

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



Monroe County School Board

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PREAMBLE:

The information provided in this MCSD employee handbook is based on current law and School Board Policies in effect at the time of publishing, and as interpreted by Monroe County School District Administration. Laws, policies, and interpretations may change from time to time during your employment, and you are cautioned not to rely on the information contained in this handbook as being a complete compilation or absolutely correct. One purpose of this handbook is to provide you with a general notice of some, but not all, information that should be important to you.

If you have any questions, please contact your office manager or supervisor. If they are unable to assist you, they will give you direction as to which person or department at the district level is responsible for the issue in question. You may always contact the District's Human Resources Department for any questions that you have regarding employment policies.

Union members should refer to their union contract for details regarding specific employment rights and procedures. This handbook does not replace the union contracts.

The School Board Policies are also available to all employees and the public for more detailed information and a complete set of the district's rules, regulations, and policies. These policies may be found at <https://go.boarddocs.com/fl/sbmon/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=APVRSC699CF9> and is incorporated herein.

This employee handbook does not supersede or replace any other contract that you may have with the District. Further, this employee handbook does not create any additional or special rights or contract between you and the District.

A. HIRING

1. Employment Application

Vacancies within the District are advertised as they occur with our online paperless application system, Frontline Recruiting and Hiring. Qualified applicants may apply for vacancies by visiting the website at:

<https://www.applitrack.com/keyschools/onlineapp/application.aspx?login=true&isInternal=1&>

It is the policy of the School Board to select employees on the basis of merit, training, and experience. First consideration is acknowledged and followed as per the union contracts. There will be no discrimination against any applicant or employee because of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation, or genetic information. The District complies with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment.

2. Veteran's Preference

As according to Florida Statute F.S. 110.2135, Preference in employment, reemployment, promotion, and retention, and School Board Policies 1120.11, 3120.11 and 4120.11 - Preference for Veterans in Employment, preference in employment, reemployment, promotion and retention shall be given to an eligible veteran, as long as the veteran meets the minimum eligibility requirements and has the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the particular position. Form DD214 establishing right to claim veteran's preference must be provided.

3. Interviews

MCSD has a Targeted Selection as the standard for interview proceedings. This requires that all applicants for a position be interviewed by the same selection team, MCSD interview guide, question series and timing variables to the fullest extent possible.

The interview materials and scoring guides may be found on the Human Resources Department webpage at: <https://fl02202360.schoolwires.net/Page/6425>.

4. Employment and Supervision of Relatives (Nepotism)

A "relative" is an individual included within the definition of "relative" set forth in F.S. 112.3135, which includes the following individuals: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, or half-sister.

Two (2) or more relatives shall not work in the same school/department except by permission of the Superintendent. In the event that an administrator, due to some unusual circumstance, may have been placed in the same school/department with a relative, the administrator may continue in the position until reassigned to a position of comparable grade, pay, and reasonable personal convenience.

- A. Relatives may be employed in the same school/department when specifically recommended by the administrator and approved by the Superintendent on the grounds that it is to the advantage of the District.
- B. Under no circumstances shall a person supervise the work of a relative.

Likewise, administrators may not nominate for employment, or directly supervise, relatives at the same work location. The administrator of any District entity or office shall disclose to the Superintendent any relative for whom the administrator is responsible with respect to employment decisions, payroll authorization, or job performance evaluations. All employees shall disclose to the Superintendent, the names of all relatives working at the same work location. Failure to immediately make such disclosures shall be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

B. WORKING HOURS

The length of the workday, the hours, lunch and break times vary with each job and or specific school location. This information is shared before hire and should be verified before the first day of employment.

Employees who will be unable to report to work or will be late, are required to notify their supervisor immediately so that arrangements can be made for someone to cover the area of responsibility. For instructional and some paraprofessional personnel, Absence Management has been implemented to assist in finding substitute teachers to cover classrooms.

There are District leave procedures to cover each type of leave. Be aware that absence without approved leave may be cause for disciplinary action and that it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that a leave request has been completed, shared with the office manager or supervisor and approved before beginning the leave. We understand that exigent circumstances can occur. In these events your office manager [and depending on the circumstance, for lengthier instances of leave, HR] should be advised as soon as possible. Staff may contact the Human Resources Department regarding leave, leave forms, and any other employment-related matters.

C. ON-THE-JOB

1. New employee requirements

As a new employee, all new hire forms must be completed in the Frontline Recruiting and Hiring system. Please note that a copy of the original, official social security card is the only copy accepted by the Human Resources Department. It is very important in that it assures retirement and social security contributions are credited appropriately. The name that appears on the social security card will be used on all documents and programs within the District.

All new employees must be fingerprinted before they begin working and all employees will have their fingerprints re-submitted every five years. Fingerprinting is offered in the Human Resources Department Offices, during normal business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Resubmissions are from the digital retention database from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE).

2. Credit for Years of Experience

Teachers coming into the District may receive credit for their years of teaching experience in the public or private sector for K-12 experience once verified. Non-instructional new hires may receive some credit for their years of experience in a similar role dependent on budget and approval from their supervisor. Verification of the experience is the responsibility of the new employee to acquire from their former employer(s). Verification must be received in the Human Resources Department within 90 days of employment in order to be processed and receive credit for experience for that school year. Forms for verification are sent with the new hire paperwork in the Frontline Recruiting and Hiring system.

3. ID Badges

An identification badge is issued to each employee (temporary and permanent) at the time of employment. The identification badge must be worn so that the employee's picture, name, and validity period are readily visible on the front of the badge. ID badges must be worn at all times.

ID badges remain the property of the School Board and employees are required to return them to their supervisor upon termination of employment. This is an essential part of the official check out procedure. The misuse of the ID badge and/or failure to comply with this rule will subject an employee to disciplinary action. A replacement fee of \$5.00 may be assessed for a lost or damaged badge.

4. Use of District Vehicles

The use of District owned vehicles is a privilege and not a right. Before operating a District owned vehicle, an authorization form must be complete for the District to run a driving record check. Drivers of District vehicles may be employees or approved volunteers who hold a valid Florida Driver's License. The forms are available from the Human Resources Department.

The use of District vehicles should be given priority over an employee driving a personal vehicle.

5. Facilities Use

Building and facilities use is governed by the applicable policy and procedures. In all instances strict adherence to applicable policies and procedures is mandatory. Use of buildings/facilities outside of one's scheduled work hours must first be approved by the site administrator. Extended use will also require the approval of Senior Management utilizing a facilities use agreement. This process includes contacting with the Employee Benefits & Risk Management Department concerning insurance coverage requirements. Please consult your site/department employee handbook, the district website (policies and procedures) and our immediate supervisor should you have questions or need additional assistance. It is important to note that Staff members should not use any of the District's facilities, equipment or supplies for personal reasons.

6. Employee Change Requests

If you have a change to your employee information such as legal name, address, phone number, address, emergency contacts, etc. you should submit the change through Focus Employee Self Service (ESS) portal. To enable processing a legal change made to your name, you will need to provide a copy of your new social security card and photo identification to the Human Resources Department through the Focus ESS portal.

7. Hepatitis B Vaccinations

To protect employees and students against Hepatitis B, employees in high risk categories are offered the opportunity to receive the Hepatitis B vaccination series at the District's

expense. The Human Resources Department will provide a form authorizing these employees to have the vaccination upon request.

The categories of employees automatically eligible for this vaccination are:

- Principals/Asst. Principals in charge of discipline
- PE Teachers/Athletic Coaches/Athletic Trainers
- ESE Teachers
- ESE Teacher Aides
- ESE Bus Drivers
- ESE Bus Aides
- Pre-K Teachers
- Pre-K Teacher Aides
- Kindergarten Teachers
- Kindergarten Aides
- Nurses
- Plumbers
- Cafeteria Workers

Other interested employees that do not fall into any of the categories listed above may appeal to the Executive Director Personnel Support and Instructional Leadership if they feel they are in a high risk category and would like to receive the vaccination.

8. Tobacco – Smoke Free

The District defines "use of tobacco" to include all uses of tobacco, including cigars, cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, vaping, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, or any other matter or substances that contain tobacco, and the possession of paper used to roll cigarettes.

The District prohibits the use of tobacco at any time on Board property or when doing official business for the board:

- a) within any indoor facility owned or leased or contracted for by the Board.
- b) anywhere on the campus of any facility owned or leased or contracted for by the Board, including, but not limited to, practice fields, playgrounds, football fields, baseball fields, softball fields, pool areas, soccer fields, tennis courts, and all open areas.
- c) in all vehicles, owned or operated by the Board, including, but not limited to, school buses, vans, trucks, station wagons, and cars.

For cessation resources please call Tobacco Free Florida at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW.

9. Drug-Free Workplace

The School Board maintains a Drug-Free Workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of alcohol or tobacco, or a controlled substance as identified in Florida Statutes, Chapter 893, by employees is prohibited at any worksite or workplace and at any school-related activity, and any employee is prohibited from

influencing students to use or abuse illicit drugs, alcohol or tobacco. Any employee who is found to be in violation of this prohibition will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension without pay and termination and the loss of workers' compensation benefits.

As a condition of employment, employees will abide by the terms of a drug-free workplace. Further, employees will notify the Board of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in or away from the workplace no later than five days after such conviction.

10. Weapons Policy

The School Board prohibits the possession, storing, making, or using a weapon, including a concealed weapon, in a school safety zone and any setting that is under the control and supervision of the District for the purpose of school activities approved and authorized by the District including, but not limited to, property leased, owned, or contracted for by the District, a school-sponsored event, or in a District vehicle.

The term "weapon" means any object which, in the manner in which it is used, is intended to be used, or is represented, is capable of inflicting serious bodily harm or property damage, as well as endangering the health and safety of persons. Weapons, as defined by F.S. Chapter 790, include, but are not limited to, firearms, guns of any type, knives, razors, clubs, electric weapons, metallic knuckles, martial arts weapons, ammunition, and explosives.

Staff and students are required to immediately report knowledge of weapons and threats of violence by students and staff to the building principal or Safety and Security Coordinator. Failure to report such knowledge may subject the staff or student to immediate suspension and potential expulsion from school.

11. Sexual Harassment Policy

The School Board does not discriminate on the basis of sex (including sexual orientation or gender identity), in its education programs or activities, and is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and its implementing regulations, not to discriminate in such a manner.

The Board prohibits Sexual Harassment that occurs within its education programs and activities. When the District has actual knowledge of Sexual Harassment in its education program or activity against a person in the United States, it shall promptly respond in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent.

Pursuant to its Title IX obligations, the Board is committed to eliminating Sexual Harassment and will take appropriate action when an individual is determined responsible for violating this policy. Board employees, students, third-party vendors and contractors, guests, and other members of the School District community who commit Sexual Harassment are subject to the full range of disciplinary sanctions set forth in policy. The Board will provide persons who have experienced Sexual Harassment ongoing remedies

as reasonably necessary to restore or preserve access to the District's education programs and activities.

12. Civility Policy

School district personnel will treat parents, students, and other district personnel with courtesy and respect, and expect the same from others.

It is the intent of the School Board to promote mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among district employees, students, parents, and the public. It is not the intent of the School Board, however, to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. The School Board also recognizes there may be a variety of cultural perspectives on what constitutes civil or uncivil behavior; however, the intent of this policy is to maintain, to the greatest extent reasonably possible, a safe, civil, harassment-free workplace for all, and to set an example of civility for students to emulate. In the interest of presenting administrators, teachers, and other employees as positive role models, the School Board encourages positive communication and discourages disruptive, volatile, hostile or aggressive communications or actions.

13. Probationary Period

Upon initial employment, all regular employees will serve a probationary period that begins the first day of regular employment. Probationary periods are as follows:

- supervisors and school principals is 97 days
- non-instructional personnel is 6 months
- instructional personnel is one school year

Employees who are released during or at the end of their probationary period shall not have any rights of appeal nor have the right to a written explanation.

14. Self-Reporting of Arrest

As required by the provisions of State Board of Education Rule 6B-1.006(5) and The Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida, a professional employee is required to self-report within forty-eight (48) hours to the Superintendent any arrests or charges involving the abuse of a child or the sale and/or possession of a controlled substance. Such notice shall not be considered an admission of guilt, nor shall such notice be admissible for any purpose in any proceeding, civil or criminal, administrative or judicial, investigatory or adjudicatory. In addition, self-reporting shall also be required for any conviction, finding of guilt, withholding of adjudication, or entering of a plea of guilty or *nolo contendere* for any criminal offense other than a minor traffic violation within forty-eight (48) hours after the final judgment. NOTE: DUI is not a minor traffic violation.

15. Evaluations

Each employee will be evaluated annually. The evaluation will be in writing and will be placed in the Focus portal. The supervisor will meet with the employee privately to review the information and the employee will be asked to sign the document or approve in the Focus portal. Signature or Annual Acknowledgement is provided to acknowledge receipt

of the evaluation. Comments may be added to the evaluation form and/or an additional sheet for comments may be attached, if so desired.

16. Resignation/Retirement

Employees who decide to resign or retire from their job with the School Board should notify their supervisor as far in advance as possible. The employee should also contact the Employee Benefits & Risk Management Department concerning options for continuing any insurance coverage.

Employees planning to retire may be eligible for special benefits, including insurance coverage. The Payroll Department should be contacted as soon as retirement is a consideration, because it takes time to process the necessary forms.

An Exit Form (Exhibit A) must be completed in the Focus system by the employee. After employment has ended, District e-mail and technology will be disabled including Focus so employees should plan accordingly to save any important information such as paystubs or tax forms.

D. PAYROLL

1. Payroll and Salary Schedules

All employees shall be paid on a semi-monthly basis. Checks will be issued twice a month on the 15th and 30th. If payday falls on a weekend or a holiday, payday will be the day before the weekend or Holiday. A copy of the most recent Payroll and Salary schedules are available online at: <https://fl02202360.schoolwires.net/Page/527>

2. Paystubs

Paystubs are available through the Focus Employee Self Service (ESS) portal. Employees should check their paystubs regularly to make sure everything is accurate. Paystubs will show pay period earnings, all deductions, and total earnings for the fiscal and calendar years. If there is an error, employees should contact their office manager or supervisor.

3. 12-Month Pay

All Employees shall have their annual salary divided by 24 equal payments regardless of being a 10-, 11- or 12-month position. If an employee begins late in the school year, pay is calculated with total number of days worked divided by the pay-periods remaining in the fiscal year.

- 10- and 11-month employees are paid August through July
- 12-month employees are paid July through June

4. Direct Deposit

Direct deposit is mandatory. Direct deposit is available for any banking institution. If a direct deposit change is needed, complete a change request through the Focus Employee Self Service / Employee Requests. This request is submitted directly to Payroll for processing. A copy of a voided check or a letter from the banking institution must be attached to the change request for approval.

Paystubs can be found in Focus Employee Self Service / View Pay History.

5. Mandatory Payroll Deductions

Various payroll deductions are made each payday to comply with federal and state laws pertaining to taxes and insurance. Deductions will be made for the following:

- Federal and State Income Tax Withholding
- Social Security (FICA)
- Retirement (Florida Retirement)
- Other items as chosen by employee (i.e. health benefits, life, dental, etc.)
- Mandated legal deductions (i.e., garnishments, child support)

At the end of each calendar year, you will be able to access your Wage and Tax Statement. This statement summarizes your income and deductions for the year. If you have any questions regarding these deductions, please contact payroll services.

The School Board also provides the opportunity for voluntary payroll deductions for the following:

- Board approved life insurance plans
- Tax sheltered annuities
- Monroe County Teachers Federal Credit Union
- Take Stock in Children, Boys & Girls Club, and United Way contributions

E. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

1. Health Insurance

The School Board provides all employees with the following:

- a. \$25,000 Life Insurance and AD&D Insurance.
- b. Partially paid medical coverage for employees who choose medical insurance and \$450 a year contribution (less the \$28.50 administrative fee) is offered to those who waive medical coverage. If employees do not elect medical insurance, the contribution may be used to purchase voluntary benefits through Optavise. With this contribution, you can use it towards only dental, vision or an FSA account. Any unused balances will revert to the School Board.

2. Section 125 Cafeteria Plan

Eligible employees have the opportunity to select individual fringe benefits that fit their personal needs such as dental, vision, disability insurance and supplemental life insurance through Optavise.

The costs of the premium for these plans are the employee's personal fiscal responsibility.

Any time an employee is in a nonpaid status by the District, arrangements must be made to pay the insurance premiums directly to the School District. Invoices will be sent for any outstanding premiums every payroll, failure to pay invoiced premiums within 60 days will result in immediate cancellation of coverage. The Employee Benefits Department can assist with any questions or concerns.

3. Workers' Compensation/Injury on the Job

If an employee is injured on the job, they may be covered by Workers' Compensation. Employees must report ALL accidents or injuries to their supervisor or office manager immediately to be considered for these benefits. After reporting the injury to the Supervisor, medical treatment for a non-emergency must be obtained through a Network Provider. Employees can only visit Health Care Providers authorized by the employer.

If employees are injured on the job and must miss work due to the injury, they must have a doctor's note stating they are not able to work and for how long. Before returning to work, employees must have a Fitness for Duty doctor's note releasing the return to work along with listing any restrictions applicable.

4. Illness or Injury-in-the-Line-of-Duty

Any employee, except substitutes or temporary employees, shall be entitled to Illness/Injury in Line of Duty leave when he/she must be absent from duties because of a personal injury received in the discharge of duty or because of illness from any contagious or infectious disease contracted at work. The following requirement shall be observed:

Sick leave used by the employee shall be authorized for a total not to exceed ten (10) days during any fiscal year. It is the employee's responsibility to file a request for compensation through their supervisor within the time and the manner provided by law (5 days).

Other requirements may also apply. You are urged to contact your supervisor, school principal or the Risk Department regarding same.

5. Leave

At various times you may be eligible for vacation leave, personal leave, sick leave, military leave, leave without pay, and bereavement leave. Any time you are on leave for longer than ten working days, you must contact the Human Resources Department / Payroll Department.

a. Vacation Leave

All full-time employees appointed to a twelve-month position earn annual leave at the rate of one (1) day per month. Use of vacation leave shall not be approved before the time it is earned. Part-time, 12-month employees will receive annual leave to match the time worked (e.g., a person who works four hours per day will earn four hours per month annual leave). After five years, employees will earn 1 1/4 days annual leave each month. When you have completed ten years with the District, you will begin earning 1 1/2 days a month. Total accrued vacation leave may not exceed forty-two (42) days at the end of the fiscal year June 30th.

You may apply for vacation leave once you have earned it by using the Frontline Absence Management program. When possible, leave must advance for approval by your supervisor.

b. Sick Leave

One of the many benefits you earn as an employee is sick leave. You will earn one day of sick leave for each month of employment. The sick leave days you earn match the length of your workday. Sick leave may be used for your personal illness or for death or serious illness in your immediate family. Careful use of your sick leave days will benefit you if you have a serious illness. Additionally, under current Florida law, accumulated sick leave can also put extra dollars in your pocket when you retire.

c. Sick Leave Pool

After you have worked one year in the system and have accrued seven days of sick leave, you become eligible to participate in the Sick Leave Pool. This plan currently provides personnel an emergency pool of sick leave days for use in cases of prolonged absence due to personal illness or disability (normal maternity leave is not allowable under the plan). To join, you must apply through the Risk Department in September or February. You will contribute one of your sick leave days to the pool. An additional day may be charged each year. Sick Leave Pool days can only be applied for after you have exhausted your personal sick leave days. The Sick Leave Pool application may be found in the Focus Portal under Forms.

d. Personal Leave charged to Sick Leave

Administrative and non-bargaining personnel may be granted five (5) days of personal leave with pay per fiscal year, provided such leave is scheduled in advance and does not interfere with ongoing District operations.

Support Service Personnel (bargaining) may be granted five (5) days of personal leave with pay to conduct personal business involving special obligations that cannot be scheduled on non-duty days. Such leave shall be chargeable to your sick leave and shall not be cumulative from year to year.

Instructional Personnel may be granted six (6) days of personal leave with pay; five (5) for the purpose of conducting personal business involving special obligations that cannot be scheduled on non-duty days and one (1) for professional

development. Such leave shall be chargeable to your sick leave and shall not be cumulative from year to year.

Personal leave may not be granted to extend vacation time on the days preceding or following school holidays or recess periods except in unusual circumstances and not unless approved by the employee's supervisor after a satisfactory explanation for the request.

Requests for personal leave should be submitted five (5) days prior to the date that the employee desires to be absent from his/her duties. Less notice may be acceptable in the event of unforeseen circumstances. In all instances, the request is subject to the approval of the employee's supervisor who determines that the absence of the employee will not work an unusual hardship at the school site or department affected. In no instance may a supervisor approve personal leave with pay for more than ten percent (10%) of the work force for which he/she is responsible on a given day.

e. FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act)

This leave is available to qualified employees for a maximum period of 60 workdays of unpaid leave per year. This leave may be used for the birth of the employee's child; the adoption of a child by the employee; to care for a seriously ill spouse, child, or parent; or a serious personal health condition. Please note the Monroe County School Board requires employees to utilize any leave time they have during this period.

To qualify, the employee must have been employed for a 12-month period and have worked a total of 1,250 hours. Thirty (30) days' notice is required for foreseeable absences. However, there are exceptions, and an employee should contact the Human Resources Department for clarification. Appropriate and valid medical certification as required by the FMLA and School Board policy is required in serious illness.

f. Jury Duty/Witness Leave

A staff member summoned to serve on a jury or subpoenaed as a witness shall be granted temporary leave with pay for all hours required for the duty up to his/her normal workday hours, provided the matter is not related to personal litigation in which the staff member is a party.

Any fees received shall be remitted to the District.

However, if jury duty does not require absence for the entire workday, an instructional staff member is expected to return to work immediately upon release by the court.

g. Temporary Duty Elsewhere

The School Board may grant temporary duty elsewhere leave for an employee to attend meetings, conferences, and workshops inside or outside the county. Such

leave must be initially approved by the supervisor and be job-related. This leave normally will be with pay and include those travel expenses payable under Florida law. Leave must be requested in advance utilizing the appropriate Focus Portal or Frontline Absence Management program. A copy of the notification/agenda of the meeting should be attached to the request for leave.

h. Military Leave

Military leave shall be granted to an employee who is required to serve in the armed forces of the United States or of the State of Florida in fulfillment of obligations incurred under the Selective Service Laws or because of membership in the reserves of the armed forces or the National Guard. When an employee enters voluntarily into any branch of the armed forces for a temporary or an extended period of service, military leave shall be granted at the School Board's discretion. However, an employee whose absence will interfere with the orderly operation of the school program shall be denied military leave except in unusual cases.

If the employee provides documentation of orders for active duty and requests benefit continuance in writing, the employee shall be entitled to continue to receive District health or other insurance benefits. The Board's contribution toward benefits will continue. The employee will continue to pay the employee portion of all premiums.

Notwithstanding any other provision in Board rules or policy, employees called to active duty pursuant to this section shall be granted military leave for period of active duty without loss of seniority and shall be entitled to reemployment upon release of active duty as provided in School Board Policies.

i. Bereavement Leave

Any employee who suffers the death of an immediate family member shall be granted three (3) days of paid bereavement leave upon request for bereavement purposes. Immediate family for bereavement shall be defined as spouse, child, grandchild, mother, father, stepfather, stepmother, sister, brother, grandparents and in-laws of such. Any other relative permanently residing in the employee's household or with whom the employee permanently resides shall also be considered "immediate family." Proof of relationship to the deceased may be required by the supervisor.

6. Holidays

Holidays may vary from year to year depending on state law and school board policy. The current school calendar is posted on the district's main website and a copy is available from your office manager/supervisor.

F. RETIREMENT

1. FRS (Florida Retirement System)

Another benefit you have is your membership of the Florida Retirement System. The School Board pays part of your retirement contribution. By Florida Statute, employees are required to pay 3% of the contribution to this retirement fund.

EXISTING FRS PARTICIPANTS as of June 30, 2011:

You become eligible for retirement benefit under the retirement system after six (6) years of creditable service. The categories for normal retirement benefits are:

- (1) six (6) or more years of service and age sixty-two (62), or
- (2) thirty years (30) of service, regardless of age.

NEW FRS PARTICIPANTS as of July 1, 2011:

You become eligible for retirement benefit under the retirement system after eight (8) years of creditable service. The categories for normal retirement benefits are:

- (1) eight (8) or more years of service and age sixty-five (65), or
- (2) thirty-three (33) years of service, regardless of age.

All members of the Florida Retirement System are required by state law to be covered under Social Security, and contributions for Social Security are automatically deducted from your paycheck. (The School Board also pays into your Social Security Account a matching amount). The local Social Security office can provide you information regarding Social Security eligibility and benefits.

2. DROP (Deferred Retirement Option Program)

The Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) provides you with an alternative method for payment of your retirement benefits for a specified and limited period of ninety-six (96) months if you are an eligible Florida Retirement System (FRS) Pension Plan member. Under this program, you stop earning service credit toward a future benefit and your retirement benefit is calculated at the time your DROP participation begins. While you are in the DROP, your monthly retirement benefits accumulate in the FRS Trust Fund earning interest while you continue to work for an FRS employer. Upon termination, your DROP account is paid to you as a lump sum payment, a rollover to another qualified plan or a combination partial lump sum payment and partial rollover. Monthly benefits are paid to you in the amount calculated at DROP entry, plus any applicable cost-of-living adjustments during DROP participation.

If you are vested, you become eligible to participate in DROP any time after you reach your normal retirement date. The earliest you may submit your application to participate in DROP is six (6) months before reaching your normal retirement date. The division must receive your DROP application and DROP election forms no later than the last working day of the month you intend to begin DROP participation. Please submit your DROP application as early as possible. Your Member Annual Statements and your service history, available from your FRS Online account, will help you track when you will reach normal retirement and allow you to project estimates of benefits.

https://www.dms.myflorida.com/workforce_operations/retirement/active_members/deferred_retirement_option_program_drop

E. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Monroe County Teachers Federal Credit Union

The Monroe County Teachers Federal Credit Union is a non-profit organization. The credit union offers such services as: checking accounts, savings accounts, club accounts, ATM cards, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA), and certificates of deposit.

Loans are available for most useful purposes; some examples are the purchase of a new or used automobile, boat, motorcycle, and RV. For the home owner, the credit union finances mobile homes (new or used) and offers home improvement loans. Deposits and payments may be made by the option of payroll deduction. They also have direct deposit available for paychecks, retirement, and social security.

Employees and their immediate family members living in the same household may join the credit union. Membership may be retained even if employment with the school board ceases.

The credit union location is 1442 Kennedy Drive, Key West, Florida 33040. For more information, contact the credit union at 296-8546 or P.O. Box 2666, Key West, Florida 33045-8546.

2. United Teachers of Monroe

United Teachers of Monroe represent both the instructional and the support related employees of the Monroe County School Board.

The offices are located in the Lower Keys, 1300 United Street, Key West, Florida 33040 and the Middle Keys, 3400 Overseas Hwy., Building 5, Ste 5-106, Marathon, FL 33050. The phone number is 305-294-7483.

G. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Reporting Suspected Drug Abuse

The Florida Statutes require that all school personnel report to the principal or the principal's designee any suspected unlawful use, possession, or sale of any controlled substance, counterfeit controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, tobacco, or model glue by a student. All school personnel shall be exempt from civil liability when reporting in good faith to the proper school authority such suspected unlawful uses, possessions or sales.

Employees should report such suspected activities to the principal or his/her designee and only the principal or his/her designee shall contact a parent or legal guardian of a student regarding this situation.

2. Reporting Child Abuse

Under Florida Statutes, all employees or agents of the school board have a duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect and a duty to comply with child protective investigations and all other provisions of law relating to child abuse and neglect. Employees are granted immunity from civil liability when reporting in good faith such actual or suspected cases of child abuse. Such reports should be made directly to the Department of Children and Family Services and you may inform the principal of the school that you have filed a report. **1-800-96-ABUSE**

3. MVA (McKinney Vento/Homeless Education Act)

The McKinney-Vento Act (MVA) is a federal law that ensures the right of students to go to school even when they are homeless. In accordance with the MVA and the Title IX, Part A: Education for Homeless Children and Youth Project, all MCSD employees are responsible for assisting in identification of homeless students and for helping to spread awareness about available MVA Services and notify their School CHIPS Contact (or the District CHIPS Contact) of any potential homeless children/youth.