

Policy Updates to the 2021-2022 Employee Handbook

Policy	Revision/Update
Acknowledgement of Confidentiality and Access Agreement	Form was revised to replace confidentiality form for student information and for employee information. Both confidentiality forms were consolidated into one form explaining confidentiality policy.
District Emails	Policy was created to state that the IT department will activate, deactivate or make changes to district email accounts upon the approval and/or request of the HR Department or other designated personnel.
Virtual/Distance Learning	Wording was changed to reflect “upon necessity” that STET/HMPS will provide virtual/distance learning as per TEA regulations.
Employee Agreement for Assignment and Use of School District Property	Included USBs as property that may be assigned by HMPS. Added line to policy, “All employees issued school district property will be expected to sign out for such property and are expected to keep property in good working condition as you will be held financially responsible for any lost or damaged property.”
Equal Employment Opportunity	Made revisions to policy to include Title IX acknowledgment and names and contact information of the Title IX Coordinator and the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator. Statements were also added, “In it’s efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law...” “Additionally, STET/HMPS does not discriminate against an employee or applicant who acts to oppose such discrimination or participates in the investigation of a complaint related to a discriminatory employment practice.”
Remote Work	<p>Policy was created to state, "In order to allow the District to meet its goals to provide quality instruction for its students and function during mandatory class/school closures due to COVID-19 or any other unforeseen natural disasters, staff may be required or assigned to perform duties remotely in order to maintain key functions of the district.</p> <p>Remote work will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis by the Human Resources Department. At this time, remote work is offered <i>only</i> for COVID-19 related issues such as pending test results, positive cases, and quarantines including district-imposed quarantines. Remote work is not available for all positions and will be evaluated by HR and the immediate supervisor. Upon the assessment of remote work, HR will send the employee a memorandum documenting the COVID-19 case, the approval or denial of remote work, the return to work procedures, and guidelines and procedures for remote work, if applicable.</p> <p>If an employee is not approved for remote work or unable to perform remote work, the employee will be subject to the district's leave policies.”</p>

Certification and Licenses	Revised policy to state, "An employee may be demoted or terminated if the individual does not hold a valid certificate or fails to fulfill the requirements necessary to extend a temporary certificate, emergency certificate, probationary certificate, or permit within the given deadline provided by the district or Alternative Certification Program (ACP). Professional employees are also required to obtain Bilingual Education Supplemental or English as a Second Language Supplemental certifications depending on their assignment within the academic year. If such requirement is not met, the individual's employment status may be affected."
Recertification of Employment Authorization	Included statement to policy to read, "STET/HMPS is a participant of E-Verify, a web-based system that allows enrolled employers to confirm the eligibility of newly hired employees to work in the United States."
Performance Evaluations	Included statement to policy to read, "T-Tess evaluations will be completed for certified teachers and all other employees will be evaluated with the district's approved internal rubric evaluations."
Pandemic Protocol	<p>Added to existing policy to read, "As of date, STET/HMPS will allow any individual who wishes to voluntarily use a face mask to do so. Safety guidelines provided by CDC, TEA, and local health departments will continue to be adhered to such as washing of hands, the use of sanitation stations, social distancing, the regular sanitizing of school equipment and property, etc.</p> <p>Upon the confirmation of a confirmed case, the Human Resources Department in conjunction with designated personnel, will begin an investigation, conduct trace contacting of close contacts, communicate with the respective county for additional guidance, implement individual, class, partial or entire school closures upon necessity, request necessary documentation, and submit required documentation and reports to the respective county and TEA. <i>For any student or staff member who has tested positive to be able to return to campus in-person must either test negative or receive clearance from a physician and provide corresponding documentation.</i></p> <p>If a quarantine is imposed resulting in a class, partial or entire school closure, principals/campus administration staff will contact close contacts while protecting the identity of person(s) due to privacy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) laws. Official letters regarding the case and closure will be disseminated to parents and staff and approved staff will receive remote work memorandums. For remote work, please see Remote Work policy. For additional protocols or COVID-19 related inquiries, please contact the Human Resources Department."</p>

Salaries, Wages, and Stipends	Added statement to read, "All employees will receive notice of work and campus calendars through the district's website."
Paychecks	Added statement to read, "All employees will be required to enroll in direct deposit." Policy was updated to reflect Ascender Employer Portal, formerly known as TxEIS and policy now states to contact Payroll/Benefits Department.
Compensatory Time	<p>Made revisions to policy to now read, "The following applies to nonexempt employees upon approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees CANNOT accumulate more than 40 hours of compensatory time within the duty year. • Compensatory time MUST be used in the duty year for which it is earned. • Use of compensatory time may be at the employee's request with supervisor approval as workload permits. An employee must complete a compensatory form for approval by principal/supervisor and submitted to the Benefits/Payroll Department for process. • An employee MUST use compensatory time before using available paid leave (e.g., state, local leave). • Compensatory time will only be paid out upon resignation or termination if applicable.
Supplemental Insurance Benefits	Added statement to policy to read, "Employees can enroll in supplemental insurance programs at their own expense upon hire or during open enrollment. The supplemental plan year is from June 1 through May 31."
Excessive Absences	Made revisions to policy to now read, "An employee's principal/supervisor reserves the right to deem absences excessive and reserves the right to address employees of such absences through conferences and/or disciplinary action, including termination."
State Personal Leave Days	Made revisions to policy to include statements that read, "When an employee separates from employment before the last duty day of the school year, the employee's final paycheck will be reduced by the amount of state personal leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rata entitlement for the school year." "If such days are requested, the principal/supervisor will review case-by-case and reserves the right to deny approval and/or implement disciplinary action if absence was not approved."
Dress and Grooming	Policy was revamped to include minimum standards for professional dress, appearance and appropriate for the educational workplace environment. Policy also states STET/HMPS reserves the right to determine at its discretion what is and is not appropriate workplace attire and to address issues as they

	<p>arise. Policy addresses district-issued uniforms. A table has been included to depict allowable and prohibited attire for men and women.</p>
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse	<p>Added line to policy to read, "As a STET/HMPS district requirement, all educators will be required to complete online training provided by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) on an annual basis during professional development days."</p>
Visitors in the Workplace	<p>Added line to policy to read, "STET/HMPS also reserves the right to deny visitors in the workplace during pandemics and other natural disaster cases for safety and precautionary measures."</p>
Dismissal of Non-Contract "At-Will" Employees	<p>Added statement to policy to read, "As defined by the Texas Workforce Commission, employment at will means that absent a statute or an express agreement (such as an employment contract), either party in an employment relationship may modify any of the terms or conditions of employment, or terminate the relationship altogether, for any reason, or no particular reason at all, with or without advance notice."</p>
Resignations	<p>Added line to policy to read, "Upon receiving a resignation, STET/HMPS reserves the right to make a resignation effective immediately prior to the 2 weeks or 30 days."</p>
Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation	<p>Added statement to read, "The district's Title IX Coordinator's name and contact information is listed in the Equal Employment Opportunity section of this handbook."</p>
Harassment of Students	<p>Added statement to policy to read, "Any district employee who suspects or receives direct or indirect notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct based on sex, including sexual harassment, of a student shall immediately notify the district's Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, or superintendent and take any other steps required by the district."</p>
Bullying	<p>Added statement to read, "A failure to report may impair the district's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct and may result in disciplinary action."</p>