



# Rutherford County Board of Education

2240 Southpark Drive  
Murfreesboro, TN 37128  
(615) 893-5812 phone

## CERTIFIED EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

RUTHERFORD COUNTY BOARD OF  
EDUCATION  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
FORM

- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and become familiar with the policies of the Rutherford County Board of Education. The most current version is posted on the Rutherford County website at [www.rcschools.net](http://www.rcschools.net)
- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and become familiar with the Employee Handbook (Certified or Classified) that is posted on the Rutherford County Schools web site at [www.rcschools.net](http://www.rcschools.net)
- I acknowledge that I have read the following information pertaining to benefits enrollment.
  - To enroll in insurance benefit coverage for myself or my eligible dependents, I must complete the necessary steps within 30 calendar days of my date of hire. The first day of my employment serves as the first day of my 30 calendar day deadline.
  - If I fail to enroll within 30 calendar days of the start of my employment I will have to wait until the Annual Open Enrollment period to enroll for benefits which would become effective in January of the following year.
  - I must provide documentation to verify my eligible dependents within 60 calendar days of my date of hire. I understand that working spouses who have insurance offered through their employer are not eligible to participate in the Rutherford County medical plan. Dependent eligibility and documents needed for verification can be found at [www.rutherfordcountyttn.gov/rm](http://www.rutherfordcountyttn.gov/rm)
  - Should I acquire dependents or need to remove dependents, within 30 calendar days of the event(s), I must contact a Benefits Specialist in the Risk Management Department.
  - I understand that information pertaining to my enrollment and utilization of the medical plan or other benefits offered to me through my employment will be available to the Risk Management Department for the purpose of plan administration.
- Furthermore, by signing below, I understand that information pertaining to my enrollment and utilization of the medical plan or other benefits offered to me through my employment will be available to the Risk Management Department for the purpose of plan administration. The Risk Management Department is located at 303 N. Church Street, Suite 201, Murfreesboro, TN 37130.
- I understand that if I am approved for a non-paid leave of absence that the Board of Education will not contribute any monies toward my monthly insurance premium unless I am on approved Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. It is my responsibility to notify of my leave status and make the medical insurance payment directly to the Risk Management Department at 303 N. Church Street. This payment must be made by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to keep my insurance in effect.
- If in a certified position, I understand that my employment is based on a year-to-year school contract beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending June 30<sup>th</sup> until tenured.
- I understand that if a new degree is added to my Tennessee teaching license, it is my responsibility to provide a copy of that updated license to Human Resources
- If in a classified position, I understand that I am employed in an at-will position with no contract requirements.
- I understand that if I leave employment within 6 months of my contract date, the county will be reimbursed through payroll deduction for my fingerprinting charges.
- I understand that if I am hired as a part-time employee, I will not be eligible for benefits. I also understand that sick days will be earned at the rate of .5 per 20 days worked and a personal day will be earned at the rate of 1 (one) for 100 days worked.

## CERTIFIED EMPLOYMENT HANDBOOK

### **BOARD POLICIES**

The Rutherford County Board of Education has established board policies to govern the school system. The policy manual is located on the Rutherford County web site. These policies are accessible and should be reviewed by all certified employees.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

It is the policy of the Rutherford County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its educational programs or employment policies as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of

1973, Title IX (1972 Educational Amendments), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX should be directed to Pierrecia Lyons. Inquiries regarding Section 504 or the Americans with Disabilities Act should be directed to Dr. Andrea Anthony of the Rutherford County School System, 2240 Southpark Drive, Murfreesboro, TN 37128. Complaints may also be filed with the Tennessee Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights at (615) 253-1550 and/or the United States Department of Education by contacting (404) 562-6446.

The current complaint managers for complaints involving harassment or discrimination are Dr. Andrea Anthony and Ms. Sara Page, Rutherford County School System, 2240 Southpark Drive, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37128, Telephone: (615) 893-5812.

### **BENEFITS                    615-898-7715**

Employee health and welfare benefits are handled by the Rutherford County Risk Management department located at 303 N. Church Street, Murfreesboro, TN.

A medical insurance plan is available to all regular full-time employees. To be eligible for the plan, the eligible employee must enroll in medical, vision or dental benefits on-line within 30 calendar days of the hire date listed on the employee contract. The employee will receive complete instructions regarding benefit enrollment as part of your new hire information. If the employee does not enroll in benefits within 30 calendar days starting with their date of hire, the employee must wait until the next annual open enrollment period to enroll in the insurance program. The County provides a life insurance plan and long-term disability coverage to all benefit eligible employee at no cost to the employee.

Special enrollment period: If an employee loses coverage under another health plan and (a) was under a COBRA continuation provision and the coverage under such provision was exhausted; or (b) was not under such a provision and either coverage was terminated as a result of loss of eligibility for the coverage (including as a result of legal separation, divorce, death, termination of employment, or reduction in the number of hours of employment) or employment contributions toward coverage were terminated; and the Employee makes application under the Plan within thirty (30) calendar days of losing

coverage, then he/she will be allowed to enroll in the Plan.

If you are approved for a non-paid leave of absence that the Board of Education will not contribute any monies toward my monthly insurance premium unless you are on approved Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. It is the employee's responsibility to notify of the leave status and make the medical insurance payment directly to the Risk Management Department at 303 N. Church Street. This payment must be made by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to keep insurance in effect. Once FMLA is exhausted, if the employee remain on leave, the Board of Education will no longer contribute towards your medical premiums and your insurance will be eligible for continuation through COBRA and portability rights.

## **DEPENDENT COVERAGE**

If you wish to enroll your Spouse or your child(ren), starting with their date of hire, a benefit eligible employee has 30 calendar days to elect coverage for themselves and/or eligible dependents. Eligible dependents include a current legal spouse, natural, adopted, step or foster children. Due to ACA requirements, all medical plan participants must have their name and social security number or Federal Identification Number (FIN) listed exactly as it appears on the employee or dependents social security or FIN card.

Verification of the dependents eligibility is required to add a child or spouse to Medical, Vision or Dental benefits. A complete list of eligible dependents and acceptable documents required to provide eligibility is located on the Risk Management website at <http://www.rutherfordcountyttn.gov/rm>. Click on Dependent Verification Information Sheet. The required documentation must be provided to the Risk Management Department no later than 60 calendar days from an employee's date of hire to avoid removal of dependent(s) added.

A benefit eligible employee may request a special enrollment due to a qualifying life event such as a birth, adoption, marriage, divorce, or loss of coverage for employee or eligible dependent. In order to make a change in coverage due to a life event, the employee must notify the Risk Management Department within 30 calendar days of the qualifying event and provide documentation to prove eligibility for any dependent added. A list of eligible Life Status Changes is available online at <http://www.rutherfordcountyttn.gov/rm>.

## **DIVORCE AND YOUR SPOUSE'S INSURANCE COVERAGE**

Divorce is a qualification for a special enrollment period. If you do not have insurance with the county but need to obtain insurance for yourself or your children following a divorce, you must do so within 30 calendar days following the date which the judge signs your final divorce papers (date of divorce).

If you maintain the insurance for you and your spouse through the Rutherford County insurance plan, your spouse may remain on the insurance plan during the period of time that your divorce is being processed within the courts. Within 30 calendar days following the finalization of your divorce, you must contact the Risk Management office and request to have your spouse removed from your insurance coverage elections. If, as part of your divorce settlement, you are required to provide insurance coverage to your ex-spouse, you must obtain an individual insurance plan for your ex-spouse through an insurance agent or if your ex-spouse obtains insurance through their employer, you

may choose to pay the insurance premium. Your divorce attorney can advise you on this matter.

If you are ordered by the court to carry insurance for your former spouse, you must obtain a private policy for this coverage. You cannot continue spousal coverage through the Rutherford County Insurance Plan once your divorce is finalized. As an employee of Rutherford County, you are required to provide notice to the Risk Management office regarding the change in dependent eligibility within 30 calendar days following your date of divorce. Your coverage change will be effective the date of divorce.

**LTD (Long Term Disability)**

Rutherford County Government also provides benefit eligible employees a Long Term Disability (LTD) insurance plan as part of the benefit package. Eligibility for the benefit is determined by the same guidelines for all other benefits. The insured plan provides a benefit of 66.67% of your earnings to a maximum of \$6,000 per month. You must be disabled for at least 180 days before you can receive the LTD benefit.

A full description of all benefits can be found at the Rutherford County Risk Management Department web site. For claims and other questions call the Rutherford County Risk Management Department at 303 N. Church Street, 898-7715, M-F, 8:00 -4:30.

**Dear Rutherford County Government Employee:**

You've likely heard about the health care reform law called the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This law was enacted, in part, to ensure all Americans have access to affordable health insurance. On January 1, 2014, the law requires all Americans (with limited exceptions) to have health insurance; those who don't will be subject to a tax penalty. This new requirement applies to you and your dependents.

**Health coverage through Rutherford County**

The County is pleased to offer high-quality, affordable health insurance to its eligible employees and their families.

*If you are eligible for Rutherford County's health plan* but currently do not have health coverage, now is a good time to consider all your health insurance options – before the individual coverage mandate becomes effective on January 1. The County's Annual Enrollment for 2014 health coverage begins October 21. Enrollment in the County's coverage satisfies the requirement to have health coverage.

*If you are not currently eligible for Rutherford County health coverage*, you may wish to review your other options, such as a spouse's or parent's plan or the Health Insurance Marketplace.

**Health coverage through the Marketplace**

On October 1, 2013, all Americans will be able to shop for and purchase affordable health insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace. Some people with lower incomes may be eligible for a tax credit (premium discount) to help pay for their coverage through the Marketplace. However, if you are eligible for the County's health coverage, regardless of your income, you likely will not be eligible for this tax credit if you choose to purchase coverage through the Marketplace. This is because the County provides and intends to continue providing health coverage that meets both the "affordability" and "minimum value standards" required by the ACA.

Enclosed is a required federal notice that provides more information about the ACA and the Marketplaces.

If you have questions or need help reviewing your options, please contact the Risk Management Department at 615-898-7715.

Sincerely,

**Rutherford County Risk Management Department**

## **Job Related Injuries (When Injured on the Job)**

### Filing a Claim

All injuries and/or illnesses, on the job, whether requiring medical attention or not, must be reported to the supervisor immediately or within the current working shift after such occurrence. If the accident involves loss of consciousness, a fatality, broken bones, loss of a body part or third degree burns, the supervisor should be notified immediately. It is then the responsibility of the supervisor to immediately notify the Safety Coordinator.

The following steps should be followed when injured:

- Supervisors must call in notification of an OJI to the Risk Management Department within one (1) working day from the date of occurrence.
- Completed reports of injuries and/or illnesses and other documentation must be filed with the Risk Management Department by the supervisor on all injuries, accidents and/or illnesses whether medical treatment is necessary or not, within two (2) working days from the date of the event. The Safety Coordinator or designee (OJI Representative) will complete and sign off on all reports of injuries, accidents and/or illnesses.
- Select an authorized physician from the **Panel of Physicians** listed on the claim report. Complete and sign the form. Be sure to keep a copy for your records.
- If you so desire, seek medical treatment from the physician you selected from the **Panel of Physicians**. Do not go to your primary care physician **-it is not protocol and will not be paid for through the OJI Program.**
- ER visits are NOT protocol, unless there is a dire need (e.g. a broken bone, torn ligament or bleeding profusely). However, if a work related injury happens after hours during the week or the weekend, you are permitted to utilize the ER – **provided your supervisor is aware of the injury.**
- Notify your supervisor of your condition and when the physician recommends you return to work.
- To avoid out of pocket expenses, prescriptions must be filled at one of the authorized pharmacies.
- If the physician recommends light or restricted duty and your supervisor can provide a job within your restrictions, you **MUST** report to work. Failure to report will terminate your OJI benefits.
- The supervisor shall complete the **Return to Work Agreement** by listing the light duty jobs that fall within the employee's restrictions. The supervisor shall also explain the restrictions to the employee and have the employee sign the agreement as acknowledgement of understanding the restrictions.
- If there is no light duty available, you will be out of work and paid through the OJI Program.

All questions regarding job related injuries should be directed to the Rutherford County Safety Coordinator at 615-898-7715.

## **PAYROLL DEPARTMENT 893-5815, EXT 22020**

### **DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Direct Deposit is the required method of payment for all employees. Each employee must complete the direct deposit form and attach a voided check or letter from the bank or institution of their choice that includes the routing and account number. Remember that the first check received will be a cashable check to allow for a pre-note run and will be mailed directly to your home address on file in the payroll department.

### **PAYSTUB Account**

All employees must register for an epaystub account.

Your **epaystub** will be active after your first payroll date; you can view your information once you create an account after your first pay check is issued.

The **epaystub** information will be cumulative for a period up to seven years and will roll off as years are added beyond seven years. Once registered, you will receive an automatic email notice each time a new **epaystub** is ready for viewing. You may register for an account with a personal or RCS email address. The instructions for creating an account are attached. If you need assistance, your school based Tech Coach or the contact listed below can assist you.

Instructions:

1. Go to <https://secure.rutherfordcountyttn.gov/epaystub/login.aspx>  
**If you get a security error, continue to website anyway**
2. First time to this site, you need to verify who you are. **Follow the directions in BLUE.**  
Username: use your last name + the last 4 of your ssn  
(Ex: smith1234)  
Password: your 5 digit zip code + the last 4 of your ssn as your password (Ex: 371291234)

**If you receive a “fail”...**

- 1) have you moved since 2012?, use the old zip code
- 2) have you changed your last name since 2012?, try your maiden name
- 3) do you hyphenate your last name? If you are Jones-Smith, enter with a space instead of the hypen -  
example – jones smith1234

If you are in the database, you will be taken to another screen in which you will enter the email address where you want to receive paystub emails. Type your password and re-enter it to confirm it is correct.



3. You will receive an email at the address you entered that contains a link to verify your email. Click on this link.
4. If your account is verified, it will state that on the page and redirect you to the login page. Use the email address you entered previously as the username and the new password you created.

Username: your email address

Password: The one you set up

If you need assistance, please call 615-898-7762 option 2 or email [support@rutherfordcountyttn.gov](mailto:support@rutherfordcountyttn.gov)

### **12 MONTH SALARY DISTRIBUTION**

All newly hired certified employees are automatically placed on a 12-month salary distribution if hired within the first 20 day work cycle. Salary for certified staff hired the initial 20 day work cycle will automatically be calculated on (10) Ten month distribution.

**Any change to salary distribution must be submitted in writing on the approved form no later than the first working day of the following year.**

### **IN-SERVICE REQUIREMENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER 615-893-5812, EXT 22073**

Included in the Rutherford County School System calendar is an allocation of 12 hours of in-service pay for the completion of independent in-service hours and in no case shall the total independent in-service hours paid to any one position exceed twelve hours. Employees that enter the system into NEW positions (positions that have not been filled during the school year) will have to fulfill the 12 hours of required in-service. Employees who enter the system to REPLACE a teacher who did not complete the year due to a resignation or who are in an INTERIM position (due to a teacher being on a non-paid leave of absence) MAY have in-service hours to complete. **The 12 hours of in-service belong to the teacher of record. If the teacher takes leave, he/she has the option to relinquish a specified number of hours to the interim teacher. Interim teachers must call the Professional Development Center to verify in-service hours and requirements for that position.**

### **Important Information About In-service from the Professional Development Center**

- Everyone who has a 200 day contract for during a school year is required to complete twelve hours of in-service on his or her own time.
- There are particular requirements according to your grade and teaching assignment. These requirements are published on the Schoolstation Bulletin Board.

- Schoolstation is the tracking mechanism for in-service credit. You use it to sign up for sessions and to view your in-service reports.
- Your log in for Schoolstation is the name part of your e-mail. The default password is boro but you may change that once you log in for the first time.
- There is a link to Schoolstation on the school system web site. Go to the Teacher tab and choose “Sign up for in-service.” The link is <https://schstation.rcs.k12.tn.us/rutherford/login.php>
- You may view your accumulated hours at any time throughout the year by logging on to the Schoolstation site. Teachers will NOT receive written reports or notifications concerning their in-service status. That report is available only at the Schoolstation site.
- If you are in an interim position or if you job share, you may have different requirements. If you are in a NEW position, regardless of when you begin work, you will need to complete 12 hours of in-service. Call the Professional Development Center at 22073 if you have ANY questions.
- Teachers who are on extended leave may not attend in-service sessions.
- If you want to attend training that is not directly provided by the school system, you must complete a Request for In-service Credit form and submit it for approval BEFORE the training. Those forms are available in the office of each school.
- If you do not complete your required hours, you will not be paid for them. The pay adjustment will be in your last check of the school year.
- All in-service must be completed and reported by the second Friday in May.

## **200 DAY CALENDAR**

Certified employees employed after the beginning of the school year should be aware of the distribution of the 200 days of compensation. This explanation is outlined on the pages entitled RCS Calendar and Certified Pay Schedule (pages 21 and 22). The certified employee’s employment status may not have allowed the employee the opportunity to earn all 12 hours of independent in-service or the two discretionary days. In addition, vacation days embedded in the calendar may have been paid and not actually earned. The Parent Teacher Conference Day is earned in ½ day increments but paid at the time the second ½ day is earned. If the certified employee did not work the first ½ day, their paycheck will be adjusted. (Contact the payroll department for a full explanation.)

Certified employees are advised to confirm their eligibility for paid days at the time they accept the position. Each position will vary depending on the circumstances of the vacant position.

## **403B SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT PLAN OR TAX-SHELTERED ANNUITIES**

The Rutherford County Board of Education has awarded the contract for the Rutherford County Schools 403(b) Plan to VALIC Retirement beginning July 1, 2008.

Retirement. VALIC Retirement offers three types of 403(b) accounts.

- Portfolio Director's Choice, an annuity product
- Profile Retirement Program, a mutual fund product
- Schwab Personal choice Retirement Account, self-directed investing

Each type offers a broad variety of investment options. Your 403(b) account can be either a traditional tax-deferred 403(b) or a Roth 403(b) which uses after-tax income.

You may contact the local VALIC Retirement office directly at 615-221-2541.

## **EXPERIENCE VERIFICATION**

New certified employees with Tennessee, out-of-state or private school experience are required to provide a VERIFICATION OF EXPERIENCE form prior to December 1 of the school year employed. This form must be signed by the authorized person in the former school system. Any verified experience received in the payroll office after December 1 will not be eligible to be applied toward the salary for the given year. The certified employee will be paid on the established degree and zero (0) years of experience during the time prior to December 1 while verification forms are being processed and reviewed.

The burden of proof for experience rests with the individual certified employee.

Experience guidelines are posted on the RCS web site, Human Resources

## **NEW DEGREES**

Upon completion of coursework for a new degree, current employees must complete the appropriate paperwork with the Institute of Higher Education and the State Department of Education. Salary adjustments are made ONLY for degrees earned by December of the given year AND when new licenses verifying the new degree are presented to the Central Office during that given year.

- Documentation of new degrees earned by August must be filed with the State Department of Education on or before December 1 of the current school year. The pay increase will be applied to the entire contract year.
- Documentation of new degrees earned by December must be filed with the State Department of Education on or before February 1 of the current school year. The pay increase will be applied to the second half of the contract.

- Salary adjustments, including retroactive pay, will be made upon submission of a copy of the new license, signed by the employee to verify accuracy, to Human Resources based on the current salary schedule.

In the spring of each year a memo will be sent to each school requesting certified employees to inform the Central Office of anticipated new degrees. Failure to notify the Central Office of the anticipated degree may result in the employee not receiving the pay advancement until the following school year.

**New employees will be paid on the degree shown on their TN teaching license. If an additional degree is pending (May or August graduation date) our office must be notified and provided with documentation at the time of employment to support a salary adjustment once a new license reflecting the advanced degree is presented.**

## RETIREMENT

It is compulsory that all full-time regular certified employees be members of Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System. Retirement and Social Security will automatically be deducted from the employee's check each month.

This guideline provides a review of benefits broken down by classification of employment status.

1. **TCRS Legacy Plan** – June 30, 2014 is the cutoff date for membership in the existing TCRS Legacy Plan for teachers. TN teachers who belonged to the TCRS Retirement Plan during the 2013/14 school year or previously employed TN teachers who are still active members of TCRS will keep their membership in the Legacy Plan. This plan is a traditional pension or defined benefit plan.

\* A previously employed TN teacher will have lost her/his TCRS Legacy Plan membership if the teacher withdrew her/his employee contributions or if the teacher was not vested and has not been employed as a teacher for seven years or more. TCRS staff will decide the status of these teachers.

\*\*New teachers hired after July 1, 2014 who were previously employed as support staff who are already members of the TCRS Legacy Retirement Plan will go to the new TCRS Hybrid Teacher Plan. However, TCRS will maintain a separate Legacy Retirement Plan account for that employee's time as support staff provided service is not terminated.

2. **TCRS Hybrid Plan** - New teachers hired after July 1, 2014 who do not have an active membership in the TCRS Legacy Plan as a teacher will be enrolled in the Hybrid Plan. The Hybrid Plan has two components:
  - A. Traditional Pension or Defined Benefit plan - Five years of service are required for vesting
  - B. State 401(k) or Defined Contribution plan – immediate vesting

for employee. Monies in this plan are deposited in the employee's state 401(k) account. RetireReadyTN is the state's current 401(k) provider- [www.treasury.tn.gov/dc](http://www.treasury.tn.gov/dc). The employee is responsible for managing his/her account.

- a. Employee contribution is 2% - All Hybrid Plan employees are automatically enrolled with a 2.0% employee contribution. Employees may opt out of making this 2.0% contribution or contribute a different amount. The state recommends that employees contribute at least 2%.
- b. School system contribution is 5%.

All enrollment, beneficiary notification, name/address changes, annual statements etc. must be accessed/ completed online through the TCRS Concord website. At [www.treasury.state.tn.us/tcrs/](http://www.treasury.state.tn.us/tcrs/)

TCRS WILL COMMUNICATE WITH THE EMPLOYEE VIA THE HOME ADDRESS LISTED IN THE RCS PAYROLL DEPARTMENT. EMPLOYEES MUST SUBMIT A NAME/ADDRESS CHANGE FORM TO MAINTAIN CURRENT RECORDS IN PAYROLL.

INTERIM teachers have optional membership rights in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (TCRS). The federal law now imposes a ten-percent (10%) penalty on tax-deferred contributions withdrawn from a retirement system prior to retirement age. Since a majority of interim teachers obtain a refund on their TCRS account, this will allow the employee to avoid the 10% penalty tax by electing not to join TCRS. If the employee elects not to join he/she must sign the appropriate form. A web link to TCRS can be located on the RCS web site under Human Resources.

After an employee is eligible to receive vested medical insurance benefits through the County and upon said County employee's voluntary retirement from the County, any sick leave which the employee has accrued as of the date of retirement shall be reported by the County to the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System. Any unused sick leave on the date of retirement may be credited by TCRS at the rate of one month of retirement credit for each 20 days of unused leave. Sick leave is not recognized for retirement purposes until the employee has retired and the sick leave has been certified by the County. Regular part-time certified employees have optional membership rights in TCRS.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **PERSONNEL FILES (Policy 5.114)**

An individualized personnel file will be maintained on each employee. It is the responsibility of each employee to provide accurate information to the employer. Employees are responsible for reporting to the employer any change in the information, which they have previously provided. This includes name, address, phone number, retirement and life insurance beneficiary information, and W-4 information.

### **CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS**

T.C.A. 49-5-413(a) requires any individual applying for a position as a teacher in 49-5-501 or in a position requiring close proximity to school children to supply a fingerprint sample and submit to a criminal history records check to be conducted by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. Rutherford County Board of Education requires the criminal history background check and fingerprinting of all applicants prior to employment approval.

Any cost incurred by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation or any other approved investigation service in conducting such investigations of applicants shall be paid by the Board the first time such applicant applies for a position with the Board. If a successful applicant does not remain employed with the Board for a period of six (6) months, then the cost of the background check will be withheld from his/her last regular paycheck. All applicants shall be advised that all hiring decisions are contingent upon satisfactory background check results.

### **ASSIGNMENT/TRANSFERS (POLICY 5.115)**

The Director of Schools has the responsibility to assign, transfer and reassign personnel as necessary for the efficient operation of the school system.

### **SEPARATION PRACTICES (POLICIES 5.200 AND 5.201)**

Rutherford County Policies 5.200 and 5.201 outlines the conditions and stipulations for suspension, dismissal, resignation and retirement for tenured and non-tenured teachers.

### **AMENDMENT OF HANDBOOK**

It is the responsibility of all employees to carry out and comply with the rules, regulations and policies contained in this manual. The employee should be aware that these rules, regulations and policies are subject to periodic review and changes by the employer. Before relying upon the provisions set out herein, it is the employee's responsibility to check with the employer to see if any changes have occurred.

### **EVALUATION MODEL**

The State of Tennessee has selected the TEAM model to evaluate all certified employees who serve in our schools. School administrators are required to review the evaluation model and process in the fall of each year with their certified staff

### **TENURE (Policy 5.117)**

Tenure with the Rutherford County School System is awarded to certified employees who meet the following criteria:

1. Has a degree from an approved four year college or any career and technical teacher who has the equivalent amount of training established and licensed by the state board of education
2. Holds a valid teaching license, issued by the state board of education, based on training covering the subjects or grades taught

3. Has completed a probationary period of five years or not less than 45 months within a seven year period as a probationary teacher; the last two years being employed in a regular teaching position rather than an interim teaching position
4. Received evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “above expectations” or “significantly above expectations” provided by the evaluation guidelines adopted by the state board of education pursuant to 49-1-302, during the last two years of the teacher’s probationary period
5. Is reemployed by the director of schools for service after the probationary period

### **STUDENT HANDBOOK AND CODE OF BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

As per T.C.A. 49-6-4017 a Code of Behavior and Discipline is published annually and distributed to all students, parents, administrators, teachers and staff. This is a compilation of policies, procedures and regulations governing the conduct of students in the Rutherford County Schools. Teachers have the responsibility to become familiar with the Student Handbook and Code of Behavior and Discipline.

In addition, required notifications for compliance with No Child Left Behind are included in the booklet to allow for distribution to students, parents, administrators, teachers and staff.

### **RESPECT AND PROTECT: A SAFE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE**

Professional employees are expected to comply with the principals of Safe Schools where “we believe that the key to preventing violence is a school climate that fosters healthy beliefs, feelings, attitudes and communication.” “Bullying” means any act that substantially interferes with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities or performance and has the effect of: (i) physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property; (ii) knowingly placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to property; (iii) causing emotional distress; (iv) creating a hostile educational environment; or if the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, it is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process. Each employee is to work with the building level Safe School team and become familiar with the continuum of violence and the school’s goals and objectives for a safe environment.

### **SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS**

All schools are required to have a school safety plan which addresses how the faculty, staff and students will respond to school safety issues. Each faculty and staff member will be provided a copy of the Rutherford County Schools’ Emergency Plan. This Emergency Plan must be maintained in a place that is easily accessible to the employee. The employee must familiarize him/herself with the plan. The employee must become familiar with the Incident Command procedure and the role and responsibility of the Incident Command team leaders.

## **PARENT COMPLAINT FORM/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

The Board of Education has adopted a complaint form and procedure that must be followed by those individuals wishing to pursue a complaint against a certified employee. These forms and procedures are available at the Central Office and in the Administrative Handbook.

## **DISCRIMINATION / HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS, CERTIFIED AND CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES (Policy 5.500)**

Policy 5.500 outlines the definition and procedure for reporting harassment/discrimination. Harassment / discrimination will not be tolerated.

All reports must be investigated in accordance with the appropriate policy. Noncompliance with the policy will be reported to the Director of Schools.

All employees have the responsibility to become familiar with these policies and to report any abuse where there is a reasonable cause to suspect. Students do not have the capacity to consent to sexual harassment. Teacher-student sexual harassment is called “sexual battery by an authority figure”, and it is a Class C felony.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

It is the policy of the Rutherford County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its educational programs or employment policies as required by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Pay Act of 1973, Title IX (1972 Educational Amendments), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX should be directed to Dr. Andrea Anthony. Inquiries regarding Section 504 or the Americans with Disabilities Act should be directed to Dr. Andrea Anthony of the Rutherford County School System, 2240 Southpark Boulevard, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37128. Complaints may also be filed with the Tennessee Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights at (615) 253-1550 and/or the United States Department of Education by contacting (404) 562-6446.

The current complaint managers for complaints involving harassment or discrimination are Dr. Andrea Anthony and Ms. Sara Page, Rutherford County School System, 2240 Southpark Boulevard, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37128, Telephone: (615) 893-5812.

## **ETHICS (Policies 5.611 and 5.608)**

High standards are expected of all representatives of the Rutherford County School System. Administrative Procedure 1-7 provides guidance in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of coaching. Administrative Procedure 1-5 (Testing Code of Ethics) provides guidance in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of testing. Rutherford County Policy 5.611 outlines expected ethics of all employees. The Code of Ethics of the Tennessee Education Association is attached as well.



## **Supervision(Policy 5.108)**

Policy 5.108 (Supervision) requires all employees to report being charged with any criminal offense or being named as an indicated perpetrator of child abuse by the Department of Children's Services to their immediate supervisor in writing within 72 hours of the offense. Certified employees shall, within 72 hours of receiving notice from the Tennessee Department of Education, report to their immediate supervisor their teaching license has been "flagged" by the Tennessee Department of Education for any reason. The supervisor must notify the Director of Schools immediately. Failure to comply with the reporting requirements listed above will be considered insubordination and cause for disciplinary action.

## **TUTORING FOR PAY (POLICY 5.608)**

No employee may charge a pupil a fee for any service rendered the pupil on the school premises or during school hours, or for any teaching service connected with the school system. Tutoring one's own pupils for pay is prohibited.

## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

PESG is the substitute teacher provider for the current school year. Certified employees must contact the building principal and the substitute teacher vendor when there is a need for an absence. State law and the teacher contract govern the use of personal days.

Teachers are required to have a substitute teacher folder available containing such materials as would be necessary to conduct class in the teacher's absence. This material would include, but not be limited to: lesson plans, attendance sheets, seating charts, and extra assignments.

Substitute teachers are, in many instances, not professional teachers. They are trained to carry out the directions that are provided by the teachers. It is the teacher's responsibility to plan and provide that direction.

Remember that the substitute teachers are the employees of PESG and that all arrangements for substitutes must be made through the PESG office.

All substitute teachers are to be paid by the Board of Education. No individual may pay a substitute teacher directly.

## **LEAVES**

### **SICK LEAVE (POLICY 5.302)**

Sick leave is earned at the rate of one day per 20 days worked. Sick Leave shall mean leave of absence because of illness of an employee from natural causes or accident, quarantine, or illness or death of a member of the immediate family of an employee, including the employee's wife or husband, parents, grandparents,

children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, mother-in law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law. Upon written request of an employee accompanied by a statement from her physician certifying pregnancy, any teacher who goes on maternity leave shall be allowed to use all or a portion of her accumulated sick leave for maternity purposes during the period of physical disability only, as determined by a physician.

The total number of accumulated sick leave days shall mean the total number of sick leave days, which have been earned but not yet used. A certified employee in need of sick leave shall be allowed to use unearned sick leave up to the amount of days, which such employee may accumulate during the remainder of the school year. If more days are used than earned an amount of money to cover the excess sick leave days shall be deducted from the final salary. If such salary is insufficient, the employee shall be liable for this balance.

Accumulated sick leave from another system within the State of Tennessee can be transferred to Rutherford County upon the employee's written request to the previous employer. Employee's previous employer should mail the completed accumulated request to the Rutherford County Board of Education.

Certified employees should sign the sick leave form immediately upon returning to school following a day or days of sick leave whether it is a regular school day or an in-service day. The school will send all sick leave forms to the payroll office at the end of the school month. The employee's leave forms are used to reconcile the substitute teacher invoices.

#### **LEAVES OF ABSENCE (POLICY 5.304)**

When requesting a leave of absence for MORE THAN FIVE (5) DAYS, the APPLICATION FOR LEAVE form must be submitted to the Human Resources Office for consideration by the Director of Schools. This application must be filed thirty (30) days prior to the requested beginning date. This thirty (30) day filing date may be waived by the Director of Schools in the case of documented emergency.

If a non-paid leave of absence is granted and you are enrolled in the Rutherford County Medical Insurance Program and/or have purchased additional life insurance it will be your responsibility to contact the Risk Management Department at 615-898-7715 to make arrangements for paying the total premium for the duration of the leave of absence.

Employees requesting extended / maternity leave must submit a physician's statement verifying disability / pregnancy along with the completed leave form. Pursuant to board policy, employees requesting extended / maternity leave may use all or a portion of accumulated sick leave for maternity / disability purposes during the period of physical disability only, as determined by the physician's statement. Any combination of sick and non-paid days may be used, however any designated sick days must be used on the front end of the leave. Under FMLA, maternity leave may not exceed sixteen weeks from the date of delivery. Once your FMLA is exhausted, Board of Education contributions towards premiums will

cease and you will be eligible for continuation of insurance coverage through COBRA or portability rights.

The **REACTIVATION FORM** must be submitted to the Human Resources Office at least one week before the employee returns to work to reactivate the payroll status. If the leave extends to the end of the school year the reactivation form must be filed by March 1.

### **ADOPTION LEAVE**

Upon verification by a written statement from an adoption agency or other entity handling an adoption, a teacher may also be allowed to use up to thirty (30) days of accumulated sick leave for adoption of a child. If both adoptive parents are teachers, only one parent is entitled to leave under the FMLA policy.

### **FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (POLICY 5.305)**

Employees who have worked 1250 hours during the previous 12-month period may be granted up to 12 weeks FMLA for the following reasons:

- a) Childbirth and care for child
- b) Adoption or placement of a foster child
- c) Care for a seriously ill child, spouse, or parent
- d) Serious health condition of the employee
- e) Armed Forces service member/qualifying exigency

The employee must take FMLA along with accumulated sick, personal leave and/or non-paid leave when appropriate. The employee must request the leave on the FMLA form and must provide the required documentation. Under FMLA the Board of Education will continue to pay the employer portion of the medical insurance premium and the employee will pay his/her portion of the premium directly to the Risk Management Department by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Once your FMLA is exhausted, Board of Education contributions towards premiums will cease and you will be eligible for continuation of insurance coverage through COBRA or portability rights.

### **SICK LEAVE BANK**

A Sick Leave Bank is available for full time certified employees. Volunteer membership is available during the months of August, September, and October. Withdrawal from membership may occur only during the month of June. Each member will be assessed a one-time deposit of two (2) sick leave days to be donated to the Bank to be distributed by the Trustees based upon the guidelines. Guidelines and applications will be distributed by a building representative or obtained on-line at [www.rcschools.net](http://www.rcschools.net), click on Human Resources. Specific information regarding effective dates is included.

### **PERSONAL LEAVE (POLICY 5.303)**

Personal leave is earned at the rate of one day per 100 days worked. A certified employee may take two days of personal leave per school year in accordance with the policies of the Rutherford County board of Education and

the Educational Agreement between the Board and the Association. The agreed upon procedures are as follows:

1. Each fulltime professional employee shall be credited with two- (2) days- personal leave at the beginning of the school year. These days shall be earned at the rate of one (1) day per 100 days worked. A professional employee leaving the employment of the Rutherford County Board of Education before these days are earned shall reimburse the Rutherford County Board of Education for such day(s).
2. Nothing shall prohibit the use of these days as personal or professional day.
3. A personal leave day may be used at the discretion of the professional employee.
4. An employee planning to use a personal day shall notify his/her immediate supervisor at least two (2) days in advance, except in the cases of emergency.
5. No more than ten (10) percent of any faculty may be absent for personal leave on any given day.
6. None of these days may be taken on any in-service, immediately before or after a holiday, or during the first two or last two weeks of the school year.
7. Any exception to four (4), five (5), or six (6) above shall be at the discretion of the building level principal or program supervisor.

Personal days remaining unused at the end of the school year shall be credited to the certified employee as sick leave.

#### **BEREAVEMENT LEAVE**

Certified employees may take up to two bereavement leave days (per event) in the event of the death of spouse, children, parents, grand-parents, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandchildren. Documentation must be submitted to support this type of leave.

#### **MILITARY LEAVE (POLICY 5.306)**

Certified employees who present competent orders for the performance of duty or training in the service of this state or the United States, shall be paid salary or compensation for a period, or periods, not exceeding twenty (20) working days in any one (1) calendar year. These military orders must accompany an Application for Leave form and must be filed with the Human Resources Department.

#### **PRIVATE VEHICLES (POLICY 3.404) AND SPECIAL USE OF SCHOOL VEHICLES (POLICY 3.402)**

Rutherford County Policy 3.404 stipulates the conditions that must be met to allow an employee to transport students in his/her private vehicle. Employees should not transport students in a private vehicle unless every stipulation is met. The Board specifically forbids any employee to transport students for school purposes without prior authorization by the Superintendent or his /her designee.

Rutherford County Policy 3.402 states the director of schools shall recommend for board approval a list of Board-owned vehicles to be assigned to positions requiring full-time use. Such use shall be restricted to commuting to and from job-related sites and must comply with IRS requirements, including implications for reporting taxable income. Employees assigned full-time use of Board-owned vehicles shall be on call twenty-four (24) hours a day to perform services required by their job responsibilities. Other than commuting to and from work, use of these vehicles for personal use is prohibited.

#### **CELLULAR PHONES (POLICY 3.3001)**

Rutherford County Policy 3.3001 outlines the conditions for the use of the system owned cellular phones during the school day. The policy also stipulates that employees shall not use personal cellular phones during the school day for personal use.

#### **TECHNOLOGY TRAINING**

All teachers new to the system will be required to participate in technology training. The Technology Department will provide notification of the training dates to certified employees.

#### **USE OF THE INTERNET/E-MAIL (POLICIES 4.406 and 1.805)**

Rutherford County Policies 4.406 and 1.805 outlines the conditions and stipulations for the use of the Internet and e-mail as a business tool. Personal use guidelines are defined and monitored. Official training is required by the Technology Department prior to receiving an e-mail address.

#### **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (POLICY 1.804)**

Rutherford County Policy 1.804 states that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance in the Board of Education's workplace or away from workplace while on the Board's business is prohibited. Any employee violating this policy will be subjected to discipline up to and including termination.

Policy 5.403 allows for Reasonable Suspicion Drug Testing if the following conditions exist:

1. Observed use, possession or sale of illegal drugs and/or use, possession, sale, or abuse of alcohol and/or prescription drugs.
2. Apparent physical state of impairment of motor functions.
3. Marked changes in personal behavior not attributed to other factors.
4. Employee involvement in or contribution to an accident where the use of alcohol or drugs is reasonably suspected or employee involvement in a pattern of repetitive accidents whether or not they involve actual or potential injury.

5. Violation of criminal statutes involving the use of illegal drugs, alcohol or prescription drugs and/or violations of drug statutes

**Tobacco-Free Schools (Policy 1.803)** states that all uses of tobacco and tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, are prohibited in all of the school district's buildings.

#### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (POLICY 6.409)**

Rutherford County Policy 6.409 complies with state law by requiring staff members to report cases of abuse or neglect to the juvenile judge, Department of Children's Services or the Office of the Sheriff or the chief law enforcement official of the municipality where the child resides. A training session is offered at least once per year and all new teachers are encouraged to attend

#### **PURCHASING AUTHORITY (POLICY 2.808)**

Rutherford County Policy 2.808 states the procedures to follow to expend school or system funds. Reimbursements will not be made for individual purchases without the proper requisition.

#### **EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES (POLICY 5.6101)**

Employees must have administrative approval to participate in any recreational or fitness activities which are not part of the school day or educational curriculum in order to be covered under the Board's On the Job Injury Program. Voluntary participation in activities is not covered by OJI.

#### **EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (POLICY 4.4061)**

Rutherford County Schools respects the right of employees to use social media, networking sites, personal websites and blogs, but it is important that an employee's personal use of these sites does not interfere with official duties, violate any district policies or damage the reputation of the school district, its employees, its students or their families.

Employees should set appropriate boundaries between personal and public online behavior, understanding that what is private in the digital world often has the potential of becoming public, even without their knowledge or consent. It is recommended that employees carefully review the privacy settings on any social media accounts and exercise good judgment when posting content and information on such sites.

Employees should adhere to the following guidelines consistent with the district's standards on harassment, student relationships, professional communication and confidentiality of student information.

1. Employees who have a presence on social networking websites are prohibited from posting data documents, photographs or inappropriate information that is likely to create a material and substantial disruption of classroom activity.
2. Employees are prohibited from accessing personal social networking sites on district computers during working hours except for legitimate instructional purposes.

3. Employees shall not disclose any confidential information obtained during the course of his/her employment about the school district, any school, individuals or organizations, including students and/ or their families.
4. The Board discourages employees from socializing with students on social networking websites. The same relationship, exchange, interaction, information, or behavior that would be unacceptable in a non-technological medium is unacceptable when done through the use of technology. Employees are strongly discouraged from including current students as "friends," "followers," or any other similar terminology used by various sites without written permission from the student's parent.
5. Coaches, band directors and other employees who see a need to use social media sites to communicate information about extracurricular clubs, teams or other student groups should establish a dedicated, non-personal social media account for such purposes with permission of the school principal.

### **Student Equal Access (Policy 4.802)**

Schools may allow students to form clubs or groups that meet before, during, and/or after the school day. Requests to form such clubs or groups shall not be denied based upon the religious nature or beliefs of proposed club or group. If permitted, school administrators shall ensure that all clubs and groups have the same abilities to access facilities and advertise their meetings.

No funds shall be expended by the school for any such meeting beyond the incidental costs associated with providing meeting space. Groups meeting under this policy may be required to pay a reasonable fee for compensating school personnel in the supervision of the activity.

No student may be compelled to attend or participate in a meeting under this policy. A student or a group of students who wish to conduct a meeting under this policy must file an application with the principal at least three days prior to the proposed date. The principal shall approve the meeting if he/she determines that: The meeting is voluntary and student-initiated; There is no sponsorship of the meeting or its content by the school, the Board, or its employees; The meeting will not materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of the school's educational activities or conflict with other previously scheduled meetings; Employees of the district are to be present in a non-participatory monitoring capacity; however, no employee shall be required to attend in this capacity if the content of the meeting is contrary to the beliefs of the employee; and Non-school persons will not direct, control or regularly attend.

### **SCHOOL SPONSORED EVENTS**

If the Board or a school principal authorizes an event at which a student is to speak, a limited public forum shall be established for such student speakers. The appropriate administrators shall ensure that:

The forum is provided in a manner that does not discriminate against a student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint, if any, on an otherwise permissible subject; There is an appropriate method of selecting student speakers which is based on neutral criteria; Student speakers do not engage in speech that is obscene, vulgar, offensively lewd, indecent or promotes illegal drug use.

To the extent possible and practical, prior to events in which students will speak, notice shall be provided orally and/or in writing that the student's speech does not reflect the endorsement, sponsorship, position, or expression of the Board and its employees.

Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, notice of this policy shall be provided in student handbooks and staff handbooks.

### **SAFETY TRAINING**

All new employees are required to complete Safety Training within 90 days of employment. Contact your immediate supervisor to access the web links for training.

Training includes: Blood Borne Pathogens and Exposure Control, On the Job Injury, Hazardous Communication and Fire Prevention. Other trainings may be substituted or added as deemed necessary by the school system.

Training modules can be accessed from this link:  
<http://www.rutherfordcountyttn.gov/rm/training.htm>