.

### **Transitory Email**

These are emails that have short-term, immediate, or no value, and that you won't need in the future. The decision on what is or is not a transitory record is determined by the sender or receiver. If in doubt, file the record. Listed below are some examples of transitory emails:

- Publications sent through email such as newsletters, flyers, events, web links from organizations
- Draft documents or duplicate documents
- Messages not related to MCCSS business or instruction

### **EDiscovery**

Upon the invocation of an EDiscovery request, a litigation hold shall be executed on all items requested, a mandatory meet and confer meeting shall be held to clarify the scope of the information being requested and the format in which it will be produced. All information agreed upon, regardless of retention requirements, shall be kept until the litigation hold is released.

### **Violations**

Anyone that has suspected violations of this policy shall report it to the Director of Technology or designee. All hard copies of any violation will need to be forwarded to the Director of Technology or designee for review. An investigation shall be conducted and appropriate action.

### **Email quotes, background, animated images and signatures**

When adding quotes, background screens, or images keep in mind the recipients of your email. Quotes should not be of political or religious nature. They should be aligned with the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of MCCSS. Background screens should not distract from the intended message. They should be plain and allow the message to be read easily. Animated images should be appropriate for a school environment and not be offensive to anyone.

**Confidentiality notice**

The following confidentiality notice can be attached as part of a signature file on all emails:

*The information and any attachments in this email are proprietary and strictly confidential. It is intended solely for the use of the individual or entity named above. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient or agent, you are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, distributing, or taking of any action based on the contents is strictly prohibited and protected by the law governing records confidentiality. If you received this communication in error, please notify the sender and delete this communication.*

**GEORGIA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMISSION- CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS**
**Code of Ethics for Educators**

The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards that represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The code defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction and provides guidance for protecting the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators, and assuring the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession. Please reference the Commission website at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) for the most current version of the Code of Ethics (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01).

505-6-.01 The Code of Ethics for Educations- Effective January 1, 2022

**Definitions**

- a) "Breach of contract" occurs when an educator fails to honor a signed contract for employment with a school/school system by resigning in a manner that does not meet the guidelines established by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission
- b) "Certificate" refers to any teaching, service, or leadership certificate, license, or permit issued by authority of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
- c) "Child endangerment" occurs when an educator disregards a substantial and/or unjustifiable risk of bodily harm to the student.
- d) "Educator" is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, "educator" also refers to paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers. 31
- e) "Student" is any individual enrolled in the state's public or private schools from preschool through grade 12 or any individual under the age of 18. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, the enrollment period for a graduating student ends on August 31 of the school year of graduation.
- f) "Complaint" is any written and signed statement from a local board, the state board, or one or more individual residents of this state filed with the Professional Standards Commission alleging that an educator has breached one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators. A "complaint" will be deemed a request to investigate.
- g) "Revocation" is the invalidation of any certificate held by the educator.
- h) "Denial" is the refusal to grant initial certification to an applicant for a certificate.
- i) "Suspension" is the temporary invalidation of any certificate for a period of time specified by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.
- j) "Reprimand" admonishes the certificate holder for his or her conduct. The reprimand cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
- k) "Warning" warns the certificate holder that his or her conduct is unethical. The warning cautions that further unethical conduct will lead to a more severe action.
- l) "Monitoring" is the quarterly appraisal of the educator's conduct by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission through contact with the educator and his or her employer. As a condition of monitoring, an educator may be required to submit a criminal background check (GCIC). The Commission specifies the length of the monitoring period.
- m) "No Probable Cause" is a determination by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission that, after a preliminary investigation, either no further action need be taken or no cause exists to recommend disciplinary

action.

(n) “Inappropriate” is conduct or communication not suitable for an educator to have with a student. It goes beyond the bounds of an educator-student relationship.

(o) “Physical abuse” is physical interaction resulting in a reported or visible bruise or injury to the student.

### Standards

1. **Legal Compliance** - An educator shall abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to the commission or conviction of a felony or of any crime involving moral turpitude; of any other criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, trafficking, sale, or possession of a controlled substance or marijuana as provided for in Chapter 13 of Title 16; or of any other sexual offense as provided for in Code Section 16-6-1 through 16-6-17, 16-6-20, 16-6-22.2, or 16-12-100; or any other laws applicable to the profession. As used herein, conviction includes a finding or verdict of guilty, or a plea of nolo contendere, regardless of whether an appeal of the conviction has been sought; a situation where first offender treatment without adjudication of guilt pursuant to the charge was granted; and a situation where an adjudication of guilt or sentence was otherwise withheld or not entered on the charge or the charge was otherwise disposed of in a similar manner in any jurisdiction.
2. **Conduct with Students** - An educator shall always maintain a professional relationship with all students, both in and outside the classroom. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
  - committing any act of child abuse, including physical and verbal abuse;
  - committing any act of cruelty to children or any act of child endangerment;
  - committing any sexual act with a student or soliciting such from a student;
  - engaging in or permitting harassment of or misconduct toward a student that would violate a state or federal law;
  - soliciting, encouraging, or consummating an inappropriate written, verbal, electronic, or physical relationship with a student;
  - furnishing tobacco, alcohol, or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student; or
  - failing to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by students under the educator's supervision (including but not limited to at the educator's residence or any other private setting).
3. **Alcohol or Drugs** - An educator shall refrain from the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs during the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
  - being on school or Local Unit of Administration (LUA)/school district premises or at a school or a LUA/school district-related activity while under the influence of, possessing, using, or consuming illegal or unauthorized drugs; and
  - being on school or LUA/school district premises or at a school-related activity involving students while under the influence of, possessing, or consuming alcohol. A school-related activity includes, but is not limited to, any activity sponsored by the school or school system (booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations, or any activity designed to enhance the school curriculum i.e. Foreign Language trips, etc.).
  - (i) For the purposes of this standard, an educator shall be considered “under the influence” if the educator exhibits one or more of the following indicators, including but not limited to: slurred speech, 505-6-.01 Page 3 enlarged pupils, bloodshot eyes, general personality changes, lack of physical coordination, poor motor skills, memory problems, concentration problems, etc.
4. **Honesty** - An educator shall exemplify honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to, falsifying, misrepresenting, or omitting:

- professional qualifications, criminal history, college or staff development credit and/or degrees, academic award, and employment history;
  - information submitted to federal, state, local school districts and other governmental agencies;
  - information regarding the evaluation of students and/or personnel;
  - reasons for absences or leaves;
  - information submitted in the course of an official inquiry/investigation; and
  - information submitted in the course of professional practice.
5. **Public Funds and Property**- An educator entrusted with public funds and property shall honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- misusing public or school-related funds;
  - failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
  - submitting fraudulent requests or documentation for reimbursement of expenses or for pay (including fraudulent or purchased degrees, documents, or coursework);
  - co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
  - using school or school district property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee.
6. **Remunerative Conduct** - An educator shall maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- soliciting students or parents of students, or school or LUA/school district personnel, to purchase equipment, supplies, or services from the educator or to participate in activities that financially benefit the educator unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee;
  - accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest;
  - tutoring students assigned to the educator for remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee; and
  - coaching, instructing, promoting athletic camps, summer leagues, etc. that involves students in an educator's school system and from whom the educator receives remuneration unless approved by the local board of education/governing board or authorized designee. These types of activities must be in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Association.
7. **Confidential Information** - An educator shall comply with state and federal laws and state school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and personnel records, standardized test material and other information. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results unless disclosure is required or permitted by law;
  - sharing of confidential information restricted by state or federal law;



- violation of confidentiality agreements related to standardized testing including copying or
  - teaching identified test items, publishing or distributing test items or answers, discussing test items, violating local school system or state directions for the use of tests or test items, etc.; and
  - Violation of other confidentiality agreements required by state or local policy.
8. **Required Reports** - An educator shall file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- failure to report all requested information on documents required by the Commission when applying for or renewing any certificate with the Commission;
  - failure to make a required report of a violation of one or more standards of the Code of Ethics for educators of which they have personal knowledge as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner; and
  - failure to make a required report of any violation of state or federal law as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner. These reports include but are not limited to: murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault, aggravated battery, kidnapping, any sexual offense, and any sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving a controlled substance and any abuse of a child if an educator has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.
9. **Professional Conduct** - An educator shall demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards and preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to a resignation that would equate to a breach of contract; any conduct that impairs and/or diminishes the certificate holder's ability to function professionally in his or her employment position; or behavior or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students.
10. **Testing** - An educator shall administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to:
- committing any act that breaches Test Security; and
  - compromising the integrity of the assessment.

### Reporting

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

### Disciplinary Action

- a) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is authorized to suspend, revoke, or deny certificates, to issue a reprimand or warning, or to monitor the educator's conduct and performance after an investigation is held and notice and opportunity for a hearing are provided to the certificate holder. Any of the following grounds shall be considered cause for disciplinary action against the holder of a certificate:
  1. unethical conduct as outlined in The Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);

2. disciplinary action against a certificate on grounds consistent with those specified in the Code of Ethics for Educators, Standards 1-10 (GaPSC Rule 505-6-.01);
  3. order from a court of competent jurisdiction or a request from the Department of Human Resources that the certificate should be suspended or the application for certification should be denied for non-payment of child support (O.C.G.A. §19-6-28.1 and §19-11-9.3);
  4. notification from the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation that the educator is in default and not in satisfactory repayment status on a student loan guaranteed by the Georgia Higher Education Assistance Corporation (O.C.G.A. §20- 3-295);
  5. suspension or revocation of any professional license or certificate;
  6. violation of any other laws and rules applicable to the profession (O.C.G.A. §16-13-111); and
  7. any other good and sufficient cause that renders an educator unfit for employment as an educator.
- b) An individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended may not serve as a volunteer or be employed as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or in any other position during the period of his or her revocation, suspension or denial for a violation of The Code of Ethics. The superintendent and the educator designated by the superintendent/Local Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that an individual whose certificate has been revoked, denied, or suspended is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district. Both the superintendent and the superintendent's designee must hold GaPSC certification. Should the superintendent's certificate be revoked, suspended, or denied, the Board of Education shall be responsible for assuring that the superintendent whose certificate has been revoked, suspended, or denied is not employed or serving in any capacity in their district.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **Annual Compliance Training**

Morgan County Charter School System (MCCSS) utilizes training modules available on the Compliance Director website to provide state-mandated training for school system employees. This training is provided to all new employees, volunteers, mentors and contractors. Also, this training is required annually at the beginning of the school year for employees only.

### **Asbestos Plan**

The Morgan County Board of Education has a state-approved asbestos plan. A copy of this plan is available in the Transportation/Facilities building.

### **Body Fluids**

It is extremely important that all employees receive direction in clean-up procedures relating to body fluids. Annual training will be provided to all employees prior to the beginning of each school year. No employee should attempt to clean up any body fluid in any manner other than as instructed by the school system.

### **Bullying**

Teachers and staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, harassment, and intimidation to the school principal or designee. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus to and from school or a school-sponsored activity and during a school-sponsored activity.

### **Cell Phone Use**

Teachers are highly discouraged not to use personal cell phones for personal use and cell phone ringers/alerts should be turned off during instructional periods in classrooms unless it is an emergency. All staff members are highly discouraged to limit use of personal cell phones for personal use during the business day.

### **Chain of Command**

The school 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 local school level will follow the chain of command established by their principal. The principal is directly responsible to his or her Assistant Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendents are directly responsible to the Superintendent.

### **Child Abuse**

Georgia law, as well as Morgan County Board of Education policy, includes mandated procedures for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate officials. Employees are required to follow these procedures. For more information on the reporting of child abuse, contact your School Counselor, the principal or principal's designee.

If a Morgan County School employee has reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred involving a person who attends to any child as an employee or volunteer of the school, the employee must report their suspicion of abuse to the Division of Family and Children Services and their school Principal or the Principal's designee. Reports of suspected child abuse shall be made **immediately**, but not more than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe that suspected child abuse has occurred. Reports may be made orally, by telephone or other oral communication, or a written report may be made by electronic submission or facsimile to the Department of Family and Children Services and to the school Principal or the Principal's designee. Copies of reports are to be forwarded to the School Social Worker immediately. School system personnel should not contact the child's family or any other persons to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. It is NOT the duty of the employee to prove that a child has been abused or neglected or to determine if the child needs protection.

For additional information, please see local board policy, JGI.

### **Communication Protocol**

The Morgan County Charter School System values its relationship with the local media and communicates on a weekly basis with print/radio reporters and photographers. All employees are to adhere to the established Communication Protocol:

1. All articles to be published in the newspapers submitted by the Central Office are to be reviewed by the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support and Community Relations before submission.
2. All articles to be published in the newspapers submitted by the schools must be vetted and approved by the school principal before submission. Each article also needs to be sent to the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support and Community Relations so that the Central Office can be kept apprised of all school activities.
3. All requests for information from the public that are made by telephone or in writing at the Central Office need to be handled by the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support and Community Relations.
4. All Open Records requests will be forwarded to the Superintendent or his Executive Assistant.
5. Each school will ensure that all pertinent school-related activities will be placed on the community calendar on the website in a timely manner.

### **Complaints**

Please refer to local board policy GAE (B), Discrimination Complaints, for detailed procedures relating to employee complaints alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, or genetic information.

Please refer to Morgan County Board of Education policy GAE, Complaints, for detailed procedures relating to any claim by any employee certified by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission who is affected in his or her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of this school system or with which the school system is required to comply.

### **Confidentiality**

Much of what personnel may see or hear in schools is confidential by law. Any information concerning student achievement and behavior is confidential. The confidentiality rights of students are protected through state and federal regulations, and employees become liable for protecting students' rights. Confidential information regarding students or staff is not to be discussed at any time. A breach of this confidentiality can result in termination of employment.

### **Criminal Background Check Repeat**

All employees must submit to a fingerprint and criminal background check. It is the policy of the Board that all classified employees obtain a repeat criminal records check through the GCIC every 5th year of employment. The Human Resources Department will provide instructions to employees for a repeat criminal records check. Employees are not charged a fee for repeat records check.

### **Criminal Chargers**

As a condition of continued employment, each employee must notify the Board or its designee of any immediate arrest. Further, employees are required to immediately disclose any convictions. The Superintendent shall make an immediate written report to the Board of Education upon receiving information that a school system employee has committed certain specifically identified crimes. These crimes include murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated assault and/or battery, any sexual offense, including sexual exploitation of a minor, any offense involving marijuana or a controlled substance, any offense involving theft, and unlawfully operating a motor vehicle after being declared a habitual violator. If it is determined that an investigation is warranted, the Professional Standards Commission will be notified. The Superintendent or designee is required to make a written administrative referral to the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and will inform the Board of Education if a written complaint from any school employee or parent of a child is received by the Superintendent contending that any "school system educator employed by the local unit of administration" has committed any one of the following crimes:

1. Violent crimes such as murder, manslaughter and kidnapping.
2. Sexual crimes such as rape and sexual exploitation of a minor.
3. Drug-related offenses.
4. Any offense involving theft.
5. Unlawfully operating a motor vehicle after being declared a habitual violator.

**Any school employee who is charged with a violation of any criminal law, other than a minor traffic offense which does not involve a criminal arrest, must inform the Human Resources Department of the criminal charge and/or criminal arrest the next day subsequent to the employee's criminal charge and/or criminal arrest. Failure to timely report criminal charges and/or criminal arrests may result in adverse employment actions.**

### **Crisis Counseling**

In the event of a crisis situation at a school, the School Social worker will implement a plan for counseling support for students and staff members affected by the crisis. Contact Social worker at 706-752-4600 for additional information.

### **Dress Code**

Staff members are expected to be professional in the mode of dress and hairstyle which should be appropriate for the teaching profession. Warranted or not, the public's first impression of our schools is frequently based on the professional dress of staff. Professional dress is also viewed by the public as a reflection of the level of pride the employee takes in his/her work. Good judgment goes a long way and is expected of all employees.

Teachers are expected to follow the normal dress code during pre- and post-planning whenever they are scheduled to meet with parents, even if it means bringing a change of clothes to work during those times.

When a principal or supervisor determines that any manner of dress is unbecoming to the role assigned to the employee, that administrator is to meet with the employee and explain that his or her dress does not meet guidelines and should be corrected immediately. Failure of the employees to heed the warning and abide by the guidelines may result in disciplinary actions. The supervisor's judgment as to the appropriateness of hair or dress will prevail.

Situational exceptions may occur. Teachers who are assigned to teach physical education are expected to dress appropriately for those activities. Should they teach regular classes as well, they are expected to change into regular attire. Lab coats, medical "scrubs," and such garments are allowed in teaching environments such as science labs and art classes.

Occasionally campuses will observe Game Days/Spirit Days and special occasions such as teacher contract days when the dress will be more casual and parent meetings are not scheduled. Each school can make the determination as to how much they wish to relax the appearance guidelines on those infrequent occasions. This does not imply that every Friday will be “dress-down” day, nor does it imply that all guidelines will be eliminated.

Field trips to outdoor facilities are another occasion when guidelines would need to be relaxed to suit the situation. Principals can provide direction for those events, as well.

Some job assignments such as bus drivers also need special considerations. It is expected that they may wear blue denim jeans and regular tee shirts. Because of temperature extremes on school buses, drivers are permitted to wear walking shorts that extend at least 1” below the fingertips.

### **Emergency School Closing**

Under emergency situations created by extreme weather or other conditions, it may become necessary to close schools. The superintendent or designated representative will make the decision to close schools or to adjust schedules. The decision will be made as early as possible and will be announced on as many local radio stations as possible. Television stations in Atlanta will also be notified with the hope that they will air the announcement promptly. Sometimes it may be feasible to begin school one or two hours late. In this event the same amount of time may have to be added to the end of the school day in order to comply with state law. All days missed will have to be made up by teachers in order to meet the 190 working day requirement of their contracts.

### **Emergency Management Plan/Emergency Drill**

The Georgia Emergency Management Agency reviews and approves the school system’s comprehensive School Safety Plan and each school’s Emergency Management Plan. All school personnel have access to an Emergency Ready Reference, which is a guide for responding to various types of emergencies. Fire/evacuation drills are held on a monthly basis, and drills for severe weather, lockdown of the school, and bus evacuation will be held at least once each year. For additional information regarding school safety, contact your principal/ supervisor or the Student Conduct and Safety Department.

### **Facilities Modification**

Enter work requests from the following location: <https://morgancounty.schoolobjects.com/forms/>  
Work requests should ONLY be used to request existing facilities maintenance, NOT technology, construction, new items, or transportation needs.

### **Name and/or Address Change**

Each employee has the responsibility to keep the Human Resources Department informed of his/her current mailing address and telephone number. To change a name on personnel records, it is necessary for the employee to bring a copy of the new social security card showing the new name to the Human Resources Department. Name changes must be made through the Professional Standards Commission, as well, on all teaching credentials.

### **Parking**

School system employees, students, and visitors must park vehicles in parking spaces provided. Parking on the grass, ball fields, sidewalks, or other areas that are not designated as parking spaces is prohibited. This requirement is necessary for the safety of everyone, to maintain access for ingress and egress of emergency vehicles, to maintain access to handicap facilities, to be in compliance of the Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA), and to prevent damage to landscaped areas of the school system facilities.

### **Partners in Education (PIE)**

Partners in Education (PIE) is a voluntary relationship between local businesses and community organizations who partner with the school system. The goal of the program is to meet the educational needs of children by enhancing school programs and providing students with a real world perspective in the subjects they study in school. Business-sponsored activities such as tours, displays at schools, speakers and special events assist students in applying what they learn to everyday life experiences. Each school is represented on the Partners in Education committee, which meets regularly throughout the year.

**Personal property at school**

Employees who bring personal items, such as books, coffee pots, computers, lamps, etc. to school need to be aware that such items are not covered by the school system's insurance policy. Any personal items damaged, lost or stolen as a result of fire, severe weather, theft or other catastrophe are not eligible for replacement or reimbursement under the system insurance coverage. Employees should take this into consideration when bringing personal items to school or to the office.

**Playground safety inspections**

Employees play a part in ensuring schools, their environments, and their playgrounds are constructed and maintained to protect health, safety, and the welfare of students, school employees, and the general public. Playgrounds are inspected to ensure safe play environments for our students.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Each student in the Morgan County Public Schools shall be afforded the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America during each school day. The principal of each school shall schedule the time and manner for recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Each teacher shall be informed of this policy and shall adhere to it. No student or staff person shall be coerced to participate.

**Public Relations**

Establishing and maintaining good will toward the school system requires a concerted effort by the entire staff. All personnel share the responsibility of keeping the community informed, involved, and interested in the activities of the local school system. A public that is aware of its role in the educational process will be a more supportive public. In our efforts to generate favorable public opinion, our most important ambassadors are teachers and other school employees who work with our children each day. All system employees are encouraged to participate in the community and to demonstrate by their words, actions and attitudes the ideals proclaimed and promoted by the Morgan County Board of Education.

**Scholarship programs for Teachers and Paraprofessionals**

For more information, contact the Georgia Professional Standards Commission ([www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com)) and/or the Georgia Student Finance Commission ([www.gsfc.org](http://www.gsfc.org)).

**Sexual Harassment**

All staff members are entitled to a work environment free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Among behavior that might be considered sexual harassment is behavior: (1) which is not welcome, (2) which is personally offensive, (3) which debilitates morale, and (4) which therefore interferes with work effectiveness.

Offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic or degrading verbal comments about an individual or his/her appearance, the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, or any offensive or abusive verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is strictly prohibited. No individual shall threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that a staff member's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the staff member's employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts, or any other condition of employment or career development.

Any employee who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment should promptly report the harassment to the principal or supervisor. Please refer to local board policy GAEB, Harassment.

**Social Media**

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying yourself as a Morgan County Charter School System employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work as an employee of the Morgan County Charter School System and the mission of the Morgan County Charter School System. Please use professional discernment.

**Student Allegations of Employee Misconduct**

Instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or other school employee toward a student should be reported to the principal or the Human Resources Department. As authorized by Georgia Law, if it is determined the student deliberately falsified or misrepresented information alleging employee misconduct, the student will be subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion.

**Student Support Programs**

The Morgan County Charter School System offers a wide array of services to support students through local, state, and federally-funded programs, such as the Early Intervention Program, Remedial Education Program, Early Intervening Services, Section 504, Title programs, Program for the Gifted, Special Education, Response to Intervention, School Social Work, School Psychology, Counseling Program, School Nurse Program, CrossRoads Alternative Education Program, School Nutrition Program, English Language Learners Program, and the Early Learning Program. Contact the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support and Community Relations for information about any of these programs.

**Teacher/Staff Advisory Committee**

The Teacher of the Year, along with three other teachers and one other staff member from each school, a representative from the bus drivers, custodians, central office and the School Nutrition Program will serve a one-year term on the Superintendent's Teacher/Staff Advisory Committee (TSAC). TSAC will meet at least quarterly with the Superintendent to receive updates and provide input on school system issues. Minutes of each meeting will be kept and shared with each member, who will, in turn, share with his/her school.

**Tobacco Use**

The use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or other vaping devices by employees is strictly prohibited at all times on any school campus, at any BOE facility, and in any school vehicle. The prohibition of the use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or other vaping devices by employees extends beyond school hours and beyond school campuses when employees are instructing or supervising students or when students are being transported to and from school activities. Supervision includes coaching, directing fine arts practice and performances, acting as a sponsor or advisor of a school club or organization, driving a bus and similar roles. "Use of tobacco" includes smoking and smokeless products.