

Lauderdale County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in February	Descriptor Term: Code of Ethics	Descriptor Code: 1.106	Issued Date: 06/27/23
		Rescinds: 1600	Issued: 11/01/12 09/03/09

*General*¹

Board members and school district employees may not accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, money, gratuity, consideration, or favor that a reasonable person would understand was intended to influence the vote, official action, or judgment of the board member or employee in executing decisions affecting the school district. It is also prohibited for a board member's or an employee's spouse or child living in the same household to accept such items.

It shall not be considered a violation of this policy for a board member or employee to receive entertainment, food, refreshments, meals, health screenings, amenities, food, or beverages that are provided in connection with a conference sponsored by an established or recognized statewide association of school board officials or by an umbrella or affiliate organization of such statewide association of school board officials.

ETHICS COMPLAINTS

The Board may create a School District Ethics Committee (Ethics Committee), consisting of three (3) members who will be appointed to one-year terms by the Board Chair with confirmation by the Board. At least two (2) members of the committee shall be members of the Board. The Ethics Committee shall convene as soon as practicable after its appointment and elect a Chair and a Secretary. The records of the Ethics Committee shall be maintained by the Secretary and shall be filed in the Director of Schools' office, where they shall be open to public inspection.

Questions and complaints regarding violations of this Code of Ethics shall be directed to the Chair of the Ethics Committee. Complaints shall be in writing, signed by the person making the complaint, and include details as to the facts surrounding the complaint.

The Ethics Committee may investigate an ethical complaint received against a board member or employee and make recommendations to cease any activity that, in the Ethics Committee's judgment, constitutes a violation of this Code of Ethics. If a member of the Ethics Committee is the subject of a complaint, the member shall recuse himself/herself from all proceedings involving the complaint.

The Ethics Committee may:

1. Refer the matter to the board attorney;
2. In the case of a board member, refer the matter to the Board of Education for possible public censure, if warranted;

3. In the case of an employee, refer the matter to the Director of Schools/designee for possible disciplinary action, if warranted; or
4. In a case involving possible violation of state statutes, refer the matter to the district attorney for possible ouster or criminal prosecution.

POINT OF CONTACT²

The Board Chair shall serve as the point of contact for the Tennessee Ethics Commission. The Director of Schools/designee shall provide the contact information to the Commission and ensure that any changes are submitted within thirty (30) calendar days.

Legal References

1. TCA 8-17-103
2. Public Acts of 2023, Chapter No. 37

Cross References

Board Member Conflict of Interest 1.107
Duties of Board Members 1.202

Lauderdale County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in October	Descriptor Term: Ethics	Descriptor Code: 5.611	Issued Date: 01/03/13
		Rescinds:	Issued:

An effective educational program requires the services of men and women of integrity, high ideals and human understanding. To maintain and promote these essentials, all employees are expected to maintain high standards in their school relationships.¹ These standards include the following:

1. The maintenance of just and courteous professional relationships with student, parent(s), staff members and others;
2. The maintenance of their own efficiency and knowledge of the developments in their fields of work;
3. The transaction of all official business with the properly designated authorities of the school system;
4. The establishment of friendly and intelligent cooperation between the community and the school system;
5. The representation of the school system on all occasions that the contributions of the school system to the community are recognized;
6. The welfare of children as the first concern of the school system when placing professional personnel. The use of pressure on school officials for appointments or transfers is unethical;
7. Restraint from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views or selfish propaganda of any kind;
8. The responsibility to make any criticism of other staff members or of the school system directly to the particular school administrator who has the administrative responsibility for improving the situation and then to the director of schools, if necessary; and
9. The proper use and protection of all school properties, equipment and materials.

Legal Reference:

1. TCA 49-5-501(3)(D); TEA Code of Ethics of the Education Profession

EXPECTATIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL AND SUPPORT STAFF

Below are the district expectations set forth by Lauderdale County Schools (LCS). These expectations are minimum requirements. Each school may have additional expectations over and above those listed below. Teachers and educational assistants should refer to procedures provided by the building principal for more specific guidelines applicable to each school.

District Calendar – The district calendar is set prior to each school year. In-service, district-wide Professional Development Days, and Family/Teacher Conferences appear on the district calendar and attendance by teachers and school staff is mandatory. The Superintendent must approve any absences from In-service, district-wide Professional Development, and Family/Teacher Conferences. [Policy 1.800](#)
[Policy 5.113](#)

In-Service Days – Employees are required to complete five (5) scheduled in-service days annually as specified by state law. Employees who miss in-service days must make up any required trainings that they missed on those days. In addition to making up mandated trainings, employees must claim absences as personal leave or leave without pay. [Policy 5.113](#)

Professional Development Days – The district strives to incorporate embedded professional development within the school day to reduce the demands on employee personal time. Three professional development days are provided throughout the year for administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals to collaboratively work together.

Family/Teacher Conferences – Family/Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice yearly to discuss students' academic progress and individual needs. Teachers should be prepared with documentation of current/accurate grades, behavior, and student work samples to support a productive conversation.

Attendance – Personal and family illness and other emergencies arise. However, research indicates that teacher attendance patterns have significant impact on student achievement. While student attendance impacts an individual student, teacher attendance impacts all students assigned to a teacher. Attendance to scheduled faculty/staff meetings and/or any other routine meetings of the like will be required unless otherwise approved through the direct supervisor.

Extra Duties – Teachers will be required to serve in many additional capacities, which may include, but not limited to, bus duty, hall duty, extra-curricular activities, parent-teacher organizations, and gate duties. Fulfilling such duties enables the teacher to contribute to the total success of the school.

Teacher Code of Ethics – Educators must adhere to the **Code of Ethics** (pages 27-29) as mandated by state statute. The highest degree of ethical conduct must be maintained as specified in the educator's obligations to students and to the education profession. Any unethical employee conduct or failure to report colleague misconduct may result in disciplinary action.

Mandated Trainings – Annual verification of training in blood borne pathogens, bullying/harassment, child abuse reporting, suicide prevention, AED use, and concussion/sudden cardiac arrest training (where applicable) is required. Time for annual training is usually scheduled during in-service days. [Policies 6.409, 6.413, 6.414, 6.415, 6.3041](#)

TEACHER CODE OF ETHICS

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1002 **Legislative findings**

The general assembly finds and declares that:

- (1)** An educator, believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic principles. Essential to these goals is the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. An educator accepts the responsibility to adhere to the highest ethical standards; and
- (2)** An educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility inherent in the teaching process. The desire for the respect and confidence of one's colleagues, of students, of parents and of the members of the community provides the incentive to attain and maintain the highest possible degree of ethical conduct.
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Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1003

Educator's obligations to students

- (a) An educator shall strive to help each student realize the student's potential as a worthy and effective member of society. An educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.
- (b) In fulfillment of this obligation to the student, an educator shall:
- (1) Abide by all applicable federal and state laws;
 - (2) Not unreasonably restrain the student from independent action in the pursuit of learning;
 - (3) Provide the student with professional education services in a nondiscriminatory manner and in consonance with accepted best practices known to the educator;
 - (4) Respect the constitutional rights of the student;
 - (5) Not unreasonably deny the student access to varying points of view;
 - (6) Not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter relevant to the student's progress;
 - (7) Make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety;
 - (8) Make reasonable effort to protect the emotional well-being of the student;
 - (9) Not intentionally expose the student to embarrassment or disparagement;
 - (10) Not on the basis of race; color; creed; disability; sex; national origin; marital status; political or religious beliefs; family, social, or cultural background; or sexual orientation, unfairly:
 - (A) Exclude the student from participation in any program;
 - (B) Deny benefits to the student; or
 - (C) Grant any advantage to the student;
 - (11) Not use the educator's professional relationship with the student for private advantage;
 - (12) Not disclose information about the student obtained in the course of the educator's professional service, unless disclosure of the information is permitted, serves a compelling professional purpose, or is required by law;
 - (13) Not knowingly make false or malicious statements about students or colleagues;
 - (14) Ensure interactions with the student take place in transparent and appropriate settings;
 - (15) Not engage in any sexually related behavior with the student, whether verbal, written, physical, or electronic, with or without the student's consent. Sexually related behavior includes, but is not limited to, behaviors such as making sexual jokes or sexual remarks; engaging in sexual kidding, sexual teasing, or sexual innuendo; pressuring the student for dates or sexual favors; engaging in inappropriate physical touching, groping, or grabbing; kissing; rape; threatening physical harm; and committing sexual assault;
 - (16) Not furnish alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs to the student;
 - (17) Strive to prevent the use of alcohol or illegal or unauthorized drugs by the student when the student is under the educator's supervision on school or LEA premises, during school activities, or in any private setting;
 - (18) Refrain from the use of alcohol while on school or LEA premises or during a school activity at which students are present; and
 - (19) Maintain a professional approach with the student at all times.
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Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1004

Educator's obligations to the education profession

- (a) The education profession is vested by the public with a trust and responsibility requiring the highest ideals of professional service. In the belief that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens, the educator shall exert every effort to raise professional standards, to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment, to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education, and to assist in preventing the practice of the profession by unqualified persons.
- (b) In fulfillment of this obligation to the profession, an educator shall not:
- (1) Deliberately make a false statement or fail to disclose a material fact related to competency and qualifications in an application for a professional position;
 - (2) Misrepresent the educator's professional qualifications;
 - (3) Assist entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute;
 - (4) Knowingly make a false statement concerning the qualifications of a candidate for a professional position;
 - (5) Assist a noneducator in the unauthorized practice of teaching;
 - (6) Disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service unless the disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law;
 - (7) Knowingly make false or malicious statements about a colleague;
 - (8) Accept any gratuity, gift, or favor that might impair or appear to influence professional decisions or actions; and
 - (9) Use illegal or unauthorized drugs.
- (c) In fulfillment of this obligation to the profession, educators shall:
- (1) Administer state-mandated assessments fairly and ethically; and
 - (2) Conduct themselves in a manner that preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession.
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Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-1006

Report of breach of teacher code of ethics -- Failure to report

- (a) An educator who has personal knowledge of a breach by another educator of the teacher code of ethics prescribed in §§ 49-5-1003 and 49-5-1004 shall report the breach to the educator's immediate supervisor, director of schools, or local board of education within thirty (30) days of discovering the breach.
- (b) Failure to report a breach of the teacher code of ethics, or to file a report of any criminal activity or other misconduct that is required by federal or state law, is a breach of the teacher code of ethics.
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LAUDERDALE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Policies and Procedures Employee Acknowledgment 2023 – 2024

My signature and initials below verify that I have been advised of my professional responsibility to familiarize myself with the contents of the **Employee Handbook** for Lauderdale County Schools (LCS). I understand that this information is available by accessing the LCS website. If I have any questions regarding the information provided in the handbook, I should consult the Human Resources Department or the appropriate principal/supervisor.

I acknowledge that LCS policies and procedures are subject to change at any time. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that any revisions may supersede, modify or eliminate existing policies and/or procedures. Only the elected members of the Lauderdale County Board of Education have the ability to adopt any revisions to policies, and only the Superintendent may authorize changes to the Employee Handbook and administrative procedures.

I acknowledge that the **Employee Handbook** is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. Rather, it is a guide and summary of policies and procedures important to LCS employees. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies and procedures contained in the most recent handbook and any revisions made to it. Furthermore, I acknowledge that I must participate in **annual mandatory trainings as specified by local/state board policy and state/federal laws**.

Please read and initial each statement:

1. _____ I have received and reviewed the current **LCS Employee Handbook** pertaining to my position and role within the school district. I agree to abide by all procedures outlined in this handbook and the *Code of the Ethics*.
2. _____ I understand that the LCS Board Policy Manual and Administrative Procedures are located on the district website under *School Board Policy Manual*.
3. _____ I have an Employee ID badge and I understand it is my responsibility to wear at all times while performing my duties on or off LCS property.
4. _____ I have completed blood borne pathogens training as required annually.
5. _____ I have completed suicide prevention training as required annually.
6. _____ If I suspect child abuse and/or neglect, I am required by law to immediately report the incident to the Child Abuse Coordinator, the DCS hotline and law enforcement.
7. _____ I am required to immediately report all alleged or suspected acts of bullying, harassment or discrimination to my principal or supervisor and understand the Title IX procedures.
8. _____ I have completed AED training as required annually (if applicable).

I understand that a copy of this acknowledgement will be held as evidence of my receipt and knowledge of LCS policies/procedures and completion of required trainings.

Employee Name (Print)

Employee Signature

Date

School or Department

All employees are required to sign and submit a copy of this form to the appropriate principal or supervisor by August 11th.