

SUNDOWN ISD

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK
2015-2016**

Approved---June 25, 2015

Please sign the “Employee Handbook Receipt /Electronic Communication Acceptable User Agreement/Required Employee Policies ” form and return to your principal by August 24, 2015.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information that will help with questions and pave the way for a successful year. Not all district policies and procedures are included. Those that are have been summarized. Suggestions for additions and improvements to this handbook are welcome and may be sent to **Scott Marshall**, Superintendent.

This handbook is neither a contract nor a substitute for the official district policy manual. Nor is it intended to alter the at-will status of noncontract employees in any way. Rather, it is a guide to and a brief explanation of district policies and procedures related to employment. These policies and procedures can change at any time; these changes shall supersede any handbook provisions that are not compatible with the change. For more information, employees may refer to the policy codes that are associated with handbook topics, confer with their supervisor, or call the appropriate district office. Policy manuals are located in the central office and principals’ offices, and are available for employee review during normal working hours. **The SUNDOWN ISD School Board Policy Manual may also be found on the district’s web-site, at www.sundownisd.com**

Vision Statement

Inspire Lives – Transform the Future

Mission Statement

Instilling Knowledge – Empowering Learners – Strengthening our Tradition

Values Statement

Love Others – Work Hard – Embrace Excellence

District Goals and Objectives

Policy AF

The objectives of public education are:

OBJECTIVE 1: Parents will be full partners with educators in the education of their children.

OBJECTIVE 2: Students will be encouraged and challenged to meet their full educational potential.

OBJECTIVE 3: Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a diploma.

OBJECTIVE 4: A well-balanced and appropriate curriculum will be provided to all students.

OBJECTIVE 5: Educators will prepare students to be thoughtful, active citizens who have an appreciation for the basic values of our state and national heritage and who can understand and productively function in a free enterprise society.

OBJECTIVE 6: Qualified and highly effective personnel will be recruited, developed, and retained.

OBJECTIVE 7: Texas students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison to national and international standards.

OBJECTIVE 8: School campuses will maintain a safe and disciplined environment conducive to student learning.

OBJECTIVE 9: Educators will keep abreast of the development of creative and innovative techniques in instruction and administration using those techniques as appropriate to improve student learning.

OBJECTIVE 10: Technology will be implemented and used to increase the effectiveness of student learning, instructional management, staff development, and administration.

The academic goals of public education are to serve as a foundation for a well-balanced and appropriate education. The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in:

GOAL 1: The reading and writing of the English language.

GOAL 2: The understanding of mathematics.

GOAL 3: The understanding of science.

GOAL 4: The understanding of social studies.

Board of Trustees

Policies BA, BAA, BBA, BBB, BBE, BE, BEC, BED

Texas law grants the board of trustees the power to govern and oversee the management of the district's schools. The board is the policy-making body within the district and has the exclusive power to govern and oversee the management of the District.

The board of trustees is elected by the citizens of the district to represent the community's commitment to a strong educational program for the district's children. Trustees are elected to at-large, using cumulative voting, and serve 3-year terms. Trustees serve without compensation, must be registered voters, and must reside in the district.

Current board members include:

Doug Precure, President
Joe Hinson, Vice-President
Delwin Britton, Secretary
Loralee VanWettering
Karen Davidson
Shawn Sales
Danny Randolph

The board meets monthly at the District Administration Office, typically on the third Monday of the month, but can be held at different times due to conflicts. A written notice of regular and special meetings will be posted at the central office at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting time. The written notice will show the date, time, place, and subjects of each meeting. In emergencies, a meeting may be held with a two-hour notice. All meetings are open to the public. In certain circumstances, Texas law permits the board to go into a closed session from which the public and others are excluded. Closed session may occur for such things as discussing prospective gifts or donations, real-property acquisition, certain personnel matters including employee complaints, security matters, student discipline, or to consult with attorneys regarding pending litigation.

Administration

Scott Marshall, Superintendent	229-3021, ext. 202
Brent Evans, High School Principal	229-3021, ext. 230
Eddie Carter, Middle School Principal	229-3021, ext. 228
Jason Powell, Elementary Principal	229-3021, ext. 225
Steve Smith, Athletic Director	229-3021, ext. 217

EMPLOYMENT

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy DAA

Sundown Independent School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Employment decisions will be made on the basis of each applicant's job qualifications, experience, and abilities.

Employees with questions or concerns relating to discrimination on any of the bases listed above should contact Scott Marshall, Superintendent, at 806-229-3021, ext. 202.

Contract and Non-Contract Employment Policies DC, DCA, DCB, DCC, DCD, DCE

State law requires the district to employ all full-time professional employees in positions requiring a certificate from State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) and nurses under probationary, term, or continuing contracts. Employees in all other positions are employed at-will or by a contract that is not subject to the procedures for nonrenewable or termination under Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code. The paragraphs that follow provide a general description of the employment arrangements used by the district.

Probationary Contracts. Nurses and full-time professional employees new to the district and employed in positions requiring SBEC certification must receive probationary contracts. Former employees who are hired after at least a two-year lapse in district employment also may be employed by probationary contract. Probationary contracts are one-year contracts. The probationary period for those who have been employed in public schools for at least five of the eight years preceding employment with the district may not exceed one school year. For those with less experience, the probationary period will be two school years (i.e., two one-year contracts) with an optional third and fourth year if the board determines it is doubtful whether a term or continuing contract should be given.

Term Contracts. Full-time professionals employed in positions requiring certification and nurses will be employed by term or continuing contracts after they have successfully completed the probationary period. Teachers are employed by term contracts. The terms and conditions of employment are detailed in the contract and employment policies. All employees will receive a copy of their contract and employment policies.

Noncertified Professional and Administrative Employees. Employees in professional and administrative positions that do not require SBEC certification (such as non-instructional administrators and technologists) are employed by a one-year contract that is not subject to the procedures for non-renewable or termination under the Texas Education Code.

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. All paraprofessional and auxiliary employees, regardless of certification, are employed at will and not by contract. Employment is not for any specified term and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or the district.

Searches and Alcohol and Drug Testing

Policy DHE

Drug Testing of Staff Members. All full-time and part-time employees shall be required to participate in drug testing as a condition of employment. All employees shall be involved in an ongoing random testing program that shall be equivalent to a minimum of ten percent of employees per month. A refusal to be tested shall be treated as a positive test. Non-investigatory searches in the workplace, including accessing an employee's desk, file cabinets, or work area to obtain information needed for usual business purposes may occur when an employee is unavailable. Therefore, employees are hereby notified that they have no legitimate expectation of privacy in those places. In addition, the district reserves the right to conduct searches when there is reasonable cause to believe a search will uncover evidence of work-related misconduct. Such an investigatory search may include drug and alcohol testing if the suspected violation relates to drug or alcohol use. The district may search the employee, the employee's personal items, work areas, including district-owned computers, lockers, and private vehicles parked on district premises or work sites or used in district business.

Employees Required to Have a Commercial Driver's License. Any Sundown ISD employee whose duties require a commercial driver's license (CDL) is subject to drug and alcohol testing. This includes all drivers who operate a motor vehicle designed to transport 16 or more people, counting the driver; drivers of large vehicles; or drivers of vehicles used in the transportation of hazardous materials. Teachers, coaches, or other employees who primarily perform duties other than driving are subject to testing requirements when their duties include driving.

Drug testing will be conducted before an individual assumes driving responsibilities. Alcohol and drug tests will be conducted when reasonable suspicion exists, at random, when an employee returns to duty after engaging in prohibited conduct, and as a follow-up measure. Testing may be conducted following accidents. Return-to-duty and follow-up testing will be conducted if an employee who has violated the prohibited alcohol conduct standards or tested positive for alcohol or drugs is allowed to return to duty. Employees with questions or concerns relating to alcohol and drug policies and related educational material should contact Scott Marshall at 806-229-3021.

First Aid and CPR Certification

Policy DBA

Nurses, physical education teachers, marching band directors, coaches or chief sponsors of an extracurricular athletic activity (including cheerleading) that is sponsored or sanctioned by the district or UIL must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED). Certification must be issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or another organization that provides equivalent training and certification. The district shall adopt procedures for administering this requirement, including procedures for the time and manner in which proof of current certification must be submitted.

Reassignments and Transfers

Policy DC, DK

All personnel are subject to assignment and reassignment by the superintendent or designee when the superintendent determines that the assignment or reassignment is in the best interest of the district. Reassignment is a transfer to another position, department, or facility that does not necessitate a change in the employment contract. Campus reassignments must be approved by the principal at the receiving campus except when the reassignments are due to enrollment shifts or program changes. Extracurricular or supplemental duty assignments may be reassigned at any time unless an extracurricular or supplemental duty assignment is part of a dual-assignment contract. Employees who

object to a reassignment may follow the district process for employee complaints as outlined in this handbook and district policy DGBA (Local). Any change in an employee's contract shall be in accordance with policy DC. Any employee may request reassignment within the district to another position for which he or she is qualified.

Workload and Work Schedules

Policy DL

Professional Employees. Professional and administrative employees are exempt from overtime pay and are employed on a 10-, 11-, or 12-month basis, according to the work schedules set by the district. A school calendar is adopted each year designating the work schedule for teachers and all school holidays. Notice of work schedules including required days of service and scheduled holidays will be distributed each school year.

Classroom teachers will have planning periods for instructional preparation and conferences. The schedule of planning periods is set at the campus level but must provide at least 450 minutes within each two-week period for instructional preparation including parent-teacher conferences, evaluating students' homework, and planning. A planning and preparation period may not be less than 45 minutes within the instructional day. Teachers are entitled to a duty-free lunch period of at least 30 minutes. The district may require teachers to supervise students during lunch one day a week when no other personnel are available.

Paraprofessional and Auxiliary Employees. Support employees are employed at will and will be notified of the required duty days, holidays, and hours of work for their position on an annual basis.

With the exception of the maintenance foreman, paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not exempt from overtime. Paraprofessional and auxiliary employees are not authorized to work in excess of their assigned schedule without prior approval from their supervisor.

Notification of Parents Regarding Certification Status

Policy DK, EHBD

In schools receiving Title I funds, the district is required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to notify parents at the beginning of each school year that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher. NCLB also requires that parents be notified if their child has been assigned, or taught for thirty or more consecutive days by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Texas law requires that parents be notified if their child is assigned for more than 30 consecutive days to a teacher who does not hold appropriate teaching certificate. This notice is not required if parental notification under NCLB is sent. Inappropriately certified or uncertified teachers include individuals serving with an emergency permit (including individuals waiting to take the EXCET exam) or individuals who do not hold any certificate or permit. No later than the 30th instructional day after the date of assignment the superintendent or designee will send a written notice to parents. Information relating to teacher certification will be made available to the public upon request.

Performance Evaluation

Policy DN, DNA, DNB

Evaluation of an employee's job performance should be a continual process that focuses on improvement. Performance evaluation is based on an employee's assigned job duties and other job-related criteria. All employees will participate in the evaluation process with their assigned supervisor at least annually. Written evaluations will be completed on forms approved by the district. Reports,

correspondence, and memoranda can also be used to document performance information. All employees will receive a copy of their written evaluation, have a performance conference with their supervisor, and get the opportunity to respond to the evaluation.

Employee Involvement

Policy BQA, BQB

At both the campus and district levels, Sundown ISD offers opportunities for input in matters that affect employees and influences the instructional effectiveness of the district. As part of the district's decision-making process, employees shall be selected to serve on district or campus level advisory committees. Plans and detailed information about the shared decision making process are available in each campus office.

Staff Development

Policy DMA

Staff development activities are organized to meet the needs of employees and the district. Staff development shall be predominantly campus-based, related to achieving campus performance objectives, and developed and approved by the campus-level committee. Staff development for noninstructional personnel is designed to meet specific licensing requirements (e.g., bus drivers) and continued employee skill development. The District Wide Committee will be involved in decisions concerning staff development opportunities.

Individuals holding renewable SBEC certificates are responsible for obtaining the required training hours and maintaining appropriate documentation.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends

Policy DEA, DEAA

Employees are paid in accordance with administrative guidelines and a pay structure established for each position. The district's pay plans are reviewed by the administration each year and adjusted as needed. All district positions are classified as exempt or nonexempt according to federal law. Professional and administrative employees are generally classified as exempt and are paid monthly salaries. They are not entitled to overtime compensation. Other employees are generally classified as nonexempt and are paid based on hourly wages or provided compensatory time for each overtime hour worked.

Salary and wage schedules are reviewed annually and adjusted according to the budgeted amounts approved by the board. Classroom teachers will be paid no less than the minimum state salary schedule. Contract employees who perform extracurricular duties may be paid a stipend in addition to their salary according to the district's extra-duty pay schedule.

Employees should contact the business office for more information about the district's pay schedules or their own pay.

Paychecks

All professional and salaried employees are paid monthly no later than the twentieth of each month. During the school year, pay checks or stubs are delivered to each campus. During summer breaks, pay checks or stubs will be mailed or may be picked up in person. An

employee's payroll statement contains detailed information including deductions and withholding information.

Automatic Payroll Deposit

The district strongly encourages the use of automatic payroll deposit. Employees have their paychecks electronically deposited into their account. A notification is needed to activate the service. With automatic deposit, an employee's pay is immediately available on the pay date.

Payroll Deductions

Policy CFEA

Automatic payroll deductions for the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS), federal income tax, and local retirement plan are required for all full-time employees. Medicare tax deductions also are required for all employees hired after March 31, 1986. Temporary and part-time employees who are not eligible for TRS membership must have their Social Security contributions deducted.

Other payroll deductions employees may elect include Section 125 cafeteria plan, annuities, higher education savings plans, savings deposits, and loan payments through the local retirement plan. Employees may also request payroll deduction for payment of membership dues to professional organizations. Salary deductions are automatically made for unauthorized or unpaid leave.

Overtime Compensation

Policy DEA

The district compensates overtime for nonexempt employees in accordance with federal wage and hour laws. Only nonexempt employees (most hourly and paraprofessional employees) are entitled to overtime compensation. *Nonexempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their normal work schedule without advance approval from their supervisor.*

Overtime is legally defined as all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek and is not measured by the day or by the employee's regular work schedule. Employees who must work beyond their normal schedule but less than 40 hours per week will be compensated in straight-time pay or equivalent time off in the same workweek. Employees must work more than 40 total hours in a week to earn overtime compensation. For the purpose of calculating overtime, a workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. Saturday and ends at midnight Friday.

Employees may be compensated for overtime at time-and-a-half rate with compensatory time off (comp time) or direct pay. The following applies to all nonexempt employees:

- Compensatory time earned by nonexempt employees may not accumulate beyond a maximum of 60 hours.
- Compensatory time shall be used within the duty year in which it is earned.
- Use of compensatory time may be at the employee's request or as determined by the employee's supervisor to protect the district's schedules and activities.
- An employee may be required to use comp time before using any other available paid leave (e.g., sick, personal, vacation).
- Weekly time sheets will be maintained on all nonexempt employees for the purpose of wage and salary administration.

Travel Expense Reimbursement

Policy DEE

Before any travel expenses are incurred by an employee, the employee's supervisor must give approval. For approved travel, employees may be reimbursed for mileage and other travel expenditures according to the current Travel Reimbursement Rates established by the State of Texas Comptroller's Office. Employees shall receive per diem at the approved board rate, prior to travel, or submit a statement, with receipts to the extent feasible, documenting actual expenses and in accordance with administrative procedures.

Health, Dental, and Life Insurance

Policy CRD

Group health insurance coverage is provided through TRS-Active Care, the statewide public school health insurance program, and Entrust. The district's contribution to employee insurance premiums is determined annually by the board of trustees. Participation in the program is limited to employees of participating districts who are full-time employees and to part-time employees who are participating members in TRS.

TRS retirees and employees who are not contributing TRS members that are regularly scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week are not eligible to participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

The insurance plan year is from September 1 through August 31. Current employees can make changes in their insurance coverage during open enrollment each spring and August. Detailed descriptions of insurance coverage, employee cost, and eligibility requirements are provided to all employees in a separate booklet.

The district provides life insurance coverage for all full time employees.

Employees should contact Keri Riley for more information.

Supplemental Insurance Benefits

Policy CRG

At their own expense, employees can enroll in supplemental insurance programs for life, cancer or other catastrophic diseases. Employees should contact the business office for more information.

Cafeteria Plan Benefits (Section 125)

Employees may be eligible to participate in the Cafeteria Plan (Section 125) and, under IRS regulations, must either accept or reject this benefit. This plan enables eligible employees to pay certain insurance premiums on a pretax basis (i.e., disability, accidental death and dismemberment, cancer and dread disease, dental and additional term life insurance). A third-party administrator handles employee claims made on these accounts.

All employees must accept or reject this benefit on an annual basis and during the specified time period.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

Policy CRE

The district, in accordance with state law, provides workers' compensation benefits to employees who suffer a work-related illness or are injured on the job. Benefits help pay for medical treatment and make up for part of the income lost while recovering. Specific benefits are prescribed by law depending on the circumstances of each case. *All work-related accidents or injuries should be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor.* Employees who are unable to work because of a work-related injury will be notified of their rights and responsibilities under the Texas Labor Code.

Unemployment Compensation Insurance

Policy CRF

Employees who have been laid off or terminated through no fault of their own may be eligible for unemployment compensation benefits under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act. Employees are not eligible to collect unemployment benefits during regularly scheduled breaks in the school year or the summer months if they have employment contracts or reasonable assurance of returning to service. Employees with questions about unemployment benefits should contact the business office.

Teacher Retirement

All personnel employed on a regular basis for at least one-half time of the normal work schedule are members of the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS). Substitutes not receiving TRS service retirement benefits that work at least 90 days a year are also eligible for TRS membership and to purchase a year of creditable service. TRS provides members with an annual statement of their account showing all deposits and the total account balance for the year ending August 31, as well as an estimate of their retirement benefits.

Employees who plan to retire under TRS should notify the business office as soon as possible. Information on the application procedures for TRS benefits are available from TRS at Teacher Retirement System of Texas, 1000 Red River Street, Austin, TX 78701-2698, or call 800-223-8778 or 512-542-6400. TRS information is also available on the Web (www.trs.state.tx.us).

LEAVES AND ABSENCES

Policy DEC

The district offers employees paid and unpaid leaves of absence in times of personal need. This handbook describes the basic types of leave available and restrictions on leaves of absence.

Employees who take an unpaid leave of absence may continue their insurance benefits at their own expense. Health care benefits for employees on leave authorized under the Family and Medical Leave Act will be paid by the district as they were when they were working. Otherwise, the district does not make benefit contributions for employees who are not on active payroll status.

Employees must follow district and department or campus procedures to report or request any leave of absence and complete the appropriate leave request form. Any employee who is absent more than 5 days because of a personal or family illness must submit a medical certification from a qualified health care provider confirming the specific dates of the illness, the reason for the illness, and – in the case of personal illness – the employee's fitness to return to work.

Personal and local sick leave is earned on a yearly basis. If an employee leaves the district before the end of the work year, the cost of any unearned leave days shall be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Personal and Sick Leave. State law entitles all full-time employees five days of paid personal leave per year. District employees shall earn state personal leave up to a maximum of 5 days annually at the rate of 1/2 day for each 18 workdays of employment. State and local personal leave is available for use at the beginning of the year. A day of earned personal leave is equivalent to an assigned workday. There is no limit on the accumulation of state personal leave, and it can be transferred to other Texas school districts and is generally transferable to education service centers. All full-time employees shall earn an additional five workdays of local sick leave each school year, at a rate of 1/2 day for each 18 workdays of employment. Local sick leave shall accumulate to a maximum of twenty workdays and shall be taken with no loss of pay. All full-time employees shall earn an additional one workday of local personal leave at the rate of 1/2 workday for each ninety workdays of employment. This day is not cumulative and will cost the employee the cost of a substitute.

Use of Leave

As applicable per reason for absence, leave will be used in the order as follows unless otherwise specified by the employee:

- Accumulated local sick leave days
- Accumulated state sick leave days
- Accumulated state personal leave days
- The one local personal leave day earned for current year, at the cost of a substitute

Extended Catastrophic Sick Leave

Extended sick leave of up to 30 days per year may be available to an employee who has exhausted all other state and local leave. The employee shall request extended leave in writing subject to approval of the superintendent.

Other leaves or absences shall result in a deduction of the daily rate of pay for each day of absence, unless otherwise provided in this policy.

Temporary Disability Leave

An employee may request in writing temporary disability leave (leave without pay) in the case of long term catastrophic illness or injury. The maximum length of temporary disability leave for certified full-time employees shall be 180 calendar days.

Family and Medical Leave

The 12-month period within which employee's shall be eligible for 12 weeks of family and medical leave shall be defined as the fixed 12 month period measured forward from the day an individual employee's family and medical leave begins.

The district shall require employees to use family and medical leave concurrently with paid leave and with temporary disability leave, if applicable.

If both spouses are employed by the district, combined family and medical leave for the birth, adoption, or placement of a child or for the care of a sick parent may be limited to 12 weeks as determined by the needs of the district.

Intermittent leave shall not be permitted for the birth of the employee's child or the adoption or placement of a child with the employee.

Upon request for family and medical leave for the employee's serious health condition or that of a spouse, parent, or child, the employee shall provide medical certification of the illness or disability. At 30 day intervals, an employee on family and medical leave for his or her own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a member of the immediate family shall provide medical certification of the illness or disability.

The employee's request for reinstatement shall be accompanied by medical certification of the employee's ability to perform essential job functions.

A teacher desiring to return to work at or near the conclusion of a semester shall be reinstated in accordance of Section 108(d) of the Family Medical Leave Act.

If, at the expiration of the family and medical leave, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the district shall require reimbursement of the district's employee benefits contribution during the period in which such leave was taken without pay.

Workers' Compensation Benefits

An employee receiving workers' compensation wage benefits shall be assigned to family and medical leave, if applicable. The employee shall inform the appropriate administrator whether he or she chooses to use available paid leave while receiving workers' compensation wage benefits.

Assault Leave

Assault leave provides extended job income and benefits protection to an employee who is injured as the result of a physical assault suffered during the performance of his or her job. An injury is treated as an assault if the person causing the injury could be prosecuted for assault or could not be prosecuted only because that person's age or mental capacity renders the person nonresponsible for purposes of criminal liability.

An employee who is physically assaulted at work may take all the leave time medically necessary (up to two years) to recover from the physical injuries he or she sustained. Days of leave granted under the assault leave provision will not be deducted from accrued personal leave and must be coordinated with workers' compensation benefits.

Jury Duty and Court Appearances

Employees will receive leave with pay and without loss of accumulated leave for jury duty. The employee must present documentation for this service and shall be allowed to retain any compensation they receive.

Absences for court appearances related to an employee's personal business shall be deducted from the employee's personal business leave or shall be taken by the employee as leave without pay.

Military Leave

Paid Leave for Military Service. Any employee who is a member of the Texas National Guard, Texas State Guard, or reserve component of the armed forces will be granted a paid leave of absence without loss of any accumulated leave for authorized training or duty orders. Paid military leave will not exceed 15 days per year. In addition, an employee is entitled to use available state and local personal or sick leave during a time of active military service.

Re-employment After Military Leave. Employees who leave the district to enter into the United States uniformed services or ordered to active state military duty (Texas National Guard or Texas State Guard) may return to employment if they are honorably discharged. Employees who wish to return to the district will be re-employed in the position they would have held if employment had not been interrupted or reassigned to an equivalent or similar position provided they are still qualified to perform the required duties. To be eligible for re-employment, a veteran of the military must apply for re-employment not later than the 90th day after the date the veteran is discharged or released from active military service. Application must be made in writing to the superintendent and have attached to it evidence of the veteran's discharge, separation, or release from military service under honorable conditions.

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

Policy DGBA

In an effort to hear and resolve employee concerns or complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest administrative level possible, the board has adopted an orderly process that all employees must follow. Employees are encouraged to discuss their concerns or complaints with their supervisors or an appropriate administrator at any time.

The formal grievance process provides all employees with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative grievance procedures are exhausted, employees can bring grievances to the board of trustees. Please see Policy DGBA (Local) for details.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND WELFARE

Standards of Conduct

Policy DH

All employees are expected to work together in a cooperative spirit to serve the best interests of the district and to be courteous to students, one another, and the public. Employees are expected to observe the following standards of conduct:

- Recognize and respect the rights and property of students, parents, other employees, and members of the community.
- Maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to students and coworkers.
- Report to work according to the assigned schedule.
- Notify their immediate supervisor in advance or as early as possible in the event that they must be absent or late. Unauthorized absences, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, and failure to follow procedures for reporting an absence may be cause for disciplinary action.
- Know and comply with department and district procedures and policies.
- Express concerns, complaints, or criticism through appropriate channels.
- Observe all safety rules and regulations and report injuries or unsafe conditions to a supervisor immediately.
- Use district time, funds, and property for authorized district business and activities only.
- Dress and grooming of district employees shall be clean, neat, in a manner appropriate for their assignments, and in accordance with any additional standards established by their supervisors and approved by the superintendent.

All district employees should perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, district policies and procedures, and ethical standards. Violation of policies, regulations, or guidelines may result in disciplinary action, including termination. Alleged incidents of certain misconduct by

educators, including having a criminal record, must be reported to SBEC not later than the seventh day the superintendent first learns of the incident. The *Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educator*, adopted by the State Board for Educator Certification, which all district employees must adhere to, is reprinted below:

CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARD PRACTICES FOR TEXAS EDUCATORS

Statement of Purpose

The Texas educator shall comply with standard practices and ethical conduct toward students, professional colleagues, school officials, parents, and members of the community and shall safeguard academic freedom. The Texas educator, in maintaining the dignity of the profession, shall respect and obey the law, demonstrate personal integrity, and exemplify honesty. The Texas educator, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall extend just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession. The Texas educator, in accepting a position of public trust, shall measure success by the progress of each student toward realization of his or her potential as an effective citizen. The Texas educator, in fulfilling responsibilities in the community, shall cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools of the community.

Professional Standards

1. Professional Ethical Conduct, Practices, and Performance

Standard 1.1 The educator shall not knowingly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the school district or educational institution.

Standard 1.2 The educator shall not knowingly misappropriate, divert, or use monies, personnel, property, or equipment committed to his or her charge for personal gain or advantage.

Standard 1.3 The educator shall not submit fraudulent requests for reimbursement, expenses or pay.

Standard 1.4 The educator shall not use institutional or professional privileges for personal or partisan advantage.

Standard 1.5 The educator shall neither accept nor offer gratuities, gifts, or favors that impair professional judgment or to obtain special advantage. This standard shall not restrict the acceptance of gifts or tokens offered and accepted openly from students, parents, or other persons or organizations in recognition or appreciation of service.

Standard 1.6 The educator shall not falsify records, or direct or coerce others to do so.

Standard 1.7 The educator shall comply with state regulations, written local school board policies, and other applicable state and federal laws.

Standard 1.8 The educator shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position or a responsibility on the basis of professional qualifications.

2. Ethical Conduct toward Professional Colleagues

Standard 2.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential health or personnel information concerning colleagues unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 2.2 The educator shall not harm others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system.

Standard 2.3 The educator shall adhere to written local school board policies and state and federal laws regarding the hiring, evaluation, and dismissal of personnel.

Standard 2.4 The educator shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political, professional, or citizenship rights and responsibilities.

Standard 2.5 The educator shall not discriminate against or coerce a colleague on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, disability, or family status.

Standard 2.6 The educator shall not use coercive means or promise of special treatment in order to influence professional decisions or colleagues.

Standard 2.7 The educator shall not retaliate against any individual who has filed a complaint with the SBEC under this chapter.

3. Ethical Conduct toward Students

Standard 3.1 The educator shall not reveal confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law.

Standard 3.2 The educator shall not knowingly treat a student in a manner that adversely affects the student's learning, physical health, mental health, or safety.

Standard 3.3 The educator shall not deliberately or knowingly misrepresent facts regarding a student.

Standard 3.4 The educator shall not exclude a student from participation in program, deny benefits to a student, or grant an advantage to a student on the basis of race, color, sex disability, national origin, religion, or family status.

Standard 3.5 The educator shall not engage in physical mistreatment of a student.

Standard 3.6 The educator shall not solicit or engage in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student.

Standard 3.7 The educator shall not furnish alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs to any student or knowingly allow any student to consume alcohol or illegal/unauthorized drugs in the presence of the educator.

Harassment

Policies DH, DIA

Employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment, of other employees or students. While acting in the course of their employment, employees shall not engage in prohibited harassment of other persons, including board members, vendors, contractors, volunteers, or parents. A substantiated charge of harassment will result in disciplinary action.

Employees who believe they have been harassed are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the campus principal, supervisor, or appropriate district official. If the campus principal or supervisor is the subject of a complaint, the employee should report the complaint directly to the superintendent.

Harassment of Students

Policies DH, FFG, FFH

Sexual and other harassment of students by employees are forms of discrimination and are prohibited by law. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a district employee is always prohibited, even if consensual. Employees who suspect a student may have experienced prohibited harassment are obligated to report their concerns to the campus principal or other appropriate district official. All allegations of prohibited harassment or abuse of a student will be reported to the student's parents and promptly investigated. An employee who knows of or suspects child abuse must also report his or her knowledge or suspicion to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

Drug Abuse Prevention

Policies DH, DI

Sundown ISD is committed to maintaining a drug-free environment and will not tolerate the use of illegal drugs in the workplace. Employees who use or are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs as defined by the Texas Controlled Substances Act during working hours may be dismissed. The district's policy regarding employee drug use follows:

Alcohol and Drugs

Policy DH (LOCAL)

A copy of this policy, the purpose of which is to eliminate drug abuse from the workplace, shall be provided each employee at the beginning of each year or upon employment. All employees shall be involved in an ongoing random testing program. Employees shall not manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, use, or be under the influence of any of the following substances during working hours while at school or at school-related activities during or outside of usual working hours:

- Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by law, including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.
- Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage.
- Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation.
- Any other intoxicant, or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drugs.

An employee need not be legally intoxicated to be considered "under the influence" of a controlled substance.

Exception

An employee who manufactures, possesses, or dispenses a substance listed above as part of the employee's job responsibilities, or who uses a drug authorized by a licensed physician prescribed for the employee's personal use shall not be considered to have violated this policy.

Notice

Each employee shall be given a copy of the District's notice regarding drug-free schools shown below:

DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS REQUIREMENTS

The District prohibits the unlawful distribution, possession, or use of illicit drugs, inhalants, and alcohol on school premises or as part of any of the District's activities.

Employees who violate this prohibition shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions. Such sanctions may include referral to drug and alcohol counseling or rehabilitation programs or employee assistance programs, termination from employment with the District, and referral to appropriate law enforcement officials for prosecution. [See policies at DH and DHE] *41 U.S.C. 702(a)(1)(A); 28 TAC 169.2*

Compliance with these requirements and prohibitions is mandatory and is a condition of employment.

[This notice complies with notice requirements imposed by the federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989 (20 U.S.C. 3224a and 34 CFR 86.201)]

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Policy DG, DH, FFG, GRA

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to a local office or to the Texas Abuse Hotline (800-252-5400). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

Under state law, any person reporting or assisting in the investigation of reported child abuse or neglect is immune from liability unless the report is made in bad faith or with malicious intent. In addition, the district is prohibited from retaliating against an employee who, in good faith, reports child abuse or neglect or who participates in an investigation regarding an allegation of child abuse or neglect.

An employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in prosecution for the commission of a Class B misdemeanor. In addition, a certified employee's failure to report suspected child abuse may result in disciplinary procedures by SBEC for a violation of the *Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators*.

Employees who suspect that a student has been or may be abused or neglected should report their concerns to the campus principal. This includes students with disabilities who are no longer minors. Employees are not required to report their concern to the principal before making a report to the appropriate agencies. In addition, employees must cooperate with child abuse and neglect investigators. Reporting the concern to the principal does not relieve the employee of the requirement to report to the appropriate state agency. Interference with a child abuse investigation by denying an interviewer's request to interview a student at school or requiring the presence of a parent or school administrator against the desires of the duly authorized investigator is prohibited.

Fraud and Financial Impropriety

Policy DG, CAA

All employees should act with integrity and diligence in duties involving the district's financial resources. The district prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below. Fraud and financial impropriety includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the district
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document
- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other district assets, including employee time
- Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of district financial transactions
- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district information or activities
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties
- Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the district
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the district
- Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment
- Failing to provide financial records required by state or local entities
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy
- Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the district

Conflict of Interest

Policy BBFA, DBD

Employees are required to disclose to their supervisor any situation that creates a potential conflict of interest with proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interests of the district. This includes the following:

- A personal financial interest
- A business interest
- Any other obligation or relationship

An employee with a substantial interest in a business entity or interest in real property must disclose the interest to the district prior to the award of a contract or authorization of payment. This is done by filing an affidavit with the superintendent. An employee is also considered to have substantial interest if a close family member (e.g., spouse, parent, child, or spouse's parent or child) has a substantial interest.

Gifts and Favors

Policy DBD

Employees may not accept gifts or favors that could influence, or be construed to influence, the employee's discharge of assigned duties. The acceptance of a gift, favor, or service by an administrator or teacher that might reasonably tend to influence the selection of textbooks may result in prosecution of a Class B misdemeanor offense. This does not include staff development, teacher training, or instructional materials, such as maps or worksheets, that convey information to students or contribute to the learning process.

Associations and Political Activities

Policy DGA

The district will not directly or indirectly discourage employees from participating in political affairs or require any employee to join any group, club, committee, organization, or association. Employees may join or refuse to join any professional association or organization.

An individual's employment will not be affected by membership or a decision not to be a member of any employee organization that exists for the purpose of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

Use of district resources, including work time, for political activities is prohibited.

Safety

Policy CK

The district has developed and promotes a comprehensive program to ensure the safety of its employees, students, and visitors. The safety program includes guidelines and procedures for responding to emergencies and activities to help reduce the frequency of accidents and injuries. To prevent or minimize injuries to employees, coworkers, and students, and to protect and conserve district equipment, employees must comply with the following requirement:

- Observe all safety rules.
- Keep work areas clean and orderly at all times.
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor.

- Operate only equipment or machines for which they have training and authorization

Employees with questions or concerns relating to safety programs and issues can contact their campus principals.

Tobacco Use

Policies DH, GKA, FNCD

Smoking or using tobacco products is prohibited by law on all district-owned property and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off campus. This includes all buildings, playground areas, parking facilities, and facilities used for athletics and other activities. **Drivers of district-owned vehicles are prohibited from smoking while inside the vehicle.** Notices stating that smoking is prohibited by law and punishable by a fine are displayed in prominent places in all school buildings.

Employee Arrest and Convictions

Policy DH

An employee must notify his or her principal or immediate supervisor within three calendar days of any arrest, indictment, conviction, no contest or guilty plea, or other adjudication of any felony, any offense involving moral turpitude, and any of the other offenses listed below:

- Crimes involving school property or funds
- Crimes involving attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator
- Crimes that occur wholly or in part of school property or at a school-sponsored activity
- Crimes involving moral turpitude

Moral turpitude includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Dishonesty
- Fraud
- Deceit
- Theft
- Misrepresentation
- Deliberate violence
- Base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of the actor
- Drug- or alcohol-related offenses
- Acts constituting abuse under the Texas Family Code

Possession of Firearms and Weapons

Policies FNCG, GKA

Employees, visitors, and students are prohibited from bringing firearms, knives, clubs or other prohibited weapons onto school premises (i.e., building or portion of a building) or any grounds or building where a school-sponsored activity takes place. To ensure the safety of all persons, employees who observe or suspect a violation of the district's weapons policy should report it to their supervisors immediately.

Visitors in the Workplace

Policy GKC

All visitors are expected to enter any district facility through the main entrance and sign in or report to the campus principal's office or central office as appropriate. Authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destination. Employees who observe an unauthorized individual on the district premises should immediately direct him or her to the building office or contact the administrator in charge.

Copyrighted Materials

Policy EFE

Employees are expected to comply with the provisions of copyright law relating to the unauthorized use, reproduction, distribution, performance, or display of copyrighted materials (i.e., printed material, videos, computer data and programs, etc.). Rented videotapes are to be used in the classroom for educational purposes only. Duplication or backups of computer programs and data must be made within the provisions of the purchase agreement.

Computer Use and Data Management

Policy CQ

The district's electronic communications systems, including its network access to the Internet, is primarily for administrative and instructional purposes. Limited personal use of the system is permitted if the use:

- Imposes no tangible cost to the district
- Does not unduly burden the district's computer or network resources
- Has no adverse effect on job performance or on a student's academic performance

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications systems are not confidential and can be monitored at any time to ensure appropriate use.

Employees and students who are authorized to use the systems are required to abide by the provisions of the district's communications systems policy and administrative procedures. Failure to do so can result in suspension or termination of privileges and may lead to disciplinary action. Please refer to the *Sundown ISD Staff Acceptable Use Policy for Electric Communication and Data Management* as provided each employee annually, for details.

Personal Use of Electronic Media

Policy DH

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), Web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), videosharing Web sites (e.g., YouTube), editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram). Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication such as landlines, cell phones, and Web-based applications.

As role models for the district's students, employees are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as district employees. Employees will be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his

or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If an employee wishes to use a social network site or similar media for personal purposes, the employee is responsible for the content on the employee's page, including content added by the employee, the employee's friends, or members of the public who can access the employee's page, and for Web links on the employee's page. The employee is also responsible for maintaining privacy settings appropriate to the content.

An employee who uses electronic media for personal purposes shall observe the following:

- The employee may not set up or update the employee's personal social network page(s) using the district's computers, network, or equipment.
- The employee shall not use the district's logo or other copyrighted material of the district without express, written consent.
- The employee continues to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus. These restrictions include:

*Confidentiality of student records. [See Policy FL]

*Confidentiality of health or personnel information concerning colleagues, unless disclosure serves lawful professional purposes or is required by law. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]

*Confidentiality of district records, including educator evaluations and private e-mail addresses. [See Policy GBA]

*Copyright law [See Policy EFE]

*Prohibition against harming others by knowingly making false statements about a colleague or the school system. [See Policy DH (EXHIBIT)]

Asbestos Management Plan

Policy CKA

The district is committed to providing a safe environment for employees. An accredited management planner has developed an asbestos management plan for each piece of district property. A copy of the district's management plan is kept in the superintendent's office and is available for inspection during normal business hours.

Pest Control Treatment

Policy DI, CLB

Employees are prohibited from applying any pesticide or herbicide without appropriate training and prior approval for the integrated pest management (IPM) coordinator. Any application of pesticide or herbicide must be done in a manner prescribed by law and the district's integrated pest management program.

Notices of planned pest control treatment will be posted in a district building 48 hours before the treatment begins. Notices are generally located on the central office bulletin board and treatment is scheduled monthly, every 4th Friday. Pest control information sheets are available from campus principals or facility managers upon request.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Bad Weather Closing

Policy CKC

The district may close schools because of bad weather or emergency conditions. When such conditions exist, the superintendent will make the official decision concerning the closing of the district's facilities. When it becomes necessary to open late or to release students early, an electronic School Reach information blast will go out, and the following radio and television stations will be notified by school officials:

KLVT AM Radio Levelland Dial 1230
KLLL (Lubbock) FM 96.3 www.klll.com
KRLB (Lubbock) FM99.5 www.krlb.net
KCBD (Lubbock) Ch 11 www.kcbd.com
KLBK (Lubbock) Ch 13 www.klbk.com
KMAC (Lubbock) Ch 28 www.abc28.net
KJTV Fox (Lubbock) Ch. 34

Emergencies

Policy CKC

All employees should have a copy of the *Crisis Management Plan*, and be familiar with the evacuation diagrams posted in their work areas. Fire, tornado, and other emergency drills will be conducted to familiarize employees and students with evacuation procedures. Fire extinguishers are located throughout all district buildings. Employees should know the location of the extinguishers nearest their place of work and how to use them.

Purchasing Procedures

Policy CH

All requests for purchases must be submitted electronically to the business office. ***Purchase orders must be approved by the appropriate administrator prior to making a purchase.*** Once approval is obtained, the purchase order should be sent electronically to the business office immediately. No purchases, charges, or commitments to buy goods or services for the district can be made without an approved PO number. ***The district may not reimburse employees or assume responsibility for purchases made without prior authorization.*** Employees are not permitted to purchase supplies or equipment for personal use through the district's business office. Contact the business office for additional information on purchasing procedures.

Name and Address Changes

It is important that employment records be kept up to date. Employees should notify central office if there are any changes or corrections to their name, home address, home telephone number, marital status, emergency contact, or beneficiary. Forms to process a change in personal information can be obtained from central office.

Personnel Records

Policy GBA

Sundown ISD maintains personnel records at the central administration offices. The employee has the responsibility to make sure that all required records, including service records, certificates, licenses, professional development records, and the like are submitted to the appropriate offices when requested.

Under the Texas Public Information Act, and because employees of Sundown ISD are public employees, most district records, including personnel records and salary information, are public information and must be released upon written request. Employees may choose to have the following personal information withheld by submitting a written request to the central office:

- Address
- Phone Number
- Social Security Number
- Information that reveals whether they have family members

Otherwise, personal information will be released to the public.

Official written evaluations for teachers and administrators are confidential and will not be released. If the district receives a request for copies of personnel records, the central office will consult with the district's attorney to determine which records must be released and will take the necessary steps under the Public Information Act to withhold records that are confidential.

Building Use

Policy GKD

The central office and administration are responsible for scheduling the use of facilities after school hours. Contact the Administration Office to request to use school facilities and to obtain information on the fees charged.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Resignations

Policy DFE

Contract Employees. Contract employees may resign their position without penalty at the end of any school year if written notice is received 45 days before the first day of instruction of the following school year. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the superintendent and shall include the reasons for resigning. Contract employees may not resign during the school year, after active duty has begun, without the consent of the superintendent. Resignation without the consent of the superintendent may result in disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

The superintendent will notify the SBEC when an employee resigns and reasonable evidence exists to indicate that the employee has engaged in any of the acts listed in *Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification on (page 23)*.

Non-contract Employees. Non-contract employees may resign their positions at any time. A written notice of resignation should be submitted to the superintendent at least two weeks prior to the effective date. Employees are encouraged to include the reasons for leaving in the letter of resignation but are not required to do so.

Dismissal or Non-renewal of Contract Employees

Policies DFAA, DFBA, DFBA, DFBB, DFCA, DFD, DFF

Employees on probationary, term, and continuing contracts can be dismissed during the school year or nonrenewed at the end of the year according to the procedures outlined in district policies. Contract employees dismissed during the school year, suspended without pay, or subject to a reduction in force are entitled to receive notice of the recommended action, an explanation of the charges against them, and an opportunity for a hearing. The time lines and procedures to be followed when a suspension, termination, or nonrenewal occurs will be provided when a written notice is given to an employee. Advance notification requirements do not apply when a contract employee is dismissed for failing to obtain or maintain appropriate certification or whose certification is revoked for misconduct. Information on the timelines and procedures can be found in the DF policies that are provided to employees or in the policy manuals located in the central office, campus principal's office and in the teacher workrooms.

Dismissal of Non-contract Employees

Policy DCD

Non-contract employees are employed at will and may be dismissed without notice, a description of the reasons for dismissal, or a hearing. It is unlawful for the district to dismiss any employee for reasons of race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, military status, any other basis protected by law, or in retaliation for the exercise of certain protected legal rights. Noncontract employees who are dismissed have the right to grieve the termination. The dismissed employee must follow the district process outlined in this handbook when pursuing the grievance. (See Complaints and grievances, page 13.)

Exit Interviews and Procedures

Policy DC

Exit interviews will be scheduled for all employees leaving the district. Information on the continuation of benefits, release of information, and procedures for requesting references will be provided at this time. Separating employees are asked to provide the district with a forwarding address and phone number and complete a questionnaire that provides the district with feedback on their employment experience.

All district keys, books, property, and equipment must be returned upon separation from employment. The district may withhold the cost of any items not returned from the final paycheck.

Reports to the State Board for Educator Certification

Policy DF

The dismissal or resignation of a certified employee will be reported to the SBEC when the superintendent first learns about an alleged incident of conduct that involves the following:

- Any form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or any other illegal conduct with a student or a minor
- The possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance
- The illegal transfer, appropriation, or expenditure of school property or funds
- An attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to a professional position or to receive additional compensation associated with a position
- Committing a crime on school property or at a school-sponsored event
- Violating assessment instrument security procedures

Reports Concerning Court-Ordered Withholding

The district is required to report the termination of employees that are under court order or writ of withholding for child support or spousal maintenance to the court and the individual receiving the support (Texas Family Code S8.210, 158.211). Notice of the following must be sent to the court and support recipient:

- Termination of employment not later than the seventh day after the date of termination
- Employee's last known address
- Name and address of the employee's new employer, if known

STUDENT ISSUES

Equal Educational Opportunities

Policy FB

The Sundown Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Questions or concerns about discrimination of students on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin should be directed to the superintendent, ***Scott Marshall***.

Student Records

Policy FL

Student records are confidential and are to be protected from unauthorized inspection or use. Employees should take precautions to maintain the confidentiality of all student records. The following people are the only people who have general access to a student's records:

- Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes
- The student (if 18 or older or attending an institution of postsecondary education)
- School officials with legitimate educational interests

The student handbook provides parents and students with detailed information on student records. Parents or students who want to review student records should be directed to the campus principal for assistance.

Parent and Student Complaints

Policy FNG

In an effort to hear and resolve parent and student complaints in a timely manner and at the lowest level possible, the board has adopted orderly processes for handling complaints on different issues. Any campus office or the superintendent's office can provide parents and students with information on filing a complaint.

Parents are encouraged to discuss problems or complaints with the teachers or the appropriate administrator at any time. Parents and students with complaints that cannot be resolved should be directed to the campus principal. The formal complaint process provides parents and students with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with a principal's response.

Administering Medication to Students

Policy FFAC

Only the school nurse and designated employees can administer medication to students. A student who must take prescription medication during the school day must bring a written request from his or her parent and the medicine, in its original, properly labeled container. Contact the principal for information on procedures that must be followed when administering medication to students.

Dietary Supplements

Policy DH, FFAC

District employees are prohibited by state law from knowingly selling, marketing, or distributing a dietary supplement that contains performance-enhancing compounds to a student with whom the employee has contact as part of his or her school district duties. In addition, employees may not knowingly endorse or suggest the ingestion, intranasal application, or inhalation of a performance-enhancing dietary supplement to any student.

Psychotropic Drugs

Policy FFAC

District employees are prohibited by state law from doing the following

- Recommending that a student use a psychotropic drug
- Suggesting a particular diagnosis
- Excluding from class or school-related activity a student whose parent refuses to consent to a psychiatric evaluation or to authorize the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student

Student Discipline

Policies in the FN series and FO series

Students are expected to follow the classroom rules, campus rules, and rules listed in the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct. Teachers and administrators are responsible for taking disciplinary action based on a range of discipline management strategies that have been adopted by the district. Other employees that have concerns about a particular student's conduct should contact the classroom teacher or campus principal.

Student Attendance

Policy FDD

Teachers and staff should be familiar with the district's policies and procedures for attendance accounting. These procedures require minor students to have parental consent before they are allowed to leave campus. When absent from school, the student, upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. These requirements are addressed in campus training and in the student handbook. Contact the campus principal for additional information.

Hazing

Policy FNCC, FO

Students must have prior approval from the principal or designee for any type of "initiation rites" of a school club or organization. Any teacher, administrator, or employee who observes a student engaged in any form of hazing, who has reason to know or suspect that a student intends to engage in hazing, or has engaged in hazing, must report that fact or suspicion to the designated campus discipline person.

APPENDIX

Policy DAA (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DBD (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DBF (Local)
Policy DC Series (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DEA (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DEAA (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DEC (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DFAC (Legal)
Policy DFB Series (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DFD (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DFE (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DFF (Local)
Policy DGBA (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DH (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DHE (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DI (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DIA (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DK (Legal) and (Local)
Policy DN Series (Legal) and (Local)
Employee Handbook Receipt (2)
Employee User Agreement – Computer Resources Policy (2)

Sundown ISD Staff Acceptable Use Policy for Electronic Communication and Data Management

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate electronic media resources for instructional and administrative purposes.

Availability of Access

Access to the District's electronic communication system, including the Internet, shall be made available to students and employees for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations. Limited personal use of the system shall be permitted if the use:

- (1) Imposes no tangible cost on the district;
- (2) Does not unduly burden the District's computer or network resources;
and
- (3) Has no adverse effect on an employee's job performance or on a student's academic performance

Acceptable Use

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations, guidelines, and user agreements, consistent with the purposes and mission of the District and with law and policy governing copyright. (see board policy EFE)

Access to the District's electronic communication system is a privilege, not a right. All users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of administrative regulations governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to allow monitoring of their use and compliance with such regulations and guidelines. Noncompliance may result in suspension of access or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action consistent with District policies. Violations of the law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the District.

Monitored Use

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by employees are not private and may be monitored at any time by designated District staff to ensure appropriate use.

Intellectual Property Rights

Students shall retain all rights to work they create using the District's electronic communications system. As agents of the District, employees shall have limited rights to work they create using the District's electronic communications system. The District shall retain the right to use any product created for its use by an employee even when the author is no longer an employee of the District.

Disclaimer of Liability

The District shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic communication resources, violations of copyright restrictions or other laws, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The District shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy, age appropriateness, or usability of any information found on the Internet.

Consent Requirements

Copyrighted software or data may not be placed on any system connected to the District's system without permission from the holder of the copyright. Only the owner(s) or individual(s) the owner specifically authorizes may upload copyrighted material to the system. No original work created by any District employee will be posted on a web page under the District's control unless the District has received written consent from the employee who created the work.

System Access

Access to the District's electronic communication system will be governed as follows:

1. As appropriate and with the written approval of the immediate supervisor, District employees will be granted access to the District's system.
2. Students in grades PK-5 will be granted access to the District's system by their teachers, as appropriate. Students in grades 6-12 will be assigned individual accounts.
3. The District may require any student passwords to be changed periodically as determined by the Principal.
4. Any system user identified as a security risk or as having violated District and/or campus computer guidelines may be denied access to the District's system.

Technology Coordinator Responsibilities

The technology coordinator for the District's electronic communications system (or designee) will:

1. Work with principals in disseminating and enforcing applicable District policies and acceptable use guidelines for the District's system.
2. Work with principals to ensure that all users of the District's system complete and sign an agreement to abide by District policies and administrative regulations regarding such use. All such agreements will be maintained on file in the principal's office.
3. Work with principals to ensure that employees supervising students who use the District's system provide training emphasizing the appropriate use of this resource.
4. Ensure that all software loaded on computers in the District is consistent with District standards and is properly licensed.
5. Be authorized to monitor or examine all system activities, including electronic mail transmissions, as deemed appropriate by the campus principal to ensure proper use of the system.
6. Set limits for data storage within the District's system, as needed.

Individual User Responsibility

The following standards will apply to all users of the District's electronic information/communications system:

1. The individual in whose name a system account is issued will be responsible at all times for its proper use.
2. The system may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by District policy or guidelines.
3. System users may not use another person's system account.
4. Students may not distribute personal information about themselves or others by means of the electronic communication system.
5. System users must purge electronic mail in accordance with established guidelines.
6. System users may not redistribute copyrighted programs or data except with the written permission of the copyright holder or designee in

accordance with applicable copyright laws, District policy, and administrative regulations.

7. System users may not send or post messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.

8. System users may not purposefully access materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.

9. System users should be mindful that use of school-related electronic mail addresses might cause some recipients or other readers of that mail to assume that they represent the District or school, whether or not that was the user's intention.

10. System users may not waste District resources related to the electronic communications system.

11. System users may not gain unauthorized access to resources or information.

Vandalism Prohibited

Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy District equipment or data or data of another user of the District's system, or any of the agencies or other networks that are connected to the Internet is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance are violations of District policy and may constitute criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. Such prohibited activity includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses. Vandalism will result in the cancellation of system use privileges and will require restitution for costs associated with system restoration, as well as other appropriate disciplinary consequences.

Forgery Prohibited

Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users, deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail, or the use of another person's user ID and/or password is prohibited.

Information Content/Third Party Supplied Information

System users and parents of students with access to the District's system should be aware that use of the system may provide access to other electronic communications systems in the global electronic network that may contain inaccurate and/or objectionable materials. A student who gains access to such material is expected to discontinue the access as quickly as possible and to report the incident to the supervising teacher. A student who knowingly brings prohibited materials into the school's electronic environment will be subject to suspension of access and/or revocation of privileges on the District's system and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and Campus Handbook.

Participation in Chat Rooms and Newsgroups

Employees and students are prohibited from participating in any chat room or newsgroup accessed on the Internet **(during the academic day)** unless prior approval has been given by appropriate administrator.

NETWORK ETIQUETTE

System users are expected to observe the following network etiquette:

1. Be polite; messages typed in capital letters are the computer equivalent of shouting and are considered rude.

2. Use appropriate language; swearing, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, and any other inflammatory language are prohibited.
3. Pretending to be someone else when sending or receiving messages is inappropriate.
4. Transmitting obscene messages or pictures is prohibited.
5. Using the network in such a way that would disrupt the use of the network by other users is prohibited.

Internet Policy

New technologies have shifted the way we access information and have provided access to unique resources as well as the opportunity for collaborative work. These technologies have opened the doors to the world and all cultures provided by it. However, due to the fact that the Internet is a global network of computer networks, its content is beyond the control of SISD and its staff. In light of this, SISD will employ diligent efforts and sound educational practices to make accessing the Internet as safe as possible. In spite of the foregoing efforts, there remains the risk of encountering inappropriate materials. It is, therefore necessary for SISD staff and students to comply with all policies and procedures related to the Internet and understand that they are responsible for their actions while using the Internet. In addition, all behavior on the Internet should conform to general staff and student policies found in this document and the Student Code of Conduct. Noncompliance with applicable regulations may result in suspension or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action consistent with District policies. Violations of local, state, and/or federal laws may result in criminal prosecution. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated District staff to ensure appropriate use for educational or administrative purposes.

Access to the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and as such can be revoked as a result of inappropriate use. Inappropriate use would include, but not be limited to the following:

1. violating copyright laws
2. using the District's network for commercial activity or any illegal activity
3. use of impolite or abusive language
4. the transmission or receipt of offensive or sexually explicit materials
5. violation of the policies and procedures of other networks encountered on the Internet
6. attempting to illegally enter any other computer system by "hacking" passwords of authorized users.

A violation of this policy would be dealt with according to Employee Discipline Policies.

Cell Phone Usage

Employee personal use of cell phones while supervising children or in a school assembly hinders the ability of a staff member to appropriately do his/her job, and therefore is prohibited unless it is an emergency situation.

Sundown ISD Employee Handbook/Electronic Communication Acceptable Use Form

Name _____

Campus _____

I hereby acknowledge receipt of my electronic copy of the Sundown ISD Employee Handbook, Electronic Communication Acceptable Use Policy, and have reviewed the required Employment Policies as found on the web-site. I agree to read the handbook, acceptable use policy and required employee policies, and abide by the standards, policies, and procedures defined or referenced in these documents.

The information in these documents is subject to change. I understand that changes in district policies may supersede, modify, or render obsolete the information summarized in these documents. As the district provides updated policy information, I accept responsibility for reading and abiding by the changes.

I understand that no modifications to contractual relationships or alterations of at-will employment relationships are intended by either of these documents.

I understand that I have an obligation to inform my supervisor of any changes in personal information, such as phone number, address, etc. I also accept responsibility for contacting my supervisor if I have questions or concerns or need further explanation.

Signature

Date