Sweetwater City Schools
P.O. Box 231
220 S. Clark St.
Sweetwater, TN 37874
423-337-7051

This Employee Handbook has been prepared to assist employees of the Sweetwater City School System. It contains a variety of topics and information that should prove beneficial to employees. This document is only one resource, an overview of the information an employee might need, and is in no way intended to be a complete source of information. It is recommended that employees also familiarize themselves with the Policies of the Sweetwater Board of Education, the Tennessee Minimum Rules and Regulations, the Tennessee Code Annotated, and the Memorandum of Agreement between the Board of Education and the Sweetwater Education Association.

The contents of this handbook are presented as a matter of information only. The plans, policies and procedures described are not conditions of employment. To preserve the ability of the Sweetwater City Schools to meet its needs under changing circumstances, the school system reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate, or change any or all plans, policies, procedures, practices, and statements, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice. Such changes shall be effective immediately upon approval by management unless otherwise stated.

The language that appears in this handbook is not intended to create, nor is it to be construed, as a contract, express or implied, between the Sweetwater City Schools and any one or all its employees, or as a guarantee of employment for any specific duration.

Any inconsistencies between this handbook and other subsequently issued employment plans or documents will be controlled by the terms and conditions of such other employment documents. This handbook supersedes all previous handbooks and management memos that may have been issued on the subjects contained therein.

Sweetwater City Schools Administration Building
220 S. Clark St.
Sweetwater, TN 37874

Contacts

Rodney Boruff, Director of Schools	**rodney.boruff@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Dr. Jason Vance, Assistant Director, Supervisor of Instruction (7-12)	**jason.vance@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Dr. Shane Johnston, Transportation Supervisor	**shane.johnston@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Mardee Miller, Supervisor of Special Populations and Elementary Learning	**mardee.miller@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Dr. Paul Kirkland, CTE Director, Federal Programs, Grant Writer	**paul.kirkland@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Janet Collins, Finance Director	**janet.collins@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Holly Harrison, Human Resources, Coordinated School Health	**holly.harrison@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Laura Barnes, Accts. Payable, Benefits, SiestaOperations, Payroll	**laura.barnes@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Danielle Gross, Admin. Assistant School Board Secretary	**danielle.gross@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Tiffany Vestal, Student Information System/ Attendance Director	**tiffany.vestal@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Tuesday Stallcup, Food Services Supervisor	**tuesday.stallcup@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
David Underwood, Maintenance Supervisor	**david.underwood@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Jennifer Davis, Social Worker, Coordinated Health	**jennifer.davis@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Larry Arwood, Tech Supervisor	**larry.arwood@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Mark Purdy, Website Manager	**mark.purdy@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**
Kimberly Cothran , School Psychologist	**kimberly.cothran@scstn.net**	**423-337-7051**

*Listed below are contacts for specific information that cannot be obtained at the school office. For **non-emergency information**, we ask that you contact the individuals listed below **by email**.*

Finance Director	Janet Collins/Rodney Boruff
Certification/Licensing/Highly Qualified Status	Tiffany Vestal/Rodney Boruff
Federal Programs	Mardee Miller/Dr. Jason Vance/Dr.Paul Kirkland
Insurance (Health, Dental, Vision)	Laura Barnes
Payroll, Payroll Deductions, Direct Deposit	Laura Barnes
Workers' Compensation / FMLA	Holly Harrison
Transportation	Dr. Shane Johnston
Retirement	Janet Collins
HR/CSH	Holly Harrison/Jennifer Davis
Professional Development	Dr.Jason Vance/Rodney Boruff
Purchase Orders	Laura Barnes
Sexual Harassment *Complaints*	Wayne Key
Special Education	Jessica Leslie
School Psychologist	Kimberly Cothran
Teacher Evaluation	Dr. Jason Vance/Rodney Boruff
Technology Repairs (by electronic work order)	Larry Arwood
Title VI, Title IX Complaints, 504 Complaints	Mardee Miller

School Safety	Wayne Key
Volunteer Pre K	Heather Henry
Testing Coordinator	Dr. Paul Kirkland
Truancy/Chronic Absenteeism	Kathy Allen

School Directory

Sweetwater Primary School

Grades Preschool – 2nd
500 Highway 322 E
Sweetwater, TN 37874

Tonya Wallis, Principal

Heather Henry, Assistant Principal

423-351-7004
423-351-7089 (fax)

Brandon Cansler, School Resource Officer
423-351-7003

Grades 3 & 4
301 Broad Street
Sweetwater, TN 37874

Sweetwater Elementary School
Alice Tyler, Principal

423-337-7062
423-337-7609

Jalen Smith, School Resource Officer
423-337-7062

Grades 5 & 6
135 Starrett Street
Sweetwater, TN 37874

Brown Intermediate School
Traci Kile, Principal

423-337-5905
423-337-0791

James Willett, School Resource Officer
423-337-5905

Grades 7 & 8
1013 Cannon Avenue
Sweetwater, TN 37874

Sweetwater Junior High School
Nicki Nile, Principal

Kelli Hester, Assistant Principal

423-337-7336
423-337-7360 (fax)

Gerran Turpeinen, School Resource Officer
423-337-7336

Grades 9-12
414 S High Street
Sweetwater, TN 37874

Sweetwater High School
Kim Vineyard, Principal

Caleb Norwood, Assistant Principal
Felicia Gaston, Freshman Academy Admin.

423-337-7881
423-337-0685

Adam Dowell, School Resource Officer
Danny Poe

Board of Education

Jon Campbell, Chairperson
Patrick Gaines, Vice-Chairperson
Jessica Hall
Kenzie Lovingood
John Fox
Alan Richeson, City Representative

The Board of Education holds its regular meetings at 6:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month. Location: Sweetwater City Schools Administration Building at 220 S. Clark Street.

PAYROLL

Employees are paid on the 20th of each month unless the 20th falls on a weekend or holiday, at which time the employee will be paid on the last working day before the 20th. All employees are paid via direct deposit to their bank of preference.

Employees who work less than a 12-month contract may choose to be paid in 10 or 12 monthly installments. This decision is made annually at the time the employment contract is signed and is binding for one year. Direct deposits (both checks - #11 & #12) are credited to their respective bank account during the last two working days of June.

Certain items may be deducted if an employee chooses: state plans medical insurance, dental insurance, certain other insurances and annuities, United Way contributions, and Education Foundation contributions. Employees must make a written request by September 1 of each year of any changes in payroll deductions. Changes before September 1 of the following year can only be made for emergency or hardship situations and with approval by the Director of Schools. ALL choices in deductions are binding for an entire year.

COMPLETION OF TIMESHEETS (HOURLY EMPLOYEES)

The responsibility lies with each hourly employee as well as part-time certified employees to clock in and out using the Siesta program. The computer-generated timesheet must be signed monthly before a payroll check can be issued. Any errors should be corrected before turning them into the payroll department.

Pay periods are scheduled for the 20th of each month. The timesheets are to be turned in to the Central Office by 4:00 p.m. on the 11th of the month **(payroll cut-off date).** Failure to have timesheets turned in by the cut-off date may result in no payroll check until the next pay period.

All hourly employees must clock themselves in and out each day at a time that is no more than 5 minutes before their scheduled start time and no more than 5 minutes after their scheduled ending time. An employee absent for more than one hour of any given workday must take a minimum of one-half day of sick leave, personal leave, or leave without pay. Absences of less than one hour must be approved by the principal and will not count against the employee's sick leave until a total of one full workday of hours is accumulated.

BENEFITS

The following benefits are also available for employees of the Sweetwater City Schools who work 30 or more hours per week:

1. Personal health insurance (employee/system co-pay)
2. Family health insurance (employee/system co-pay)
3. Life insurance - $20,000 (at no cost to the employee)
4. Liability coverage (paid by the board)
5. Dental insurance (available at employee expense)
6. Vision insurance (available at employee expense)
7. Workers' Compensation coverage
8. Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (5% payroll deduction **plus** system contribution) Support staff is not eligible for enrollment in TCRS until after six months of employment.
9. Section 125 Cafeteria Plan – Employees may redirect certain payroll deductions to reduce taxes. The plan has three parts (insurance premiums, out-of-pocket expenses, and dependent care expenses).

   Insurance premiums - premium conversion allows employees to pay for certain employer-sponsored insurance premiums with pre-tax dollars. Example: health, dental, cancer, accident, accidental death, and dismemberment insurance premiums can all be deducted from your paycheck before taxes if the policies meet certain criteria.

   Medical flexible spending account (out-of-pocket expenses) – this allows employees to pay for ***qualifying*** medical expenses on a pre-tax basis. Expenses can come from the following areas: family medical deductibles or co-pays, eye care expenses, prescription drugs, and family dental expenses. Employees may exempt medical expenses for themselves, their spouse, and all dependents you list on your federal tax return.

The cafeteria plan is an excellent way to generate tax savings. A representative of the selected vendor will visit every employee of the system and each employee may elect or decline participation in the plan. Elections are for 12 months (September 1 – August 31) and cannot be altered unless you have a change in your family status (death, marriage, divorce, adoption, birth, or a spouse's employment change).

10. Direct Deposit – is a safe and convenient way to deposit your funds to your bank. A voided check or savings deposit slip is required one week prior to the payroll cutoff to initiate a direct deposit or to make a change affecting an account number. Any changes to your direct deposit must be done in person for security purposes.

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SCHOOL YEAR

Teachers are employed on a 200-day contract as follows:

176 instructional days
4 professional days
5 in-service days
5 administrative days
10 Holidays

VACATION/HOLIDAYS

Twelve-month employees earn one week of vacation after one year of employment, two weeks after two consecutive years of employment, three weeks after eight consecutive years of employment, and four weeks after sixteen consecutive years of employment. Vacations may be taken during the summer (two weeks maximum, non-consecutive), fall break, and spring break.

Twelve-month employees are granted the following paid holidays:

New Years Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Fourth of July
Labor Day
President's Day
Martin Luther King Day
Thanksgiving Day
Friday after Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve
Christmas

Full-time support staff on a ten-month contract are paid for 185 days (180 workdays and five holidays).

Full-time food service workers are paid for actual hours/days worked plus five holidays.

SCHOOL DAY

The regular workday for teachers or those on teacher contracts begins at 7:45 a.m. and concludes at 3:15 p.m. Administrator work hours are from 7:00 a.m. until the last student leaves or 4:00. Additional duties beyond the workday include faculty meetings, open house, parent conferences, IEP team meetings, bus duty, ball game duty **(grades 5-12)**, PTA meetings, and any other such duties assigned by the local administration.

Teachers working with students beyond the regular school day are required to stay with the students until all are picked up. Students who are consistently left at school after the scheduled conclusion of such after-school activities should be reported to the principal.

A teacher absent for more than one hour of any given workday must take a minimum of one-half day of sick leave or personal leave. Absences of less than one hour must be approved by the principal and will not count against the teacher's sick leave until a total of 7 ½ hours is accumulated.

The Director of Schools and/or principals can call faculty meetings as they deem necessary. These meetings will be limited to one hour unless they are related to an emergency situation.

School closings due to inclement weather will be announced on local (Sweetwater, Knoxville, and some Chattanooga) television and radio stations.

INSERVICE

Teachers are required to earn 30 hours of in-service credit and 30 hours of administrative credit annually. An in-service schedule will be provided each school year. It is the responsibility of the teacher to account for his/her in-service and administrative time.

Other in-service activities may be substituted for locally provided in-service, provided the teacher obtains **PRIOR WRITTEN APPROVAL** from the building principal and the Director of Schools or designee. A copy of the approval should be attached to the in-service record at the end of the school year.

The building principal may approve alternative administrative activities. Extra in-service hours may be substituted for administrative hours if approved by the building principal.

LEAVE

Sick leave: Ten-month employees will have eight (8) sick days per year. Eleven-month employees will have nine (9) sick days per year. Twelve-month employees will have ten (10) sick days per year. Full-time support staff earn five days of sick leave per year. Part-time support staff earn two days of sick leave per year. Unused sick days accumulate and will carry over to subsequent years.

Sick leave may be used for illness from natural causes or accident, quarantine, illness or death of a member of the immediate family of the employee, including the employee's spouse, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law. **Any sick leave of five (5) or more consecutive days will require a doctor's note.**

Upon written request of the teacher accompanied by a statement from her physician verifying pregnancy, a teacher who goes on **maternity leave** shall be allowed to use all or a portion of her accumulated sick leave for maternity leave purposes during the period of her physical disability only, as determined by a physician.

An employee who has been on medical leave due to an injury or serious health condition must provide a release from the doctor before returning to work.

Bereavement leave: Up to two (2) days of leave shall be granted at any one time in the event of the death of an employee's immediate family. These days may not be accumulated from one year to the next. If the funeral is more than 250 miles away, one extra day of bereavement leave will be granted with the Director's Approval. If additional days are required, sick leave may be used, per the Director's Approval.

Personal leave: Licensed employees earn four (4) days of personal leave annually. Employees who have completed 15 years of service with Sweetwater City Schools will be given one (1) additional day of personal leave. Support staff and custodians earn one day of personal leave annually. Unused personal days accumulate as sick leave. The Director of Schools must approve the use of personal leave if it precedes or follows a school holiday or if more than 10% of the school staff requests personal leave on the same day.

Military leave: Employees who are members of any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States shall be granted a leave of absence for all periods of military service during which they are engaged in the performance of duty or training in the service of the state or the United States. While performing such a duty or training, the employee shall be paid his/her regular salary up to a maximum of fifteen working days in any one calendar year. An employee who is called to active duty will be paid the difference between his/her regular salary and the military salary.

Other leave: In accordance with FMLA, any employee with over one year of service shall be granted, upon request, up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave for the birth or adoption of a child or the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition. Any female requesting leave due to pregnancy and childbirth shall be granted at least four months of leave. (For details see Board Policies 5.305, 5.306, 5.307, 5.308, 5.309, 5.310, 5.400).

Employee FML Eligible but Leave Entitlement Exhausted _ If your circumstances have changed or the employee goes beyond the FMLA excused time with **unpaid** leave. The employee will not be paid for holidays during the unpaid leave. This applies to hourly employees.

For foreseeable leave, the employee shall provide the Board of Education with at least thirty days' written notice before the beginning of the anticipated leave. All leave, except military leave and legislative leave, shall be from a date certain to date certain but may be extended to a later specified date upon written request from the employee.

A teacher on approved leave for twelve months or less may return to the same position. If the leave exceeds twelve months, the teacher shall be placed in the same or comparable position.

REPORTING ABSENCES ESS

Absence reporting forms are maintained at each school office. It is the responsibility of the employee to report any absences (sickness, personal leave, bereavement, or administrative leave). These reports must be turned in to the school office ***the day the employee returns to work***. Any falsification of an absence report is considered a fraudulent act and may be punishable in a court of law and/or other disciplinary actions.

You may contact Laura Barnes for a balance of your leave.

OVERTIME

Overtime work by non-exempt employees is discouraged and may not occur without the expressed approval of an employee's supervisor. In lieu of overtime compensation, employees may receive compensatory time off at a rate of not less than one and one-half hour for one hour of overtime worked if such compensatory time is pursuant to an agreement between the employer and the employee and is authorized by the immediate supervisor.

Employees will be allowed to use compensatory time within a reasonable period after requesting such use if the requested use of the compensatory time does not unduly disrupt the operation of the school division. Employees may accrue a maximum of 240 compensatory time hours before they will be provided overtime pay at the rate earned by the employee at the time the employee receives such payment.

Non-exempt employees whose work is less than forty hours will be paid at the regular rate of pay for time worked up to forty hours. Such employees shall be provided overtime pay or compensatory time as provided for working more than forty hours in a work-week. Paid time off for holidays or under leave policies will not count as time worked for purposes of computing overtime pay.

An employee who repeatedly works overtime without authorization is subject to disciplinary action including termination.

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

Employees who work less than thirty (30) hours per week are considered part-time and do not receive benefits. These employees are granted a total of two (2) sick days and one (1) personal day per school year as well as two (2) bereavement days. Part-time employees only work when school is in session for students (176 days) and professional development days (4 additional days) for a total of 180 workdays. If they are requested to work at other times, they will be granted comp time instead of being paid overtime.

ASSIGNMENT OF DUTIES/TRANSFERS

The Director of Schools has the authority to assign, transfer, and reassign personnel to any building or position in the district for which they are qualified. The principal has the authority to assign personnel to positions within the school.

NOTICE OF VACANCIES

Notice of teacher vacancies will be posted on the official bulletin board in each school as well as the district website. Should a vacancy occur when school is not in session, the association president will be notified. Employees wishing to apply for such a position must file a written request within ten working days of the posting of the notice.

In the event of emergencies or time limitations, the Director of Schools may waive or modify the methods of notification.

Professional employees desiring to transfer from one position to another should make a written request to the Director of Schools by March 1 of any given school year.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

The type of corporal punishment that may be administered shall be limited to paddling the student, and such discipline shall be administered only in accordance with the guidelines that follow.

Corporal punishment shall be administered only after less stringent measures such as counseling, parental conferences, and other forms of discipline have failed to produce the desired results unless the conduct of a student is of such an extreme nature that corporal punishment is the only reasonable form of punishment under the circumstances.

Corporal punishment will be administered by the school principal, assistant principal, or principal designee with the principal as the witness. The parent/guardian will be notified of the punishment prior to the action taken.

The instrument to be used in administering corporal punishment shall be approved by the Board of Education.

When corporal punishment is administered, it shall be done in the presence of another professional employee and shall take place in the principal's office or another place that is out of view of other students.

A record of any corporal punishment administered shall be completed by the principal and shall be filed in the principal's office.

*Board of Education – Policy #6.314

STUDENT INJURY OR ILLNESS

An accident should be reported immediately to the principal's office. Emergency first aid should be administered by the teacher only in a life-threatening situation. The teacher should make the student as comfortable as possible and await instructions from the principal. The teacher shall file an accident report in the principal's office as soon as possible after the accident.

The teacher should not administer medication of any kind to students. The medicine should be stored and administered in the office. Parents and/or physicians (in the case of prescription medication) must provide written permission and directions, including times and dosage.

In the event of an injury involving blood, the teacher should contact the office immediately. Each school has protective equipment available for handling blood, but it is recommended that the principal handle such injuries. The custodial staff should be notified of the clean-up needed for a blood spill.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

Sweetwater City Schools is dedicated to maintaining working conditions that provide a safe work environment for employees in all departments. You are expected to work safely, observe safety regulations and report unsafe conditions.

You may be required to take a physical examination when there is a need to determine whether you are able to perform the essential functions of your job or as may be required by business necessity.

First aid kits are available to take care of minor injuries to employees. You are expected to be familiar with the organization's fire evacuation plan and the Sweetwater City Schools Emergency Preparedness Plan (at each respective site). Any accident, of which you become aware, no matter how slight, is to be reported immediately to your supervisor. A written accident report is to be completed by the immediate supervisor.

Failure to comply with safety regulations may subject the employee to disciplinary action.

TEACHER CENTER

The Teacher Center is open daily from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Items requested from the Teacher Center will be handled in the order that requests are received. Requests will normally be processed within 72 hours.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Any school employee who knows or reasonably suspects that a child has been abused or neglected must immediately make a report as required by Tennessee law. Reports may be made to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004 or through the DCS online reporting system. In a life-threatening emergency, call 911. Reporting to a principal or supervisor does not replace an employee's individual legal duty to make the required report.

School employees should not conduct an investigation or press a child for additional details beyond what is necessary to ensure immediate safety and make the required report. Formal investigation is the responsibility of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services and/or law enforcement.

TEACHERS IN FIRST FIVE YEARS IN SWEETWATER CITY SCHOOLS

The early years of teaching should be a period of professional growth and development. Eligibility for tenure is determined by current Tennessee law, applicable State Board requirements, evaluation results, and Sweetwater Board of Education policy. Tenure is granted only by action of the Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Director of Schools.

SMOKING

Smoking is prohibited on all Sweetwater City Schools' property. This includes all uses of tobacco and tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, electronic/battery-operated devices, vapor products, and associated paraphernalia.

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

No employee shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess or use on or in the workplace alcohol or any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance, as defined in federal law. "Workplace" shall include any school building or any school premise; any school-owned or any other school-approved vehicle used to transport students to and from school or school activities; and off-school property during any school-sponsored or school-approved activity, event, or function.

Any employee who violates the terms of this policy shall be suspended and shall be subject to dismissal and referral for prosecution. The Director of Schools shall be responsible for providing a copy of this policy to all school system employees.

EMPLOYEE DRESS

Professional dress on the part of the school system employees is expected. Employees should be neat, clean, and dress in a manner consistent with their duties. Employee dress should at a minimum adhere to standards established in the student dress code Policy 6.310. No revealing clothing should be worn.

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, COMPLAINTS

Sweetwater City Schools abide by the following nondiscrimination policies:

Equal Opportunity Employment
Opportunity for employment, as well as continuation and advancement in employment, shall be afforded equally to members of all races, creeds, colors, sexes, religions, ages, national origins, and individuals with disabilities or veteran status with regard only for qualifications for the positions involved.

Employee Complaints Procedure
Any employee who feels subjected to sexual harassment and/or sexual, racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination should report the incident in accordance with Board Policy 5.500. Employees wishing to file a complaint concerning the interpretation of policies and procedures may do so in accordance with Board Policy 5.501.

ADA/504 Compliance
No qualified individual shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities provided by Sweetwater City Schools. A disability is (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual; (b) a record of such an impairment; or (c) being regarded as having such an impairment. Services, programs, and activities will be administered in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities.

Complaints should be filed with the ADA/504 Coordinator, Mardee Miller, Supervisor of Special Education, in writing at 220 S. Clark Street, Sweetwater, Tennessee 37874, or by phone for an appointment at (423)-337-7051. Complaints should include the date of the incident, a description of the incident, and the name and address of the complainant. The mediation will be scheduled to occur within 30 days and a hearing scheduled within 45 days from the date the complaint is filed.

The procedure is pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended – Title II, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, as amended.

Social Media

The term “social media” includes all means of communication or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including your own or someone else’s weblog or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking, or affinity with Sweetwater City Schools, as well as any other form of electronic communication. The same principles and guidelines found in the Sweetwater City Schools rules, policies and procedures apply to an employee’s social media activities online.
Any conduct that adversely affects an employee’s job performance or the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects the interest of Sweetwater City Schools, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Similarly, inappropriate postings, including but not limited to discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. However, this restriction will not apply to any postings made in the exercise of any rights granted to an employee by federal law.

CHANGES IN EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Employees should inform the Central Office of any changes in the following items as soon as possible:

1. Name, address, or telephone numbers
2. License status/education degrees or certification *
3. Newly acquired dependents for health insurance
4. Updating/terminating dependent information for health insurance
5. Beneficiaries in group life or Tennessee Consolidated Retirement Plan
6. Health or disabilities related to your job.

** Professional employees who complete an advanced degree no later than the summer semester are eligible for the corresponding salary increase for the upcoming school year. Employees who complete additional academic training after the beginning of the school year, but before January 1 of that school year, that would qualify the employee for a higher salary rating, shall be eligible for the corresponding salary increase as of January 1 of the school year* ***provided the employee has provided written notice of intention to complete the academic training to the superintendent and board chairman before the submission of the school system budget to the local legislative body (T.C.A. 49-5-402).***

COMPUTER ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES

Before any employee is allowed the use of Sweetwater City Schools internet access the employee shall sign a Computer Acceptable Use Guidelines at the beginning of each school year. Any employee who accesses the Sweetwater City Schools computer system for any purpose agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions. The agreement must be executed and returned to Larry Arwood, Supervisor of Technology.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE / GENERATIVE AI
Employees may use artificial intelligence and generative AI tools only in a manner consistent with Sweetwater City Schools Board policy, district procedures, applicable law, and professional

responsibilities. Employees must protect confidential and personally identifiable information, including student and employee records, and must not enter protected information into unapproved AI systems. AI-generated content should be reviewed for accuracy, bias, appropriateness, copyright concerns, and alignment with instructional or operational expectations before use. Employees remain responsible for all work products created or assisted by AI and should use only district-approved platforms when approval is required.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Reimbursement for approved travel is subject to the following guidelines:

Mileage – Reimbursement for the use of a personally owned vehicle will be at the IRS-published business standard mileage rate in effect at the time of travel. Mileage will be determined by accessing the district mileage chart ($0.76 per mile). Carpooling is expected when multiple personnel are traveling to the same destination

Meals – A meal allowance of $55 per day ($10 breakfast; $15 lunch; $30 dinner) will be reimbursed for overnight trips when meals are **not** provided at the conference. Receipts are not required. There is no meal reimbursement for one-day trips.

Lodging – The system will reimburse the cost of a single room. When two system personnel are traveling, they are expected to share a room and the system will reimburse the total cost of the room, excluding state taxes. The system will not pay for the additional cost of a spouse or family member sharing a room. Receipts are required.

Parking – Reimbursement for parking fees requires a signed receipt if over $8.

Expense forms for submitting travel expenses (mileage, food, lodging, and parking) are available from the Central Office. When turning in an expense report, proof of the trip must accompany the expense form (examples include a conference certificate or meeting agenda). For overnight trips, a hotel folio will be accepted with the expense report. Forms for reimbursement are to be submitted within one week of completed travel.

WORK ORDERS

If an employee needs to request repairs or maintenance on any item within the school, the employee should request a work order be completed by the principal. The principal will complete, sign, and submit it to the Central Office for processing with the maintenance department. If an emergency situation arises, such as air conditioning not working, the employee should immediately request assistance from the school principal, who will immediately contact the maintenance department.

If an employee has problems with a computer or technology item, the employee should send an email to the SCS technology department. The email should be sent using the system website work order tab which is located on the home page at www.sweetwatercityschools.com.

PURCHASE ORDERS

School Site – Principals shall serve as purchasing agents for individual schools. Purchases made by anyone **not authorized by the appropriate officials** shall become the **personal responsibility** of the persons making the purchase.

For orders **over** $100.00, a purchase order **is required**. This purchase order must be obtained from the school secretary. Order forms must be **thoroughly and accurately** completed and returned to the school secretary for processing.

No school shall be obligated to pay for any expenditure made by an employee unless he/she first receives a written purchase order from the proper office or unless prior written permission or arrangements are made with the principal.

Employees are to consider shipping and handling charges when placing an order; an appropriate estimate would be approximately 15% of the order. Orders can be combined to receive free shipping from certain companies.

Central Office Site – The Central Office requires an approved and signed requisition form **prior** to **any** expenditure. The requisition must be **completely** filled out and signed by the employee's principal. It must then be sent to the Central Office and, if the expenditure is more than $100, a purchase order must be completed. **Only AFTER** the purchase order is approved and signed by the Director of Schools or Supervisor (if federal funds are used) can the expenditure be made.

If orders are shipped directly to the school, the packing slip (signed and dated by the employee who checked the order upon receipt and opening) must be sent to the Central Office through school mail.

Ingles in Sweetwater allow 30-day charges to be completed. Receipts should be signed and immediately sent to the Central Office.

Credit cards for Wal-Mart are available from the Central Office. Receipts must be signed and sent to the Central Office. Credit cards must not be kept by an employee for longer than 3 days.

A tax-exempt form is available upon request from the Central Office as needed.

*** Employees who fail to follow proper procedures when making purchases may be required to pay for the purchase with personal funds and not receive reimbursement from the school system.

NEW EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST

As a newly hired employee of Sweetwater City Schools, you should have completed the following forms and returned them to the appropriate personnel at the Central Office:

- **W-4** – This form is mandated by the federal government and provides necessary information for the withholding of federal income tax. This form can be changed as needed.

- **Direct Deposit**- As of August 2007, all employees are required to have direct deposit. Any requests to adjust direct deposit must be made **in person** to the payroll specialist.

- **Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9** – This form is mandated by the federal government and confirms that you are a citizen or legal resident of the United States. Identification documentation is also required (lists are provided on the back of the form).

- **Certification of Medical Fitness** – Each employee shall present a signed physician certificate stating that he/she does not have any contagious or communicable disease in such form as might endanger the health of school children and is also medically and physically able to perform the duties of his/her job as described by the respective job description.

- **Criminal Background Check** – A criminal background check conducted by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is a mandatory requirement of employment. The cost is to be borne by the employee. The results will be maintained as part of the employee's personnel file.

- **Insurance Forms** – All full-time employees are initially eligible for enrollment within the first 31 days of employment:

- **Health**

- **Dental & Vision (enrollment in August, effective October 1)**

- **Life Insurance**

- **Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS)** – Membership is mandatory for all full-time employees, regardless of age. The membership effective date is the employee's first paycheck date.

  Support staff is not eligible for enrollment in TCRS until after six months of employment.

- **Teaching License** – A current teaching license must be kept on file at the Central Office. The educator is responsible for securing a license and maintaining its validity. Teacher contracts are automatically invalid if a license is allowed to lapse.

- **Teaching Experience Verification Forms -** This form **does not** need to be completed for the experience which has been accrued at a Tennessee Public School. This form is used in reporting non-public school teaching experience accrued in Tennessee, public and non-public school teaching experience accrued outside of Tennessee, and administrative or teaching experience in approved colleges and universities. The State Department of Education (Office of Disbursement) must approve the experience before you can be compensated for the experience on the salary schedule.

- **Employment Contract –** for the current school year.

- **Verification of Accumulated Sick Leave Days Form –** This form must be completed for the transfer of accumulated sick leave day(s)

Acknowledgment OF RECEIPT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

As indicated by my signature below, I hereby acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Sweetwater City Schools 2026-2027 Employee Handbook.

I further acknowledge that:

*I understand that it is my responsibility to read this handbook. Any questions I may have will be addressed to my employer.

*I understand that my employment will be subject to the provisions contained in this handbook. However, this book is only to be used as a guideline and not a contract.

*I understand that this handbook is not a contract of employment and does in no way guarantee my employment with Sweetwater City Schools.

_____ _____

Employee's Printed Name School

_____ _____

Employee's Signature Date

PLEASE RETURN THIS PAGE TO THE CENTRAL OFFICE.