



“Where Excellence is the Standard”

**HANCOCK COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START
PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

VISION

The Hancock County Early Head Start & Head Start/Pre-K program vision is to educate families and children by providing a diverse learning experience. In addition, the program will create a partnership of staff, parents, and community stakeholders to prepare students to become responsible citizens and productive members of the community.

MISSION

The Hancock County Head Start/Early Head Start Program will create and facilitate a healthy, safe and nurturing environment conducive to learning by bridging families, communities and providing comprehensive quality services for participating families and eligible children.

GOALS / OBJECTIVES

The Hancock County Head Start/ Early Head Start Program's goal is to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, enhance the development of young children, and promote healthy family functioning

Our objectives are to:

- Involve families in their child's growth and development
- Strengthen families as the primary nurturers of their children
- Provide children with educational, health, and nutritional services
- Involve the community and other agencies in supporting the Head Start program
- Provide the best education possible for each child
- Meet the changing needs of children, families, and the community
- Help families work through transitions successfully
- Link children and families to needed community services
- Involve parents in decision-making
- Measure effectiveness for program improvement

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INTRODUCTION

The personnel policies and procedures manual of Hancock County Board of Education is a compilation of personnel policies, practices and procedures which have been developed over a period of years and revised periodically. All revisions are reviewed by the Hancock County Board of Education and approved by the Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Policy Council. Documents provided by Region IV ACF, Head Start Bureau/Bright from the Start have been used to give guidance to changes so that the policies are consistent with Head Start Performance Standards, Parent Involvement Standards, Bright from the Start Pre-K Guidelines and Performance Standards.

This is a communication instrument for use by supervisors and managers as well as a guide for all employees of the board. It explains the standard approach for the administration of personnel policies, with the intent of reducing misunderstanding which might arise from unwritten policies or lack of clear directions.

This manual is the property of Hancock County Board of Education, Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start and is assigned to the job position not the individual employee. Upon termination of employment or resignation from employment, the employee must return this copy of the manual to his/her supervisor.

The authors of this manual recognize that it is essential for employees to have a guaranteed right to appeal decisions of management that could adversely affect their job security. This manual is designed with a central appeal procedure to handle all matters subject to appeal.

Employees should read this manual carefully to become familiar with the expectation and provisions set forth for all Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start employees. All employees are subject to the procedures and policies herein. If points are not clear or understood, employees should seek counsel from a supervisor, because all employees are expected to abide by the policies at all times.

A. HISTORY AND GOALS OF THE AGENCY

The Hancock County Head Start Program was established in 1967 as a summer demonstration project under the auspices of the Hancock County Board of Education.

Grantee: In 1968, the Hancock County Board of Education again assumed the role Grantee which it has exercised to the present day. Since this time, the Head Start Program in Hancock has been an effective community agency.

The Goals of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start includes:

- Providing a high quality, age appropriate child development program where children can benefit from caring and nurturing adults who are trained and experienced in the development of children.
- Providing pre-school children of income-restricted parents with limited resources with a comprehensive development program to meet the individual's needs - emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological.
- Providing educational experiences for the enrolled child to better prepare him/her for later educational challenges and environs, including assimilation into the public and private school systems.
- To provide the families of the enrolled children with a social services network to support family function and increase family awareness of the importance of the child's developmental needs, and to avail the family of the existing services of agencies within the community.
- To assure the enrolled child the "Head Start" in life he/she so desperately needs and rightly deserves.
- To provide quality staff development and training to ensure the delivery of services spelled out in the national Head Start Performance Standards and deliver quality services consistent with the reputation and expectation of the Hancock County Board of Education.

The purpose of this manual is to inform all employees of the Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program of the operating procedures in effect for the agency. It is essential that all employees become familiar with all policies and procedures so that all may contribute to a productive working environment.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K &
EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 1:

Personnel Records

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to maintain certain records on each employee of the agency which are directly related to the employee's job with the agency. The agency will do its best to balance the employee's right to privacy with the center's need to collect and utilize information. Official personnel records for employees of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program will be maintained by the Hancock County Board of Education, and all personnel files are to be considered confidential records.

Each employee's personnel file will be maintained by the Personnel Office and will contain only such information as is needed by the agency in conducting its business or is required by federal, state or local law. The information normally will include:

- current W-4 and G-4 completed by the employee;
- approved leave requests;
- notice of employment; application/resume;
- performance/probationary reviews;
- salary reviews;
- change of status (e.g., promotions, transfers, demotions, salary adjustments, terminations, leaves of absence, and changes in the employee's address, marital status, number of dependents, etc.);
- disciplinary notices;
- Insurance and other benefits data (e.g., type of coverage, beneficiary, etc.);
- medical/accident reports;
- letters of commendation and other correspondence concerning the employee; records of training, certificates, and/or degrees received since employment;
- copies of licenses, transcripts" or other assurance of job-related or required credentials;
- assurances required by funding sources, licensing agencies, etc. (e.g., for Head Start employees: assurance that corporal punishment or isolation will not be used as disciplinary measures for Head Start children, results of physical examinations and TB tests, assurance of no convictions of child abuse or neglect, compliance with the provisions of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988);
- References, records checks, etc.
- confidentiality agreement;
- record of all title and salary changes; current job description;
- 1-9 for verifying employment eligibility;
- Statement that the employee understands these Personnel Policies and Procedures.

The information contained in each personnel file will be obtained directly from the employee to

the greatest extent possible. When information must be obtained from an outside source, the employee will be informed of the identity or the source and the reason the agency is obtaining the information.

Each personnel file will be reviewed by the appropriate personnel to ensure that the file contains only information that is relevant to the individual's employment with the agency. Each record in the file will be examined for accuracy, timeliness, and completeness.

The Executive Director will ensure compliance by the agency with applicable federal, state and local laws which require that certain records be retained for a specific length of time. Each employee is allowed to inspect and make copies of his personnel records. A written request to do so should be directed to the Human Resource Director who will schedule a date and time for inspection within 30 days that is convenient for both the employee and the department.

A reasonable charge to reimburse the agency for its costs will be made for any copies of records requested by the employee, and a memo will be placed in the employee's file indicating what was copied, when, and by whom.

The employee is not allowed to inspect or have copies of reference information which the writer requested to remain confidential. Any such items will be removed or sealed prior to the employee's review of his personnel file.

If, after inspecting his personnel records, the employee believes that certain material is irrelevant, inaccurate, or obsolete, he may submit a written request to the Human Resource Director to remove the material from the file. The Human Resource Director will either remove the material or inform the employee in writing why the material should remain in the file. If the employee is not satisfied with the Human Resource Director's decision, the employee shall be permitted to place a written statement of disagreement in the file.

All requests from sources outside the agency for personnel information concerning applicants for employment, current employees, and former employees shall be directed to the appropriate program. The Human Resource Director will release information to outsiders in response to written requests only after obtaining the written consent of the individual who is the subject of the inquiry.

However, the Human Resource Director may release the following information without obtaining the consent of the individual involved pursuant to a bona fide written request for verification of employment:

- Employment dates;
- Position held;
- Location of job site;
- Wage and salary information.

In order to guarantee the security of the agency's personnel records, all files are kept in an area of the central office. The files are locked during non-working hours or when the Human Resource Director and/or his/her designee is not present. Access to the files is on a need-to-know basis. In addition to the employee's immediate supervisor; examples of individuals who would have a legitimate need to inspect personnel records include the Executive Director, Human Resource Director and/or any Department Manager who is considering the employee for promotion, transfer, or other personnel action.

In order to keep personnel records up-to-date, employees are required to notify the Human Resource Director in writing of any changes in the following:

- Name;
- Address; telephone number;
- Marital status;
- Number of dependents;
- Beneficiary designations for any of the agency's insurance plans;
- persons to be notified in case of emergency.

When a change in the number of dependents or marital status occurs, the employee should report to the personnel department to complete new forms for income tax withholding purposes.

When an employee leaves the employ of the center, a termination file will be maintained in the central office for at least three years from the last date of entry. Termination file is the former employee personnel file.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP2: Classes of Employees and Benefit Eligibility

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It is the policy of this agency to maintain established guidelines relative to employee classification that adhere to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Exempt Employees

Exempt employees are those whose duties are of an executive, administrative, professional, or outside sales nature, and who meet the legal requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. These employees are exempt from the normal overtime and minimum wage requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. A "Checklist for Exemption" form may be completed to determine if a position is exempt.

Non-exempt Employees

Non-exempt employees' duties are not of an executive, administrative, or professional nature. They are covered by the legal requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. These employees are eligible for overtime pay and must be paid at least the minimum wage.

Non-exempt office employees' duties are of administrative or professional nature. They are covered by the legal requirement of the Fair Labor Standards Act. These employees are eligible for overtime pay and must be paid at least minimum wage. These employees work the same scheduled days as exempt employees and accumulate leave the same as exempt employees.

Full-Time Employees

A full-time employee is hired without a predetermined terminal point of employment and works at least thirty-five (35) hours a week; is eligible for all fringe benefits including sick leave, health insurance, life insurance, unemployment compensation (when the employee's lay-off or separation from the agency falls within eligibility guidelines), worker's compensation, and paid holidays. Full-time employees will be designated in one of the following two categories:

Full-time, 12 month: hired to work at least 8 hours a day, 40 hour a week, 12 months a year;

Full-time, 10 month: hired to work at least 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week, and 10 months a year.

Part-Time Employees

A part-time employee is hired without a predetermined terminal point of employment and works less than 35 hours a week. They are eligible for worker's compensation, social security and unemployment compensation (when the employee is laid-off or separated from the agency within eligibility guidelines). Part-time employees will be designated in one of the following two categories:

Part-time, 12 month: hired to work less than 7 hours a day, less than 35 hour a week, 12 months a year;

Part-time, 10 month: hired to work less than 7 hours a day, less than 35 hours a week, 10months a year.

Enrollees

Enrollees are hired with a predetermined number of paid hours which they are eligible to work. Annual recertification of enrollees' eligibility is required. Fringe benefits are based upon requirements of state and/or federal regulations for enrollee employment training programs, e.g., JTPA, JOBS.

Regular Employees

A regular employee is hired without a predetermined terminal point of employment or for duration of no less than six months. Regular employees are eligible for benefits suitable for their employment category (i.e. full-time or part-time).

Temporary Employees

A temporary employee is hired with a predetermined terminal point of employment and is eligible for benefits mutually agreed upon by the Executive Director and the employee at the time of hire. A written agreement delineating each temporary employee's benefits and signed by the employee and the Executive Director at the time of hire is maintained in the employee's personnel file. Fringe benefits are based on the type and duration of the work to be performed, availability of funds, the discretion of the Executive Director and Human Resource Director, and/or any applicable legal or funding requirements.

Substitutes

A substitute is hired with a predetermined terminal point of employment and is not eligible for benefits.

Volunteers

A volunteer is an individual who provides services to the program and performs tasks on a volunteer basis and is not eligible for salary, wages or fringe benefits.

Equal Opportunity Employment

It is the policy of the Hancock County Board of Education not to discriminate based on gender, age, race, color, disability, religion or national origin in any educational program or other program, activity or service or admissions to facilities operated by the Hancock County Board of Education or in the employment practices of the Hancock County Board of Education. It is the express policy of the Hancock County Board of Education to comply with all appropriate laws and regulations relating to discrimination now in effect or hereafter enacted including Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and all accompanying regulations.

Employee Background Check

All personnel employed on or after July 1, 2000, must be fingerprinted and successfully complete a criminal background checks. Teachers, principals, and other certified personnel renewed after July 1, 2000, will also have a criminal background check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission. Non-certified personnel shall also have criminal background checks on a periodic basis, not to exceed every five years, using procedures and schedules to be determined by the CEO/Superintendent or his/her designee.

Contracts

Contracts for certified employees and other Hancock County Board of Education-approved personnel are issued for no more than one school year. For new, certified employees, a temporary contract for up to 20 days is issued pending the results from the criminal background check.

May 1st will be the deadline for release from contract. Exceptions may be made by the Chief Human Resources Officer, Division of Human Resources in emergency situations.

An employee who is fulfilling a full year contract for the current year must be notified by April 15th if a contract for the ensuing year will not be offered. An employee who holds a contract for less than one full year will not necessarily be offered a full contract for the ensuing year.

Lateral Transfers

The Board has the right to make lateral transfers in personnel when it becomes necessary due to :

- Overstaffing within the teaching field or grade level
- Change in attendance areas;
- Change in program or staffing within a program; and/or
- Any reason that the Hancock County Board of Education (within the limits of its authority to manage and control the school system) deems necessary for the orderly and effective management of the school system.

The following criteria will be observed in effecting these transfers:

- The needs of the instructional program and after-school activities of the schools(s) involved must be considered.
- A teacher must hold a valid GCPS contract and teaching certificate in the field where the transfer is needed.
- When the need for a transfer is known, volunteers will be given top priority. Principals must inform qualified teachers of the vacancy and accept voluntary transfers when offered.
- If there are no volunteers, involuntary transfers will be based upon seniority within teaching field, certification, or subject matter where the transfer is needed. Teachers receiving or scheduled to receive a supplement for after-school activities may not be required to transfer.
- Seniority within the system takes precedence over seniority within the school.

Reduction in Force

A reduction in force may occur for the following reasons: inadequate funds; loss of funding that includes the reduction or expiration of grant generated funds; insufficient student enrollment to merit continuation of a program or service; decline in average daily attendance; decline in need for services rendered by a position classification; return of contractual personnel from extended leave; discontinuation of a program by action of the Hancock County Board of Education; change in class sizes; closure of change in purpose or a school or program; reorganization; legislative mandates; judicial decrees; other exigencies. The determination of employees to be demoted or terminated is based upon approved procedures established by the Board and school system administration.

Employees who do not have a written contract are classified as “at-will.” Either the employee or GCPS may terminate the employment of “at-will” employees at any time with or without cause.

Non-School Employment

Hancock County Schools are reminded that their job assignments within the district are their first obligation and if outside employment is taking time or energy from this position or affecting their performance, they will be asked to make a choice.

Each principal/supervisor has direct responsibility for evaluating the effects of outside employment on personnel assigned. Employees seeking employment in any private business or outside activity during the term of their contract shall first receive permission from their respective principal/supervisor before entering into such supplementary employment.

Tutoring

Teachers may not offer private instruction on a fee basis to any student who is presently enrolled in their classes. It is incumbent upon professional staff members to assist students in their classes after school and whenever feasible.

It is preferred that a tutor be a person who is not on the staff of the school in which a student is enrolled. Tutoring must be done in such a way as not to interfere with the orderly routine of the teacher's regular day and school responsibilities.

Pay and Benefits

Hancock County School District pay dates are on the 30th/31st of each month. If either of these dates is on a Saturday or Sunday, your paycheck will be deposited directly into your account on the preceding Friday. If the pay date falls on a holiday, your paycheck will be deposited the business day before the holiday.

Paid Holidays

As a benefit of employment, all employees of Hancock County School District receive holiday pay. 190-day, 200 day and 220 day employees receive 11 paid holidays each year. Annual duty (230 day) employees receive 12 paid holidays per year. The paid holidays are as follows:

- Independence Day (annual duty only)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (2)
- Christmas (3)
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
- Spring Holidays (2)
- Memorial Day

Direct Deposit

All payroll checks are directly deposited into employee's bank accounts. Payment information is delivered electronically through the Hancock employee portal under "Employee Self Service."

Payroll Deductions

The payroll department must deduct the following items from your paycheck:

- Federal and State income taxes
- Medicare tax of 1.45 percent of your age if Hancock County School District hired you after March 31, 1986, or if you work part time (daily or hourly); and
- Pension contributions, depending upon your employment status.

Summer Salary

The pay for full-time employees on 190, 200, and 220 day schedules who are present for the full contract year is prorated in 12 installments throughout the year including the summer months. Summer pay will also be prorated for 190, 200, 220 day employees who are present for at least one-quarter of the school year if they are

- Employed after the beginning of the regular school year
- Separated from the school system after the regular school year ends
- Absent from duty without pay during any part of the required period of employment.

Dual Pay

Employees shall be prohibited from receiving dual pay for services rendered during the regular working hours. The employee must forfeit the regular pay or the pay from another agency, organization, or individual. Employees may receive payment for services rendered while on non-medical leave or for services performed other than during the regular working day.

Annual Open Enrollment

Each employee must re-enroll in the flexible benefits program annually. You will lose your benefits for the following calendar year if you fail to complete open enrollment. Watch your Hancock County Schools e-mail in October for instructions on how to enroll and for dates and times.

Personnel Time Schedule

All full-time employees of the Hancock County Board of Education work a minimum 40 hours per week. The principal or program manager sets a schedule within this policy for the time of arrival and departure of all employees assigned to his/her operations.

E-Mail

All Hancock County School employees are assigned an e-mail account. It is each employee's responsibility to check e-mail on a regular basis.

Staff Meetings

Regular staff meetings are a necessary part of the district operations. Each school shall have a schedule for staff meetings on a regular basis. The principal/director/manager shall call special staff meetings for professional learning, accreditation, and/or workshops as deemed necessary. All staff members are required as part of their teaching/employment responsibilities to attend any or all such meetings as designated by the principal/director/manager.

Work Year

All regular, full-time Hancock County employees work 190 days, 200 days, 220 days or annual duty (230 days). The official, contractual academic year (or work year) and payroll schedule for each of these schedules is as follows:

190 Days, 200 Days, and 220 Days

The start date for each work year is defined on the board-approved school calendar.

Annual Duty (230) Days

The work year begins July 1 and goes through June 30 of the following year. This schedule coincides with the board's fiscal year.

Workday Schedules and Punctuality

The minimum on-premises workday for all fulltime employees is 8 hours. The 8 hour workday for teachers and paraprofessionals includes lunch. The 8 hour workday for all other employees does not include lunch. Each employee's work schedule is set by the supervisor based on the needs of the work site.

The workday schedule for instructional staff is 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. and the workday schedule for managers, family service advocates, secretary, and environmentalist is 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Being on time is critical to the safety and success of students and for the smooth operations of the school system.

Emergency Closings

Hancock County Schools cooperates fully with local emergency management preparedness authorities for natural and man-made disasters. The superintendent may close individual schools or all schools in the event of abnormal conditions, hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the safety, welfare, or health of students or employees. In cases of emergency closures, some critical employees, primarily in the Facility and Operation Department may be required to report to work.

Unauthorized Tape Recordings

Conversations and communications generally should be free and open among employees. Employees and/or anyone acting on the employee's behalf may only use audio or video to record or reproduce any conversation among employees while on Hancock County Schools premises and/or while conducting HCS business if you get the expressed, written consent of everyone engaged in the conversation or communication. Hancock County Schools may record public presentations, board meetings, hearings, grievances, procurement activities and official investigations.

Weapons

It is the policy of the Hancock County Head Start/EHS/Pre-K Program to absolutely prohibit the presence of weapons on the property of the Hancock County Board of Education. The Hancock County Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K Program recognizes a Zero Tolerance Weapons policy. The following guidelines are in force:

- No staff, child, volunteer, parent and/or visitor shall possess, handle, transmit, carry or have under his/her control any firearm or any other offensive or

defensive instrument vying for contending against another while on Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K premises and/or vehicles.

- No child shall possess or use any weapons on the Hancock County Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K premises and/or vehicles.
- Staff shall not supply, possess, handle, use, threaten to utilize or transfer any weapon or any other tool or instrument capable inflicting bodily injury.

Staff who violate this policy will result in immediate termination. Parents, volunteers, consultants, and/or other visitors will be referred to local police and/or sheriff department.

Care of your Hancock Public Schools Work Environment

Please follow these guidelines from the Facilities Services Department to help maintain the cleanliness and safety of your work space.

- Refrain from dragging furniture and file cabinets across floors. Please request assistance or use dollies.
- Please use only wall mounting tape and tabs to affix materials to the walls. Avoid using masking, packing or duct tape, staples, and glue in direct contact with all wall surfaces.
- Windows in classrooms should only be opened in emergency situations.
- Exterior doors should never be propped or left open.
- Breakfast in the classroom: ensure that all debris is placed in the appropriate container and placed in the hallway after breakfast. Custodians will not enter the classroom once the school day has begun to discard breakfast trash.
- Refrain from storing food items and/or food containers in desks and closets. This reduces the need for pest services in the building.
- Refrain from disposing of any food items in the classroom sinks.
- Recycling: separate all debris from paper and cardboard and place in the appropriate containers. Break down all empty boxes and places them in the designated recycle areas.

Health and Safety

The Hancock County Board of Education recognizes the responsibility for ensuring the safety of all employees. Therefore, it is the policy of the Hancock County Board of Education to take all practical steps to develop and implement a safe program for all employees, which will provide and maintain safe and healthful working conditions, adequate protection equipment and develop operating procedures and practices that comply with federal, state, and local legislation pertaining to accident prevention.

To help ensure safe working conditions, an employee is responsible for:

- Knowing the potential hazards of the job
- Learning and following the safety practices required by management
- Using health and safety devices required by the job.
- Correcting and/or reporting safety hazards immediately
- Immediately reporting any accident or injury to supervisor

- Obeying “No Smoking” regulations. All students are prohibited from tobacco use on campus or at school activities, functions or events. While fulfilling their duties as district employees, staff members shall not use tobacco in the presence of students or on school system property. Please refer to the section titled “Personnel Smoking for additional information.
- Operating machinery or equipment only if qualified to do so.
- Maintaining good housekeeping practices including keeping all fire exits clear and firefighting equipment accessible.

Drug Free Workplace

The Hancock County Board of Education provides a drug-free workplace and professes that the use of illicit drugs and the unlawful possession and use of tobacco and alcohol are wrong and harmful. The unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, or dispensation of illicit drugs, tobacco, and alcohol by employees on school premises, in school vehicles, or any school-sponsored activities is prohibited. Compliance with these standards is mandatory. Disciplinary sanctions up to and including termination of employment and referral for prosecution will be imposed on employees who violate these prohibitions.

Employees are prohibited from using or displaying drug, alcohol, and tobacco products in front of students while the employee is on duty, during the normal school day, or while on duty at any school or system sponsored functions.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 3: Salary Administration

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to pay wages and salaries which are based upon the nature of the job performed and which are competitive with rates being paid for similar work by other employers in the community. Salary increases are intended to reward above average job performance and are not necessarily given on the basis of length of service alone.

The Executive Director, Board Members, and Human Resource Director review all wages and salaries on a continuing basis. It is their responsibility to determine whether existing salary ranges are competitive and whether the salaries of individual employees accurately reflect their job performance and responsibilities. Merit increases for individual employees and adjustments to the salary ranges will be approved by the Executive Director, Board Members, and appropriate Human Resource Director(s).

New employees are generally hired at the minimum rate assigned to their job. Supervisors may recommend higher starting rates based on the employee's education and/or experience. These recommendations will be reviewed by the appropriate Human Resource Director, Board Members, and the Executive Director.

Supervisors may recommend salary increases for their employees in conjunction with regular performance appraisals. Recommendations for salary increases will be reviewed by Human Resource Director and forwarded to the Executive Director, and if approved, to the Finance Department.

Wage and salary surveys will be conducted by Hancock County Board of Education Human Resource Director and/or consultants as appropriate and/or upon request of the Executive Director. The surveys are conducted to determine comparability of wages based upon position, education, experience, etc. The data obtained from these surveys form the basis for recommendations for rate range adjustments, if funds are available for such adjustments.

Cost of living adjustments may be granted by the agency if and when funds become available for such increases and/or when the agency conducts wage and salary surveys and makes subsequent salary adjustments reflecting market factors and adjustments for inflation. There will be no automatic cost of living adjustments unless required by a funding source.

On each pay day employees will receive a statement showing gross pay, deductions, and net pay. City, state, federal, and Social Security (FICA) taxes and employee contributions to the agency's benefit plans will be deducted automatically. Other deductions may be made from payroll if the employee submits a request in writing to the Personnel Department.

Overtime compensation will be paid to non-exempt employees who work in excess of forty hours during the normal work week at one and one-half times their regular hourly rate unless arrangements are made to provide compensatory time before the end of the pay period.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 4: Payroll

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to compensate its employees by agency check on a regular basis and in a manner so that the amount, method, and timing of such payments comply with any applicable laws or regulations.

Each non-exempt employee is required to submit a time sheet reflecting the number of hours worked for the pay period. Time sheets are submitted to the appropriate supervisor for the supervisor's signature verifying that the time claimed by the employee is correct. Each exempt employee is required to submit an activity sheet for the pay period. Activity sheets are submitted to the immediate supervisor for signature. A pay check will not be issued without a properly submitted and verified time sheet or activity sheet. All staff must sign in and out on forms provided at centers or the administrative offices. Time sheets must be consistent with sign in/sign out forms. Completing another employee's time sheet, signing in or out for another employee, or falsifying one's own time sheet or sign in/out time is prohibited and may be grounds for disciplinary action, including termination.

The pay period ends and time sheets are due to the Personnel Department on the 15th and the last day of each month. Payroll checks shall be distributed at the Head Start Office before the close of business on or up to three days after the end of the pay period. Should the due date fall on Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday, time sheets will be due and employees paid on the last working day prior to the regular due date.

Employees who discover a mistake in their pay check, lose their pay check, or have it stolen should notify the Personnel Officer immediately. In the case of a mistake, the error will be corrected. In the case of loss or theft, the agency will attempt to stop payment on the check and, if successful, reissue a check to the employee. However, the employee is solely responsible for the monetary loss and the agency will not be responsible for the loss or theft of a check if it cannot stop payment on the check.

Payroll Deductions

Mandatory payroll deductions include Social Security (FICA) for those not covered by Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and Medicare taxes at the current federal tax rate. Federal, State, and local taxes are deducted in accordance with the W-4 and G-4 forms furnished by the employee. Voluntary deductions may include employee contributions to insurance plans or retirement plans as requested to the Executive Director in writing. Under no circumstances will political contributions be deducted from paychecks.

Withholdings will be made when, in response to a written court order, an employee's wages are garnished. Money legally due the program may be withheld with or without the employee's consent. Pay for time reported and not worked will be withheld in the next pay period.

Pay Advances

It shall be the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program not to advance salaries or wages nor make loans to employees. In the case that employee is out-of town on agency business on pay day the Executive Director may exercise discretion in honoring a written request for an advance if that request is submitted at least 15 days in advance or the proposed date of payment. The employee may not request an amount higher than the normal monthly salary.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 5: Sick Leave

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to provide sick leave for all eligible employees for protection against undue illnesses in the event of an illness or injury. This plan is instituted on the assumption that such absences shall be minimal and taken for the sole purpose of illness or injury.

This policy applies to all employees of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program, whose normal work schedules consist of at least forty hours per week. There is no qualifying time for sick leave.

Sick leave may be used only in the following instances:

- Sickness, injury, or disability of the employee;
- Medical, optical or dental appointments and treatments;
- Pregnancy, childbirth or abortion;
- Restrictions on the employee because of quarantine;
- Illness or injury of a spouse, parent or dependent child.

A doctor's statement will be required for all periods of sick leave or more than three consecutive days or whenever abuse of this benefit is suspected. Annual leave may be used in lieu of and in order to extend sick leave.

Sick leave provisions are not applicable to temporary employees or substitutes unless the contract specifically states otherwise.

The employee shall notify his immediate supervisor or the designated representative prior to or within one hour from the beginning of the normal business day on the first day of absence. The employee should, if possible, inform the supervisor when he may return to work. If, however, he is unable to return to work on the day specified, notification should be made again to the supervisor.

Employees are encouraged to make medical, dental or optical appointments during off-duty hours or on non-work days whenever possible.

Sick leave benefits shall not be paid when an employee is on an unpaid leave of absence and shall be reduced by the amount of worker's compensation benefits paid to an employee. Accumulated sick leave shall not be paid to an employee upon termination of employment or his survivors, in the event of his death.

The agency reserves the right to require any employee using sick leave to report to a doctor of the agency's choice at the agency's expense to verify the employee's illness and request for sick leave.

Abuse of sick leave by an employee will result in the withholding of sick leave benefits and disciplinary action.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 6: Paid Holidays

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to provide paid holidays each calendar year for all eligible employees in the observance of the following holidays:

New Year, Easter/Spring, Thanksgiving and
Christmas Holidays
Memorial Day OR
Presidents' Day
Independence Day Week
Labor Day

Each program will observe the same
holidays this group as the school system of
the county in which they are located.
Last Monday in May
Third Monday in February Week of July 4
First Monday in September

When a designated holiday occurs on Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed as the holiday. When a designated holiday occurs on Sunday, the following Monday shall be observed as the holiday.

An employee who is on the payroll on the day on which a holiday is observed shall be eligible for holiday pay provided the employee works the scheduled work days before and after the holiday or is absent one or both days for one of the following reasons:

Personal Leave; or
Excused Leave; or
Administrative Leave with pay;
Or Jury Duty.

An employee who does not work the days before or after a holiday without prior approval or who is on leave of absence without pay shall not be eligible for holiday pay. Holiday pay shall be at the employee's current rate of pay, not to exceed eight (8) hours per holiday.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 7: Excused Leave

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to excuse employees from their duties with pay for short periods of time in order to vote, travel safely, make reasonable accommodation for an employee to observe religious holidays other than those paid and specified by the agency, and for a death in the employee's immediate family or household.

The Director may excuse employees to permit safe travel under hazardous travel conditions, or to make reasonable accommodation for an employee to observe religious holidays other than those specified and paid by the agency. Excused leave for those purposes will not normally exceed four hours and is granted at the discretion of the Director.

In cases of bereavement, excused leave for a maximum of three (3) days may be granted to an employee who has had a death in his immediate family or household. Excused leave for bereavement is granted at the discretion of the immediate supervisor. All bereavement leave pay is based on the individual personal leave bank.

All employees who are registered voters of the state of Georgia may receive reasonable time off, not to exceed two (2) hours, between the opening and closing of polls, to vote in local, state and national elections. If the polls open two (2) or more hours before the employee's work schedule begins or remain open two (2) or more hours after the work schedule ends, the employee shall not be eligible for excused leave to vote.

Attempt must be made to reach an employee's work station before leave for hazardous travel conditions can be granted.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 8: Jury Duty and Court Leave

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Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program recognizes the obligation of employees to fulfill their civic responsibility when called upon for jury duty. Notify the immediate supervisor when the summons is received. Upon completion of jury duty, the employee must furnish the immediate supervisor with proof of the dates of jury duty service. Report to work prior to the appointed hour of jury duty each day and/or return to work immediately following completion of jury duty or court leave.

Any employee may be granted excused leave from work without loss of pay on days which he is subpoenaed by any court, federal, state, or political subdivision thereof, to serve as a witness. This leave will not affect the time or service rating of the employee.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 9: Floating Time and Overtime

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By the very nature of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program, it may be necessary that an employee work in excess of forty hours in a given week. Overtime is considered to be approved or suffered work beyond the forty hours of the work week. Suffered work is overtime worked without choice; e.g., a child care teacher who has already worked forty hours and must stay with one or more children while awaiting a late parent.

Floating time is time off from work earned if an employee works more than the scheduled work day, and for which prior approval has been granted by the Director/Human Resource Director. Floating time equal to the number of hours worked beyond the regular work day must be taken during the week in which the work occurred.

Program personnel may be granted time equal to the amount of overtime worked. Overtime pay at the rate of one and one-half times the regular rate of compensation may be paid to non-exempt employees of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program or floating time may be allowed at the discretion and with prior approval of the supervisor. Overtime pay will be paid only to non-exempt employees. All floating time and overtime must be approved in advance. To receive pay at one and one-half times the regular rate for overtime approval must be given by the Director/Personnel Department. However, request for floating time is approved by the immediate supervisor.

Arbitrary working on an employee's part to accrue overtime is not allowable. To have overtime become eligible for overtime pay or floating time, it must be approved in accordance with the employee's supervisor or the Personnel Department. The supervisor must provide a written statement to the Executive Director that he authorized the overtime.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START CENTER

PP 10: Administrative Leave with Pay

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to permit employees to be absent from work with pay on a short-term basis under certain circumstances. Eligible employees will receive compensation for authorized administrative leave, if the short term absence from work qualifies under this policy.

All requests for authorized administrative leave with pay should be submitted to the employee's supervisor at least five working days in advance of the absence from work, except in the case of administrative leave for inclement weather, and must be recommended in writing by the Program Director and approved by the Executive Director.

A short-term absence from work is defined as any absence which continues for ten consecutive working days or less. Absences longer than ten consecutive working days, if approved, must qualify as a leave of absence without pay, if employment rights are to be maintained. An administrative leave with pay may be granted only for the following reasons:

- inclement weather;
- training activities; or
- Management discretion.

Employees are expected to make a good faith effort to report to work during inclement weather, unless the agency declares an emergency closing.

Employees may be required to participate in continuing education and training programs when such instruction is considered necessary for compliance with funding agency regulations, licensing or recertification of a license required to be held by an employee, and to develop or enhance skills required for efficient job performance. Participation in such activities may be considered hours worked for pay purposes.

The agency has the right to exercise customary managerial functions, including the right to dismiss, assign, supervise, and discipline employees. When, in the exercise of legitimate management discretion, it becomes necessary to relieve an employee of his normal duties for such purposes and reasons as management reasonable believes justifies the action, an employee may be given administrative leave with pay, if recommended by the Program Director and approved by the Executive Director. Neither the approval nor denial of an employee's request

for administrative leave with pay by the Executive Director shall be grounds for an employee grievance under the agency's grievance procedure. The decision of the Executive Director regarding administrative leave with pay is considered to be final and binding on all agency personnel.

Immediate supervisors should consider and Executive Director or his designee approve placing an employee on administrative leave with pay if his continued presence on the job may compromise the safety of the clients, the employee himself, (an)other employee(s), or of agency facilities, property, or equipment.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START CENTER

PP 11: Leave of Absence without Pay

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Leave of absence without pay refers to that period during which an employee is not obligated to report to work, having been excused in writing by the Program Director/ Human Resource Director and Executive Director, and during which time the employee receives no remuneration from the agency. A person on leave of absence is entitled to his former or an equivalent position upon return. Leave of absence without pay usually will be granted for no more than a total of six months including the combined Family Medical Act leave, personal leave and/or sick leave.

Request for leave of absence without pay must generally be made in writing to the Human Resource Director and/or Executive Director at least ten (10) working days prior to the date leave is scheduled to begin. Requests for return from leave of absence must be made to the same director(s) in writing at least ten (10) working days prior to the date leave is scheduled to end. These requirements may be waived or decreased in unusual circumstances at the discretion of the Executive Director.

No benefit earned by time on the job is accrued during leave of absence without pay. Fringe benefits, such as life and health insurance, retirement, and worker's compensation are not paid to or on behalf of the employee while on leave of absence. If the employee makes arrangements in advance, and provides funds for the full amount of the premium(s) by the premium due date(s), the agency will forward such money to the proper insurance companies with the regular agency payment. No personal or sick leave will be earned when an employee is on leave of absence.

If a holiday occurs during an approved leave of absence without pay, the employee shall not be eligible for holiday pay.

Failure to return to work when scheduled following leave of absence without pay shall be interpreted as a voluntary resignation. The effective date of termination shall be the last day of approved leave.

Leave of absence without pay may be available to an employee for the following types of employee absences:

Family Medical Leave: Subject to the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), covered employees shall be granted up to 12 weeks of job protected leave of absence without pay for certain family and medical reasons. Employees are eligible for Family Medical Leave if they have worked Hancock Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start for at least one year (not necessarily consecutively) and for at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months.

Reasons for taking leave - Unpaid leave will be granted for any of the following reasons:

- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

Advance notice and medical certification - The employee will be required to provide advance leave notice and medical certifications. Taking of leave may be denied if requirements are not met. The employee must ordinarily provide 30 days advance notice when the leave is foreseeable. Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program will require medical certification to support a request for leave because of a serious health condition and may require second or third opinions, at the agency's expense, and a fitness for duty report to return to work.

Job benefits and protections - For the duration of FMLA leave Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start will maintain the employee's health coverage under the group health insurance plan under the same terms as if they had been at work throughout the leave. The use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave. However, the agency will apply any accrued personal and sick leave toward the 12-week leave of any employee taking FMLA leave. Employees taking leave under the Act may upon written request and approval by the Executive Director, take such leave on an intermittent or reduced leave scheduled.

Upon return the Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program will restore the employee to his original or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Extended Medical Leave: Leave for medical reasons requested beyond the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 may be granted for up to six months, including the 12 weeks FMLA and accrued leave. Extended medical leave requires a written request to and approved by the Executive Director, a physician's report, periodic verification of the continued disability and a doctor's release before the employee returns to work during extended medical leave the employee will be responsible for payment or premiums under the group health insurance plan.

Maternity/Paternity Leave: An employee may apply for no more than four months leave of absence before and/or after the baby is born or the date upon which the baby is adopted.

In consideration of the health of the employee and the requirements of the position, the attending physician shall determine when a pregnant employee shall leave the service of employment. Following delivery and with certification by her physician that the employee is physically able to work, she shall inform the Executive Director and/or Human Resource Director of her return and will be reinstated in her previous position. FMLA leave may be applied during maternity leave if the employee desires. When FMLA leave is exhausted, she will revert to leave of absence without pay.

Military Leave. Military leave may be used for periodic training, limited active duty, or active duty.

Periodic training - Employees who are members of federal or state military units may take two weeks each calendar year at a time other than annual leave to fulfill their active duty training requirements. They shall be paid by the agency an amount equal to the difference between regular salary and military pay, excluding travel allowances, if the employee otherwise would have been scheduled to work. To be eligible to receive payment, the employee must give the agency prior notice of military duty and must furnish written evidence to the agency verifying the amount of military pay, within three working days after returning to work.

Limited active duty - Employees who are ordered to report and perform military duty in the event of a public emergency, such as riots or natural disasters, shall be eligible to receive the difference in regular salary and military pay not to exceed two weeks per calendar year. To be eligible for payment, the employee must notify the agency as soon as possible of being called to military duty and must furnish written evidence to the agency verifying the amount of military pay upon completion of duty.

Active duty - Employees who enter service in the armed forces of the United States in accordance with existing legislation may be granted military leaves without pay for up to six months. Employees who leave full- or part-time jobs are guaranteed equivalent positions when they return, if the agency is still operating the same of a similar program, provided that they:

- serve no more than four years (can be extended to five years, provided extension is at the request and for the convenience of the federal government);
- satisfactorily complete the period of active duty;
- are qualified to perform the duties of the position;
- Reapply to the program within ninety days of completion of military service.

Educational Leave: Education-all leave may be granted when the course of study being pursued would result in enhancing the employee's value to the agency. Such leave shall not exceed one academic year with prior written approval.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 12: Employee Counseling

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to assist employees in obtaining counseling and referral services which will aid employees in career planning and in solving problems of a personal nature.

Personal difficulties such as marital, family, medical, emotional, financial, interpersonal, and legal problems, stress, and alcohol and drug abuse can adversely affect the job performance of employees. Employees experiencing these and similar problems are encouraged to report them to their Supervisor/ Director and the Human Resource Director or Executive Director for referral to an appropriate professional.

Supervisors should be alert to these problems, noting such warning signs as excessive absenteeism, changes in an employee's behavior patterns or attitude, and substandard job performance. They should, when appropriate, communicate with employees experiencing these work related problems. If an employee's problem seems to require professional counseling, the supervisor should refer the employee to such services as seem appropriate or to the Human Resource Director or Executive Director to make a referral. Under no circumstances should an agency employee, other than one hired or contracted specifically for such a purpose, provide counseling to another employee. Communications between employees, supervisors, and Personnel or Executive Directors as a result of this policy are to be strictly confidential, except to the degree necessary to protect the safety of the employee or agency clients, property and equipment, or other employees.

If the employee's problems stems from an unresolved grievance, the supervisor should advise the employee of the appropriate steps to be taken to compliance with the Grievance Procedure described in this manual.

Employees may take accrued personal or sick leave to avail themselves of counseling sessions, self-help groups, or other therapeutic activities. If an employee is required to seek counseling as a condition of continued employment and refuses to do so or to follow the required counseling regimen, the Human Resource Director and/or Executive Director may recommend that the employee be terminated.

Employees are responsible for their job performance. Performance appraisals are to be based on factors related to job performance, regardless of whether an employee seeks counseling.

The agency provides counseling activities through Employment Assistance Services (EAS). Employees are encouraged to take advantage of these services. All information given to the service is confidential. Management only receives statistical data.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 13: Work Schedule

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to establish working hours as required by workload and production flow, client needs, and the efficient management of personnel resources.

. This policy is intended to define normal hours of work and shall not be construed as a guarantee or limitation of work or as a restriction on the agency in adjusting the working schedule to meet operating requirements.

The normal work week shall consist of forty hours beginning at 8:00 a.m. on Monday and ending at 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Exceptions are the centers which operate from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Work hours may vary according to the needs of each center. Normal work days are Monday through Friday. Normal work days consist of eight hours per day.

One-half hour is granted each employee for lunch with the exception of center staff.

Lunch will be scheduled at a time consistent with work schedule and the needs of the work station. Lunch breaks will normally be taken between 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Lunch break is also used for supervising children.

Adjustment in hours of operation is allowable when need is demonstrated and the change is approved by the Human Resource Director or Executive Director. Scheduling will ensure that personnel are available when the field centers are open to the public.

Employees may observe two (2) fifteen (15) minute breaks each day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Employees may not accumulate break time and breaks not taken are not compensated in any way. Refreshment breaks will not be allowed while children are present.

When program need dictates, staff may be authorized by the Education Manager/ Director or Executive Director or Human Resource Director to work irregular hours.

Non-exempt employees are required to complete and sign individual time sheets showing the daily hours worked. Activity sheets shall be completed at the close of each work day by exempt employees.

Non-exempt employees are not permitted to sign in or commence work more than fifteen minutes prior to their normal starting time or to sign out or stop work more than fifteen minutes after their normal quitting time without prior approval of their supervisor and under normal circumstances. Suffered work is the primary exception granted under this policy.

Unapproved absences shall not be considered as hours worked for pay purposes. The supervisor shall inform the employee, if he will not be paid for certain hours of absence.

School Time

Any approved time spent in a higher educational setting or college will be considered work time. Therefore floating time will be used to assure that non-exempt employees attending college will not exceed forty hours per week. Only actual classroom time will be considered for floating time; travel time is excluded.

Annual Evaluation

Hancock County Schools annually evaluates all employee's job performances and places their evaluations in their personnel files. Your supervisor should also share your annual evaluation with you. Your evaluation is considered confidential under Georgia state statute and will not be released without appropriate approval or legal authority.

Change in Job Status

Your job status can change for many reasons: a promotion, probation, transfer, demotion, reassignment or re-employment. General information about each status follows:

- Promotions/Probations – Most promotions require a three-month probationary period when you are a new or re-employed employee. It can be longer if the superintendent grants your supervisor's request.
- Transfers – You may voluntarily or involuntarily transfer within a department, among different departments, to another location or to a new work shift. However, the transfer must be in Hancock County Schools best interest and with approval from your supervisor and other authorities.
- Reassignments – when you switch to a similar job and pay as your previous position, this is a reassignment . This change can result with approval from the division head and other authorities.
- Re-employment – If you voluntarily left your job and are in good standing, you are eligible for re-employment in a similar position. However, you must meet certain job requirements and be on probation. If you return to Hancock County Schools within five years of leaving, the system could credit or "bridge" your service to help determine your salary. You also could be eligible for appointment consideration.
- Demotions – You may voluntarily take a lower ranking position. However, you must

request it in writing, there must be a vacancy, you must meet the job's minimum qualifications and the proper authorities must grant approval.

Change in Personal Status

To keep your file current and to ensure seamless, accurate delivery of critical employment information, promptly report the following changes in your personal status via the Hancock County employee portal under "Employee Self Service," as well as, provide documentation in writing to the indicated division/department:

- Human Resources: Your new name, address, phone number, marital status, insurance policy and/or beneficiary information
- Payroll: Your new marital status and/or number of dependents for income tax purposes

Confidentiality and Access to Personnel Records

Human Resources and your worksite maintain both publicly available and confidential files about each employee. Some information about your employment with Hancock County School is subject to release to the public if requested under the Georgia Open Records Act, such as your application for employment, salary information, and disciplinary records. Confidential information is not released, such as social security numbers, home addresses and phone numbers, transcripts, medical forms, and evaluations.

Only you may review your entire file, unless a court order or other legal mandates require otherwise. The law does protect certain information, including pre-employment information, letters of recommendation and medical records. Therefore, these items are not available for viewing. You may view your file at the Human Resource Services office by appointment only. A representative(s) may review your file with you if desired.

For details or to schedule an appointment, please contact your Human Resources Department.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 14: Equal Employment Opportunity

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start to provide equal opportunity in employment to all employees and applicants for employment. No person shall be discriminated against because of the individual's race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, political or union affiliation, marital status or disability.

Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start is an equal opportunity employer and complies with Titles VI, VII, and IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title 45, Chapter X of the Code of Federal Regulations, with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991.

This policy applies to all terms, conditions, and privileges of employment including recruitment, advertisement, hiring, probation, training and development, promotion, demotion, lateral reassignment, transfer, layoff compensation, benefits, educational assistance, reduction in force, termination and retirement.

Any communication from an applicant for employment, an employee, a government agency, or an attorney concerning any equal employment opportunity matter shall be referred to the Executive Director or his designee.

While overall authority for implementing this policy is assigned to the Executive Director, supervisors and Human Resource Director should understand that their work performance is evaluated on the basis of their equal employment efforts and results.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 15: Reference Checks

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start that all job applicants will be subject to employment investigations into their work backgrounds and personal references.

Qualified individuals will be considered for employment by the agency. Applicants who have falsified information, omitted essential facts on their application, or whose work backgrounds and/or personal references are not satisfactory are not considered to be eligible for employment. If employed and it is subsequently discovered that information was falsified or omitted, the employee is subject to immediate discharge.

Prior to employment by the agency, all job applicants must list:

- all prior criminal convictions and pending charges related to the job or program in which they desire employment;
- for prospective employees of the agency, this disclosure specifically relates to convictions for child abuse and/or neglect or any other crimes against children;
- the agency may specify other charges to be addressed by prospective employees of other programs in the agency or other job related charges to be disclosed by applicants;
- All felony convictions and currently pending criminal charges.

Prior to employment, a state criminal records check will be conducted on all prospective employees, to the extent permitted or required by state law and available funds. An employee may be hired conditional upon the receipt of a clean criminal records check and may be required to pay the cost of the additional records check.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START CENTER

PP 16: Physical Examinations

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start to require a physical examination for its employees. The objectives of this program are to hire people in good health so that satisfactory work performance may be maintained, to help new employees recognize disabilities so that early correction may be obtained, and to help employees start an effective health program on their own.

The agency will determine the extent and nature of the physical examination required based on the prospective and/or current employee's job and prior history, and program regulations. Employees will be required to provide proof of continued physical health during their tenure in a position or within the agency and dependent on their agency and job requirements, and federal and state requirements, laws, and regulations.

It is the responsibility of the employee to bear the cost of the pre-employment physical examination. Any job offer made is contingent upon successfully completing the physical examination. A job offer can be withdrawn if the physical requirements are not met.

Federal and state laws, where applicable, take precedence over agency policies. Where federal and state laws are not prohibitive, it is the agency's policy that every individual shall, as a condition of or continued employment pass a physical examination every five years and a tuberculin test every year. The employee's supervisor may request a physical examination more frequently, if the employee's job performance so warrants.

It is the responsibility of the employee to bear the cost of routine employment and pre-employment physical examinations.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 17: New Employee Probationary Period

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program that all new employees and all current employees transferred or promoted to a new job shall be placed on probation for a period of three months. Upon successful completion of the probationary period, the employee will be given regular status.

The purpose of the probationary period is to permit the Director/Executive Director and Human Resource Director, where applicable, to observe an employee under working conditions to determine whether the person can perform the work satisfactorily.

The immediate supervisor shall assume responsibility for proper orientation and supervision of new personnel during the probationary period. The immediate supervisor shall evaluate the employee's work performance and based thereon, shall recommend to the Executive Director and appropriate Human Resource Director the employee's transfer to regular status or dismissal. The employee shall be notified in writing when he has successfully completed his probationary period or of the intent to terminate his employment.

During the probationary period, the employee's job performance will be carefully observed by the supervisor. Weaknesses in performance or attitude shall be brought to the attention of the employee in a manner appropriate for understanding and self-correction.

During the probationary period, the supervisor shall prepare a written evaluation of the employee's job performance. The evaluation should include a recommendation as to continuing the employee during the remainder of the probationary period. Copies of the evaluation shall be forwarded to the Human Resource Director and/or Executive Director, and to the appropriate department for inclusion in the employee's personnel file.

The probationary period may be extended by the number of days the employee is absent from scheduled work while in a probationary status.

Separation during probation may be effected without showing detailed cause and may be based on such things as poor attendance, excessive absence and/or sick leave, or inadequate job performance.

New employees whose job performance is deemed by their supervisors to be unsatisfactory after reasonable efforts have been made to improve their performance, may be terminated at any time prior to completion of the probationary period. A written evaluation shall be prepared by the supervisor accompanied by a statement of actions taken to assist the employee to perform satisfactorily.

New employees who are terminated during or at the end of the probationary period are not subject to rights of appeal unless the individual alleges discrimination because of none merit reasons. In that case, the employee may file a discrimination complaint.

In cases where policy groups must approve or disapprove recommendations to fire personnel, a recommendation must be made to the policy group to terminate the employee, following the same procedures as for the termination of a regular employee. A probationary employee, however, may be terminated without detailed cause and cannot appeal should the policy group approve the recommendation for termination.

Transferred or promoted employees who are unable to perform satisfactorily their new jobs may be returned to their original positions, if those positions remain or become available during or at the close of the probationary period.

If the results of the medical examination, background check, or criminal check indicate that an employee is not suitable for continued employment, the employee will be terminated during the probationary period as soon as the information becomes available.

New employees during their probationary period shall be eligible for paid sick leave. They are eligible for any paid holidays which occur during their probationary period.

Employees transferred or promoted within a program retain the benefits which they had accrued in their previous positions during their probationary period. If employees are transferred or promoted between programs within the agency, retention of these benefits is dependent upon the resources and regulations of the new program.

At the end of an employee's probationary period, the individual must be either recommended for tenured status or terminated. The probationary period will not be extended to accommodate the marginal employee. Any employee who is unable to perform the requirements of his job after six months will be terminated.

An employee will be granted tenured status only after the probationary period has been satisfactorily completed.

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PP 18: Medical Procedures

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start to require its employee to be examined by a physician whenever conditions make this desirable for the protection of the employees or the agency. In addition, all employees are required to have physical examinations every five years during their employment.

As a condition of employment, an applicant may be required to pass a physical examination administered by a physician designated by the agency. Disabilities or impairments will be noted on the applicant's permanent file and such problems that could affect job performance will be reported to the appropriate department.

Employees may be required to have a physical examination on other occasions such as transfer or promotion or whenever management determines that the interests of the agency and the employee will be served. The cost of these physical examinations shall be paid by the employee and may be administered by a physician selected by the employee.

Physical examinations administered at the request of management in the absence of change in job requirements or status, or program regulations, or by a physician designated by the agency shall be paid for by the agency. The cost of physical examinations not made mandatory by this policy shall be paid by the employee and may be administered by a physician selected by the employee.

Written reports of medical examinations paid for by the agency are the property of the agency and shall be treated as confidential. However records of such examinations will be made available to public agencies if required by law or regulation.

Employees returning from a sick leave or maternity leave of absence may be required to have a physical examination to determine their capability to perform satisfactorily their regular

work without endangering themselves or their fellow employees. Also, in order to limit possible abuses of paid absence policies, the agency reserves the right to require a doctor's visit in order to examine an employee absent because of illness or injury these physical examinations will be paid for by the employee who may select a physician of his choice.

The agency reserves the right to require a second medical opinion regarding an employee's absence because of illness or injury or regarding a doctor's certification of an employee's ability to return to work. When the agency requires a second medical opinion, the examination shall be at the expense of the agency by a physician selected by the agency. Employees who are not satisfied with the physician's determination may submit at their own expense a report from a physician of their own choosing. In the event of conflicting opinions, the agency's physician and the employee's physician shall designate a third physician to examine the employee and that physician's report shall be binding on both parties. The expense of the third examination shall be shared equally by the agency and the employee.

The agency maintains first-aid kits and other limited emergency supplies in some areas such as: office, classrooms, or where machinery or maintenance equipment is located.

Employees who become ill on the job or suffer any work-related injury, no matter how minor, shall report to their supervisor for first-aid treatment and/or recording of the incident. Time spent by an employee in waiting for and receiving such first-aid attention shall be considered hours worked for pay purposes. Whenever possible, employees should notify their supervisor before leaving their work station for medical reasons. If immediate notification is not possible, the employee must notify the supervisor within 24 hours of the incident.

Employees who are exposed to any unexpected occupational health hazard, such as toxic materials or fumes, are required to have a physical examination immediately after the exposure. The physician shall determine whether exposed employees require medical treatment, whether they may be permitted to continue on their jobs, or whether they should be assigned to other jobs. Employees whose job normally exposes them to health hazards shall be given periodic medical examinations to ensure that such exposure does not result in any medical complications.

Employees who are seriously injured during the course of their employment shall be given immediate medical treatment and, if required, hospitalized. The employee's immediate supervisor or any other member of management has the authority to have injured employees transferred to an outside medical facility for emergency medical treatment.

PP 19: Medicare

All employees hired after April 1, 1986, are required to pay Medicare contributions, which provide the medical benefits within the Social Security Administration.

Religious Leave

Leave for religious holidays may not exceed three days per fiscal year. The employee should make up the leave at a time mutually agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor.

Jury Duty, Subpoena, and Other Court Order

All district employees shall be allowed a leave of absence without loss of pay when they attend a judicial proceeding in response to a subpoena, summons for jury duty, and other court orders that require their attendance. Employees with jury duty shall not have the jury leave deducted from sick or personal leave, and no employee using jury duty leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute. Employees may also retain juror compensation.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 19: Training and Career Development

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Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start will avail itself of numerous and varied opportunities to provide training for its employees in an effort to develop a better educated and highly skilled work force. Assistance and counseling will be provided to employees in the development of individual career plans and the availability of self-development opportunities to assure progress within their chosen career.

The Director and supervisors will provide in-service training and regular staff meetings to all employees addressing the following issues:

- Orientation for all new personnel regarding the goals and aims of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start.
- Awareness of the various programs of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start
- awareness of resources available to staff and clients of the agency; and
- Interagency communication.

New Staff Orientation

Within ten days of confirmation of employment, new personnel will attend and orientation to agency Personnel Policies and Procedures, at which time the employee will sign a statement acknowledging receipt of the manual. Said statement will be retained in the employee's personnel file. The session will also include an orientation to the organization and its programs and functions, lines of authority, basic regulations, instructions on completing forms, documenting time and travel, job reporting requirements, guidelines for performance and completion of forms for taxes, insurance, etc.

Staff, Board and Policy Council Meetings

All employees are expected to attend regular and special staff meetings when so instructed by their supervisor and when the nature of such meetings directly relates to their duties and responsibilities. Attendance at Board of Education meetings is optional unless specifically mandated by the Executive Director. Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Director and Coordinators, as designated, are required to attend meetings of the Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Policy Council.

Pre-and In-Service Training

All employees are required to attend regularly and specially scheduled pre-service and in-service training sessions sponsored by Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start. Absence from these sessions must be pre-approved by the Director and Executive Director. If a pattern of absenteeism develops, it will be reviewed for possible disciplinary action.

Employees are encouraged to participate in training sessions, conferences, seminars, etc. sponsored by relevant professional associations, funding sources and their funded Training and Technical Assistance providers, local school districts, and other groups involved with managing and providing high quality services to children and families. Approval must be obtained from the Director to attend general meetings or the Policy Council for Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start specific meetings. The Director will approve the attendance of all employees at meetings requiring out-of state travel.

Continuing Education

All employees are urged to take part in the higher education, relevant professional organizations, and any other educational programs relevant to the job. All teachers, managers, and paraprofessionals are urged to return to school to obtain an associate degree or higher which will lead to certification.

Tuition and fees will be paid by the employee unless agency funds are available and approved by the Director and, if necessary, by the Board of Education appropriate policy group. Educational assistance is provided only for courses of study which are directly related to an employee's job or career developmental plan. Tuition paid by Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start will be paid only to accredited institutions of learning or those which award credits, credentials or degrees that are recognized and acceptable by the US Department of Health and Human Services, or Georgia Department of Education or Department of Human Resources, whichever has jurisdiction over the program employing the individual.

If tuition, fees, or books are to be paid by the agency or reimbursed to the employee, a written request for assistance must be approved prior to enrollment by the supervisor and Human Resource Director or Executive Director. If the employee does not receive a passing grade in the course, he will not be reimbursed for the course tuition or will have costs for tuition), books, and or fees deducted from future checks or paid directly back to the agency.

An employee who is terminated during enrollment because of reduction-in-force or elimination of his job shall be allowed to continue the course at agency expense, if tuition or fees payment was approved prior to enrollment and subsequent termination, or will not be reimbursed by the center if that was the prior agreement.

An employee who voluntarily leaves the agency or is terminated for cause prior to completing a course shall reimburse the agency for tuition or fees, or will not be reimbursed by the agency upon completion of the course.

When classes are held during a normal work week, compensatory time or a staggered work schedule may be used at the discretion on the Executive Director or Human Resource Director. Release time may be granted for course work specifically required by regulation, licensing or funding agency requirement or for course work taken at the request of the agency.

Whenever possible, employees will be given the opportunity to attend training at conferences, seminars, or professional meetings. When attending such training at agency request, employees are reimbursed for fees and expenses according to agency travel and reimbursement policies.

Employees are responsible to provide the appropriate department with records and/or transcripts showing proof of successful course completion and attendance at training events.

Credentialing

CDA: Due to the emphasis placed by the Administration for Children and Families on attaining the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or its equivalent by those who teach young children, teachers, and assistant teachers in Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start must possess CDA equivalency or be willing to enrolled in the CDA training program and to complete assessment not more than two years from date of entry. Refusal to follow this policy will result in termination of employment.

Equivalency is defined as an Associate, Bachelor's, or higher degree from an accredited institution of higher education in Child Development, Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, or Elementary Education with an Early Childhood Education endorsement. Similar qualifications with other designations, e.g., technical diploma/degree, may be acceptable if appropriate documentation is submitted and accepted as equivalent by the applicable funding source.

Any teacher or teacher assistant without an equivalent degree or credential will be required by the program to enroll in CDA training. If upon completion of the CDA curriculum the employee refuses or fails the assessment and refuses to be involved in further training at his own expense, he will be terminated. If the employee elects to be involved in further training at his own expense, after no more than one year, he must be assessed. If the employee refuses to be assessed or fails his assessment and is not credentialed, he will be terminated unless he chooses to resign from his position.

Upon successful completion of the CDA credential verifiable by presentation of the CDA certificate to the Education Administrator, the employee will be eligible for a one step increase in pay. All CDA recipients agree to remain in their teaching positions with Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start for at least one year. If an employee leaves the agency prior to the expiration of one year, he will be required to reimburse the agency for all CDA fees paid by the agency, pending review of the circumstances by the Director.

Currently, all lead teachers holding a CDA must return to college and obtain an associate or bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education which will lead to certification. All teacher assistants are urged to obtain an associate degree in Early Childhood. All newly hired employees will have a degree in Early Childhood and have passed the certification requirements.

Family Service Credential (e.g., SSCBT or FSA). Social Service Competency Based Training (SSCBT), Family Service Associate (FSA) and others are credentials designed for individuals who have not had formal academic preparation in social work and who have not had extensive on-the-job training in the broad area of human services. It is intended to enrich and upgrade the performance of employees whose work involves the delivery of social services. Equivalency for any Family Service credential will be defined by the funding agency. Similar qualifications with other designations may be acceptable if appropriate documentation is submitted and accepted as equivalent by the applicable funding source.

Any family service worker without a degree or extensive experience in Social Work, Psychology, or a related field will be required by the program to enroll in college and complete a bachelor degree in Psychology and may be eligible for program payment or reimbursement of tuition and fees. If the employee is not ready to be assessed or refuses to be assessed after one year, he may enroll in additional training at his own expense for not more than one year. If the employee refuses both assessment and the opportunity for further training at his own expense, he will be terminated.

Other job related credentials. If a funding agency requires employees in a particular job classification to complete any specific credential or its equivalent, the requirements cited above for achievement of the CDA credential will be applied to that credential. That includes specific references to:

- enrollment and payment or reimbursement of tuition and fees;
- timelines for training and assessment; and
- training and assessment at the employee's expense.

Equivalency for any credential will be defined by the funding agency. Similar qualifications with other designations may be acceptable if appropriate documentation is submitted and accepted as equivalent by the applicable funding source.

Documentation of Training

A record of attendance at any training as described above will be maintained in each employee's personnel file. It is the responsibility of each employee to provide documentation of attendance at all training. Such documentation will include the title, date, number of hours and location of the session, the name of the trainer instructor, and employee's and supervisor's signatures.

When any credential or certificate (such as the CDA) expires, it is the responsibility of the employee to complete the required renewal process and provide Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start with formal documentation of successful renewal of that certificate or credential in order to remain in the position.

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PP 20: Performance Appraisal

Page 1 or 2

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Programs to evaluate the job performance of each employee periodically by the employee's supervisor. The performance appraisal process is designed to:

- Improve individual and organizational performance;
- Furnish a sound and continuing basis for effective supervisor/subordinate relationships;
- Assure periodic rating and recording of the quality of each employee's overall performance;
- Require each employee to be informed of the requirements by which his performance is judged, of his current progress, what he can do to improve, and the possibilities for advancement;
- Provide an opportunity for special recognition of those employees who continue to perform in a superior manner; and
- Provide information to support merit pay increases in the process of wage and salary administration.

The performance appraisal consists of a written evaluation of the employee's job performance and a personal discussion with the employee. The performance appraisal report becomes a part of the employee's permanent record.

This information may be used to determine the employee's eligibility for promotion and/or transfer as well as identify areas of strength and/or weaknesses.

Performance appraisals shall be completed upon the following occasions:

- once each year depending on the annual work schedule of the employee; and
- when the employee is transferred or promoted to a new position; and
- May be conducted at the agency's discretion at the time of the employee's termination.

Except in the case of probation or termination, if a performance appraisal has been completed on the employee within one month prior to one of the above occasions, a new appraisal need not be completed.

Supervisors are expected to keep informal records of significant events concerning the job performance of individuals under their supervision. Supervisors are expected to record activities and dates, supply feedback as needed when the event occurs, and retain the record for discussion during performance appraisal interviews.

The job performance of each employee shall be evaluated on the basis of the job description and performance measures established by the program and understood by the employee. Factors to be considered in the performance appraisals include quantity and quality of work and promptness in completing assignments.

If the written evaluation contains an unfavorable comment or rating which the employee believes is unfair or unjustified, and the matter has not been resolved to the employee's satisfaction during the discussion with the supervisor, the employee may discuss the disagreement with the supervisor's supervisor and/or write a rebuttal detailing his point of view and evidence. The employee should then forward that rebuttal to the Program Director for inclusion in his personnel file.

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PP 21: Promotion

Page 1 or 2

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to promote from within when possible. When vacancies occur, employees will be given the opportunity to apply for such vacancies.

Job vacancies will be publicized internally by posted announcements on bulletin boards in the centers and central office, and in payroll envelopes. At the discretion of the Program Director, vacancies may be advertised in the service area concurrently with the internal announcement of job vacancies. The announcement will state the position and qualifications. Employees who desire to apply for a particular job must submit a completed application. Supervisors and department heads may recommend employees for consideration as candidates for promotion.

The records of all candidates will be reviewed and updated by their departments to ensure that they are current and complete.

Qualified candidates will be interviewed by the selection committee or head of the department in which the vacancy has occurred. Employees will be notified by the appropriate department of the date and time scheduled for job interviews related to promotion. It is the responsibility of the Program Director to recommend the most qualified applicant for the position.

In selecting the most qualified applicant for promotion, the following factors will be considered:

- ability to perform the work with a normal period of training as determined by the employee's education, experience and past performance;
- the employee's health and general physical fitness, disabilities notwithstanding, unless the disability makes acceptable job performance impossible; and
- The employee's seniority.

If two or more employees are equally qualified with regard to the first two factors, then seniority will be the deciding factor.

Management may use all or any combination of the following methods to evaluate employees for promotion:

- attendance and work records;
- performance appraisals;
- job-related tests; and
- a medical examination arranged by the agency.

Employees selected for promotion will be placed on probation for a period not to exceed three months. Promoted employees will be given training in their new job. They will retain their former job seniority until they have satisfactorily completed the probationary period in the new position. They may be compensated at the minimum rate of pay for their new job during their probationary period, or if their existing rate is above the minimum for the new job, the employee may be assigned a rate of pay which is at least equal to the next appropriate step in the salary grade for the new job. At the recommendation of the Program Director and concurrence of the Executive Director, the promoted employee may receive the rate of pay within the salary range for the new job commensurate with his background and experience.

At the end of the probationary period, the supervisor will prepare a written evaluation of the promoted employee's job performance with a recommendation as to the employee's status in the new position. Copies of the evaluation will be forwarded to the Human Resource Director and/or Executive Director.

A promoted employee successfully completing the probationary period will be assigned regular status in the new position as his regular job. The employee will be given a rate of pay within the salary range for the new job which is commensurate with his background, experience, performance level and the new job title. His personnel records will be updated to record the promotion.

If the promoted employee proves incapable of holding the position, he shall be reinstated to the former job without prejudice or loss of any rights or privileges, and assigned to his prior rate of pay, if a vacancy exists and management recommends the reassignment. If a vacancy does not exist, the agency is under no obligation to continue employment. Hancock County will make every effort to reinstate the employee to any open position for which he qualifies.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 22: Disciplinary Action

Page 1 or 6

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program that any employee who violates any of the agency's rules and regulations, policies and procedures, or standards of employee conduct and behavior shall be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may be taken against an employee when, in the judgment of the supervisor, such action is warranted. Discipline shall be commensurate with the problem involved and shall not exceed the limits of this section.

There shall be four types of disciplinary action: warning, reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, and termination.

Verbal Warning: A formally identified verbal notice of poor performance, inappropriate action, or other breach of policy or procedure from the supervisor to the employee. A record of the warning, signed and dated by the supervisor, shall be forwarded to the appropriate department and maintained in the employee's personnel file. The employee will be asked to initial the written record of the warning to show that he received the warning. Initialing the statement by the employee does not necessarily constitute the employee's agreement with the contents of the warning. The second warning for the same or similar problem or the third warning within a six month period for any problem shall result in a written reprimand.

Written Warning: Shall, except in the case of a serious violation, i.e. preceded by a warning. Reprimands shall be placed in writing and must contain the specifics of the conduct for which the employee is being reprimanded and be signed by the employee and the supervisor. The employee's signature assures only that the reprimand has been discussed with the employee and does not necessarily constitute the employee's agreement with the contents of the reprimand. The appropriate department must receive a copy of the reprimand and place it in the employee's personnel file. If an employee receives two reprimands for the same offense during a twelve month period or three reprimands for any problem during that same period, he is automatically placed on disciplinary probation.

Suspension without pay: Shall not exceed twenty working days. Suspension by a supervisor shall relieve an employee immediately of his duties. Suspension may result from previous cumulative disciplinary action or may occur without prior supervisory correction if, in the supervisor's opinion, the employee's offense is so severe that his continued presence on the job may result in danger, threat, or harm to the clients, other staff, agency property or equipment, or to the employee himself.

Within three working days an employee who is suspended shall receive a written explanation of the reason for the suspension, signed by the supervisor and the employee. The employee's signature assures only that the offense, and' subsequent terms of suspension have been discussed with the employee and does not necessarily constitute the employee's agreement with the reason for suspension. The appropriate department must receive a copy of the suspension action and place it in the employee's personnel file.

Employees on suspension shall lose pay for the period of the suspension, but fringe benefits will continue on the same terms as prior to the suspension. An employee may arrange to maintain his insurance benefits during the suspension without pay, on the same terms as though in paid status.

Consultation between the employee, his supervisor, and the Executive Director or Program Director must occur before the employee is reinstated.

Any employee suspended without pay more than twice during a twelve month period will be demoted or recommended for disciplinary termination at the supervisor's discretion and consistent with the offenses for which he was suspended.

Disciplinary termination: Shall result in the separation of the employee from employment with the agency. The application of policy and procedures for disciplinary termination are included in the section of these policies and procedures, Termination of Employment.

Before taking disciplinary action, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to conduct a thorough investigation of the facts surrounding the issue. Except in the case of imminent danger or harm, this investigation should precede the disciplinary action. In cases where the employee's continued presence on the job may create a threat to the safety of property or individuals, the individual should be placed on administrative leave with pay until the investigation is completed. Disciplinary action should follow the offense as quickly as possible.

The disciplinary action taken must be reasonably related to the seriousness of the offense, the employee's record with the organization, and disciplinary action taken with other employees who have committed similar offenses.

After taking any disciplinary step, the supervisor should follow-up to make sure that the problem has been corrected. If the problem is not corrected, the next disciplinary step should be taken. If the problem has been corrected, the supervisor should advise the employee of the noticed improvement.

The following are the normal progressive steps in the disciplinary process. However, depending on the offense, previous record of offenses, and other circumstances, they may not always occur in this order:

- Warning
- Reprimand
- Suspension without pay
- Disciplinary Termination

In cases involving serious misconduct and/or major violations the supervisor may recommend immediate suspension of the employee, and if appropriate, recommend termination of the employee. If a supervisor recommends that an employee who has completed his initial probationary period be terminated, a complete investigation of the situation shall be conducted by the appropriate department. The employee may be granted a hearing before the appropriate program policy group, if such exists for this purpose, before a final termination decision is effective.

Employees who believe that they have been too severely disciplined or disciplined without good cause may utilize the appeal procedure. A period of three years during which an employee experiences no disciplinary problems shall nullify any previous violations for purposes of implementing the disciplinary procedures contained in this policy. However, all disciplinary action shall remain a part of the employee's personnel file. Any employee shall have the right to submit a written rebuttal regarding any disciplinary action to the appropriate department to be retained in his personnel file and attached to any other written documentation regarding the action.

Minor Violations: These offenses are usually correctable through training and counseling. They do not involve questions of honesty, constitute a significant threat to the operation of the program or agency, or pose a threat to the safety and well-being of the individual, other employees, clients, or property. Minor violations include, but are not limited to the following:

- Unsatisfactory attendance or excessive tardiness;
- Abuse of time, such as unauthorized time away from work area or failure to notify supervisor promptly of anticipated absence or tardiness;
- Obscene or abusive language;
- Conviction of a moving violation while operating agency or government vehicles; and
- Inadequate or unsatisfactory job performance.

Minor violations shall result in the following actions:

First Offense: The supervisor shall bring the offense to the attention of the employee.

Second Offense: The supervisor shall formally warn the employee.

Third offense: The employee shall be placed on disciplinary probation.

Fourth offense: The supervisor shall make the decision as to whether to place the employee on suspension without pay or recommend termination of the individual's employment with the agency.

Serious Violations: These offenses constitute a threat to the operation of the business, or to the safety and well-being of the individual, other employees, clients, or property. Serious violations include, but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to follow supervisor's instructions, perform assigned work or otherwise comply with applicable agency policy or elements of job description;
- Violation of safety rules in the absence of a recognizable threat to life;
- Leaving the work site without permission during working hours;
- Failure to report to work without giving proper notice to supervisor; and
- Unauthorized use or misuse of agency or government property or records.

Serious violations shall result in the following actions:

First offense: The supervisor shall issue a written reprimand.

Second offense: The employee shall be placed on disciplinary probation.

Third offense: The supervisor shall make the decision as to whether to place the employee on suspension without pay or recommend termination of the individual's employment with the agency.

Major Violations: These types of problems represent a serious and immediate threat to the operations of the agency or the safety and well-being of the individual, fellow employees, clients, or property. Acts and behavior in this group are of such a serious nature that the first occurrence may result in dismissal. They include, but are not limited to the following offenses:

- Absence or leave from work in excess of three consecutive days without satisfactory explanation and agency approval;
- Use of alcohol, or use or unlawful possession of controlled substances while on the job;
- Falsification of agency records, including but not limited to time and attendance records, vouchers, reports, leave records, application for employment, client files, or other official agency or government documents;
- Willful or negligent defacement of agency or government records or property or another

employee's property;

- Acts of physical violence or fighting;
- Violation of safety rules where there exists a threat to life or human safety;
- Violation of supervision of children (No child can be unsupervised or left alone for any length of time).
- Unauthorized possession or use of firearms, dangerous weapons, or explosives;
- Reporting to work under the influence of, when ability is impaired by, or unlawful use of alcohol or controlled substances;
- Threatening or coercing clients, employees or supervisors;
- Using corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure with a child in the care of the agency;
- Engaging in prohibited activity on agency premises or during working hours; Criminal convictions for felonies or other acts of conduct occurring on or off the job which are plainly related to job performance, or reflect adversely upon the agency or its operations, or are of such nature that to continue the employee in the assigned position could constitute negligence in regard to the agency's duties to its clients, employees and to the general public;
- Breach of confidentiality regarding clients or employees of the agency; Stealing or unauthorized removal of government and/or agency property; and
- Engaging in behavior during working or non-working hours which is inconsistent with the mission of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start and adversely affects or has the potential to adversely affect the reputation of the agency.

Major violations will, at the very least, result in disciplinary probation for the employee so charged. Any offense which compromises the safety or well-being of persons or property will result in, at a minimum, suspension without pay and may result in immediate termination. At the discretion of the supervisor, the Human Resource Director or Executive Director, and considering the magnitude of the offense, the employee's record, and action taken in other similar cases, these policies and procedures give supervisory personnel the right and responsibility to discharge the employee immediately from his duties and take steps necessary for immediate termination.

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PP 23: Termination or Employment

Page 1 or 2

It is the Policy Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to establish certain conditions under which employee may be removed from the program's payroll and the program has developed standard procedures to be followed when it becomes necessary to terminate employees.

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start to terminate employment because of an employee's resignation, discharge for cause, retirement, release for good of the agency, or as a result of a permanent reduction in the work force. Discharge can result from employee misconduct or unsatisfactory job performance.

In the absence of a specific policy or written agreement to the contrary, employees are free to resign at any time, and the agency reserves the right to terminate employment for any business reason.

Voluntary Termination

All employees are expected to give adequate written notice of their intent to resign or retire. Such notice should be delivered to the Human Resource Director or Executive Director in advance of the date of resignation or retirement as follows:

- Professional staff - at least thirty days
- Clerical, non-professional and maintenance staff - at least two weeks

Failure to give the required notice may result in forfeiture of agency-paid benefits and ineligibility for re-employment. Before the effective date of a voluntary termination, the employer may arrange for an exit interview to determine the reason for the resignation; to ensure return of petty cash and/or agency property; to settle any outstanding obligations; to make provisions for completing unfinished work; and to explain conversion benefits under the agency's group insurance plans and other vested benefits available to the employee under the agency's benefit plan. A written report of the employee's exit interview will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Any employee who is absent from work without prior approval or without having notified the immediate supervisor of his or her absence or the reason for it will be considered as having resigned after the third consecutive day of absence.

An employee who is not satisfied with the decision to terminate for cause, i.e., disciplinary termination, should refer to the Appeal Procedure.

All outstanding debts to the agency may be deducted from the employee's final paycheck. If any agency property in the employee's possession has been lost or damaged, the cost of repairing or replacing such property shall be deducted from the employee's final pay check. However, if the case of non-exempt employees, the amount deducted shall not reduce the employee's earnings for the final pay period below the current minimum wage. Employees are expected to make arrangements to cover the cost of loss or damage if the total amount is not deducted from their final check.

The Finance Department will arrange to have the final pay for terminated employees available on the next regular worker's pay date, if possible. Final pay checks will be distributed by the Executive Director or his designee. The appropriate department will be responsible for the return by terminated employees of all agency property in their possession, including books, manuals, identification cards, and keys.

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PP 24: Appeal Procedure

Page 1 or 5

The purpose of an adverse personnel action is to correct unacceptable employee conduct or performance, or if all else fails, to remove the employee from the program.

Adverse actions may range from disciplinary probation to termination of the employee. It is extremely important that program managers understand the purpose of each type of adverse action and the different situations in which each type of adverse action will be used. In taking an adverse personnel action against an employee, the burden of proof will always be with the supervisor taking the action.

Supervisors must understand the meaning of "reasonableness of punishment." This means that the punishment must be tailored to the offense. For example, an oral reprimand, the mildest form of disciplinary action, may be all that is needed to correct relatively minor misconduct or performance inadequacy; whereas termination may be appropriate in such cases as use of corporal punishment in the classroom.

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to afford its employees formal procedures to ensure that their rights to due process in any disciplinary or adverse action are protected, to ensure that employees receive fair and equitable treatment in a timely fashion, provide employees with -an easily accessible procedure for ensuring that these policies and procedures have been applied correctly, and to foster sound employee-supervisor relations through communication and ultimate reconciliation of problems of conduct or performance. The appeal procedure described herein has been established as the primary means of meeting these policy objectives.

Directors and supervisors are responsible for making certain that employees under their jurisdiction have knowledge of and understand the appeal procedure and those employees feel free to use the procedure without fear of criticism or action being taken against them affecting their job security, wage progression opportunity, or chance for job advancement.

All time limits specified herein are working days. In the interest of prompt resolution of employee appeals, the action taken at each step in the appeal procedure should be taken as quickly as possible, as but no later than the prescribed time limit. In the event of extenuating circumstances, a time limit may be extended, if notice is given to the employee that an extension is required and the reason for the extension.

Appeal hearings will be scheduled at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the policy group, or a called meeting may be requested if the Hancock County Board or policy group

will not meet within ten days. Appeal hearings during regular working hours are considered compensable hours worked, except in cases where the employee has been placed on suspension without pay or terminated. When hearings are held at times outside of the employee's scheduled working hours, appeal hearings are exempt from compensable hour rules.

An employee may have the assistance of the appropriate department in preparing his defense by making available records and information from his personnel file, other information from agency policies and procedures or administrative procedures which would be of use to the employee, and information regarding the employee's performance of duties while the action is underway; and by providing him with assistance in understanding and carrying out the due process to which he is entitled. New issues that were not raised in the original adverse action may not be raised by either party in the appeal.

All written facts and information provided to the employee, as well as any rebuttal submitted by the employee should be accumulated and forwarded to the supervisor. Executive Director, Directors or policy group to whom the appeal will be made together with copies of the appeals and responses.

Information or testimony must be treated in a most discreet and confidential manner by all persons involved.

Due process requirements of notice and an opportunity to be heard shall be afforded to all staff.

Throughout the appeal procedure an employee has the right to be represented by counsel and call witnesses on his behalf. However, the employee may not be represented by:

- persons in direct line of supervision over the employee;
- the agency Equal Opportunity Officer or Equal Opportunity Counselor;
- an agency staff person of higher rank than any person who took the action; any member of the Board of Education, an agency policy group or any of their committees;
- An employee of any agency or organization which funds the agency.

Expenses incurred by the employee and his representative must be borne by the employee.

Any employee who has suffered adverse action at the hands of the agency shall be eligible to appeal that action. Such actions may include:

- any action which adversely affects the employee's employment status, e.g., disciplinary probation, suspension, termination, demotion;
- transfer; non-selection for promotion;
- Termination due to a reduction in force.

Not appeal able is:

- the contents of an evaluation or performance rating; a disagreement;
- any grievance condition;
- any action which does not affect the employee's employment status, e.g., warning, reprimand, imposed administrative leave with pay;
- A grievance resolved in favor of the agency.

Supervisors should discuss employees with disciplinary problems first and attempt to resolve these issues with the employee. Supervisors should also forward to the attention of their immediate supervisor all cases that cannot be resolved with an oral warning.

It shall be of utmost importance for the party to whom the appeal is made to ascertain whether or not the supervisor followed agency policy in taking the action. The merits of the case will be reviewed only if it is found that action was taken according to agency policy. If agency policy was violated, the action will be rescinded.

Step 1: LOWEST LEVEL WHERE A DECISION CAN BE MADE

The first level of appeal is to the lowest level where the adverse action can be overturned. In most cases, the employee will first appeal an adverse action to his supervisor's supervisor, i.e., the second level supervisor. The employee has five days in which to file his appeal. The appeal must be made in writing, signed, dated, and based on an adverse action already instituted or scheduled.

Step 2: SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR

The second level supervisor will provide an answer to the employee within five working days from receipt of his written presentation of the appeal. In the event the second level supervisor fails to respond to the appeal within five working days, the employee will proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: APPLICABLE PROGRAM DIRECTOR OR DESIGNEE

If the action is upheld by the second level supervisor or he fails to respond, the employee may file a written appeal within five days with the applicable Program Director or, in the absence of that level, the Executive Director. The Program Director will provide an answer to the employee within five working days of his written presentation of the appeal. In the event that the Program Director fails to respond to the appeal within five working days, the employee will proceed to Step 4.

Step 4: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If the action is upheld by the Program Director or his designee or he fails to respond, or if the third level would be the Executive Director, the employee may file a written appeal within five days with the Executive Director. When the Executive Director receives the appeal, he will determine whether or not Steps 1, 2, and 3 were followed by agency supervisors. If not, the appeal will be upheld and the action rescinded. If so, the Executive Director will collect the facts and discuss the appeal within five days with the appropriate Program Director. .

Step 5: INFORMAL HEARING

The Executive Director will arrange for a hearing to be conducted within ten days after receiving the Step 4 appeal. The Program Director or designee and Executive Director will review all of the available facts and information and issue a written decision within five days following the informal hearing. In the event that the Executive Director fails to respond in the designated time period, or if the employee decides to appeal the recommended decision, the employee will proceed to Step 6.

In the case of a recommended termination, the Executive Director may concur with the recommendation to terminate any employee in a program which does not require policy group action and the employee shall be terminated. In the case of a recommended termination by a Director in a program where policy group concurrence is required, the Program Director may concur with an Executive Director's recommendation to reinstate the employee and the employee shall be reinstated. However, if that Director continues to believe that termination is the appropriate course of action following the informal hearing, he shall make that recommendation to the applicable policy group, making available with his recommendation, all previous written appeals and the decisions rendered at each level, and notify the employee in writing of his decision.

In the case of an appeal to the Executive Director where no policy group governs personnel actions, the decision of the Executive Director is final. In cases where a policy group governs personnel actions within the program, the employee may appeal the recommendation of the Director to the policy group.

In the event that the Director fails to respond within five days, or if the employee decides to appeal the recommendation, the employee will proceed to Step 6. If the appeal has been made to the Executive Director who fails to schedule a hearing or respond within five days following the hearing, the employee will proceed to Step 7.

Step 6: PROGRAM POLICY GROUP REVIEW AND HEARING

The program policy group will review the record as presented by the Director. Following the by-laws of the policy group, the Director may first be required to present the record to the personnel committee of the policy group, who in turn makes a recommendation to the full council; or may present the record and recommendation directly to the policy group.

In the former case, the policy group will consider the recommendation made by the personnel committee, but is not bound to uphold the personnel committee's decision.

The Executive Director will arrange a hearing before the group to present information and testimony. The hearing shall be closed to the public.

After the policy group's review of the record, including information and testimony from the hearing, they shall vote to affirm or reject the personnel committee's or Director's recommendation. Their vote is final. Their decision must be rendered within five days of the hearing.

Step 7: BOARD OF EDUCATION BOARD MEMBERS:

There shall be no appeals to the Board of Education of a policy group's or Executive Director's decision relative to an appeal except in cases where an employee alleges and proves in writing a procedural violation or gross disregard of fact or evidence. The failure of the Executive Director to respond within five days constitutes a procedural violation.

An allegation of a procedural error or a case of gross disregard for evidence or facts must be in writing and presented to the Chairperson of the Board's Personnel Committee within five days after receiving the final decision. The appeal is considered settled on the basis of Step 6, if such a request is not presented.

If the Board of Education votes that a procedural error exists, they shall forward their ruling to the policy group or Executive Director for implementation. The Board of Education can only review and remand for further action. The merits of all appeal decisions rest on the policy group or in their absence, the Executive Director, not with the Board of Education. However, in the case that the Board determines gross disregard of evidence or facts in earlier stages, the Board of Education can request a hearing before its personnel committee who shall have the authority to render a decision based upon the full disclosure of facts and evidence surrounding the case.

When a hearing is granted for any appeal, it shall be the responsibility of the employee requesting the hearing to be present and on time for the hearing. An employee may waive in writing his right to a hearing at any level in the process and a decision shall be rendered within the specified time frame, based upon the date of receipt of written waiver of the right to the hearing. If the employee requesting the hearing fails to be present or to have a representative present at the hearing, this shall relieve the agency of any further responsibility in terms of trying to resolve the problem that necessitated the request for the hearing. If an employee fails to appeal within the stated time frames, all rights to said appeal are cancelled.

Any further appeals must be made outside the agency to a court of law, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or Human Rights Commission.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 25: Due Process Procedure

Page 1 of 1

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start to afford all employees the right to due process in the resolution of a dispute regarding adverse action against an employee.

An employee whose poor job performance or who is being disciplined for other good cause has the following rights:

- the right to know the specific reason(s) for the disciplinary action;
- an opportunity to be heard, including:
- the right to present witnesses on his behalf;
- the right to representation at his expense by a person of his choosing (subject to the restrictions of these policies and procedures);
- a speedy decision rendered in writing;
- redress for the agency's failure to follow its own policies and procedures, including the employee's rights to due process;
- redress for gross disregard of the facts or evidence in a case at earlier stages of an appeal, whereupon if the employee alleges and can prove in writing such disregard, the Board of Education may review the merits of the case;
- The right to appeal any decision of the agency or its governing boards to independent external bodies, such as the State or local Human Rights Commission, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or courts of law.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 26: Grievance Procedure

Page 1 or 3

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to provide employees with the opportunity for redress of job actions or conditions which the employee believes unfair, in conflict with policies, or in violation of state or federal law.

Any employee dissatisfied with working conditions or other management controlled matters may file a grievance to seek correction or relief. Grievance seeks to obtain relief from a condition. A grievance may be filed when the employee feels that rules have been interpreted or applied incorrectly or when there is no rule governing a condition which is felt to be unjust. All grievances will be resolved fairly and promptly.

A *grievance* is an employee's expressed feeling of dissatisfaction concerning conditions of employment or treatment by management, supervisors, or other employees. Examples of conditions which may be causes for grievance include:

- application of agency policies, practices, rules, regulations and procedures believed to be to the detriment of an employee;
- Treatment considered unfair by an employee such as coercion, reprisal, harassment, or intimidation;
- alleged discrimination because of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political or union affiliation, disability, or any other non merit factor;
- Improper or unfair administration of employee benefits or conditions of employment such as annual leave, fringe benefits, holidays, salary, seniority, performance appraisal or working conditions.

Not grievance conditions are:

- an agency policy, state or federal law, regulation of funding sources;
- content of a funding requirement;
- non-selection for promotion (requires an appeal); an evaluation or performance rating;
- Any adverse action, e.g., termination, demotion, transfer, etc. (requires an appeal); a disagreement.

Employees will not under any circumstances be penalized for using the grievance procedure. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the grievance is fully processed until the employee is satisfied with the decision or until the employee's recourse within the grievance procedure is exhausted. All employees and their representatives are assured freedom from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, harassment, or reprisal in preparing and presenting a grievance under the specified procedure.

Failure to file a grievance in accordance with the procedure will result in forfeiture of employee's rights to relief through the grievance procedure. Failure on the part of the agency to follow procedures or to render a decision in a timely fashion shall result in a decision in favor of the employee entitling him to the requested relief, to the extent that it is within the ability and authority of the agency to provide such relief.

All agency responses to a grievance will be in writing. The aggrieved must file a grievance within ten working days after the condition occurred, unless the condition is continuous in which case the grievance may be filed any time during which the condition exists or within ten working days of its cessation.

The person initiating the grievance is not required, but is urged to put it in writing. However, the aggrieved must clearly state that he is filing a grievance. The grievance must be taken to a supervisor at the lowest level who can make a decision to relieve the condition.

Informal Review

The person grieved must provide a written decision within two working days, with a full explanation of the decision. If the aggrieved is not satisfied, or if the supervisor does not provide a written decision within two days, the aggrieved may submit a request for review and a new decision from the next supervisor, following this procedure through the Executive Director. However, no employee must be required to go through more than two supervisory levels in the informal process to reach the Executive Director. At each level, the aggrieved must be provided with a written decision within two working days. Previous decisions must accompany requests for further review.

Written decisions will provide the aggrieved with a decision which concurs with the previous decision, or modifies the previous decision, or rejects the previous decision and provides the employee with a new decision.

Formal Review

If the employee has not been satisfied through the informal process, the employee may choose to file a formal, written grievance with the Grievance Committee. The aggrieved may turn to the formal process if he is not satisfied with the Executive Director's decision, or if the Executive Director fails to provide a written decision within the specified time frame, or if staff

responsible fail to implement the Executive Director's decision. The formal written grievance must be accompanied by all previous written decisions.

A Grievance Committee considers grievances of staff from any program or section within the agency. The Grievance Committee will have an odd number of members and act by simple majority vote of its members. The Grievance Committee will consist of two members appointed by the Policy Council and one member appointed by the Board of Education. The grievance committee may decline to hear a grievance which is beyond the authority or capacity of the agency to resolve.

A hearing of the grievance committee will be held within ten working days of the receipt of the formal grievance. The aggrieved employee, Executive Director, and if applicable, Program Director will receive copies of the final decision. The aggrieved employee may be represented and/or advised by a representative of his own choosing. However, the following may not represent the aggrieved:

- persons in direct line of supervision over the employee;
- the agency Equal Opportunity Officer or counselor;
- an agency staff person of higher rank than any person against whom the grievance makes a charge;
- Any member of the Board of Education or any program policy group; an employee of any agency or organization which funds the agency.
- Expenses for the aggrieved and his representative should be borne by the aggrieved.

The aggrieved may seek direct access to the grievance committee without going through the informal stage if the grievance involves any of the following:

- failure of an administrator to follow procedures in a situation seriously affecting the employee;
- reprisals against an employee for other grievances or complaints;
- threatened adverse action for such things as alleged non-payment of debts in the absence of legal process such as garnishment;
- denial of an employee's reasonable opportunity to pursue or adhere to his religious beliefs or other First Amendment rights;
- failure of management personnel to follow the time frames specified in the grievance procedure;
- Violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- The decision of the grievance committee is final and binding.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 27: Reduction in Force

Page 1 or 3

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to make offers of employment and promotion in good faith and to stabilize employment so that employees may be provided with regular and continuous work. However, recognizing that reductions in force cannot always be avoided since they are usually made necessary by external factors beyond management's control, it is the intent of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to administer such reductions in a manner that is fair, equitable, and without discrimination.

In the event that a reduction in the work force becomes necessary or a reallocation and/or reduction of available funds occurs requiring the modification and/or elimination of existing positions, management will attempt to carry out the necessary reductions in a equitable manner, using objective policies and procedures to safeguard the rights of employees.

Whether there will be specific jobs eliminated or a general agency wide reduction in force will be determined according to a number of factors:

- Lower funding levels;
- A need to improve program quality and/or efficiency;
- A reduction in enrollment or clientele;
- Direction of a funding agency.

The primary considerations for retention of individuals affected by a reduction in force shall be performance and length of service. Job seniority shall be the primary determinant only if the performance of the affected employees is relatively equal. Length of service shall be used to break a tie, if performance factors are identical.

When business conditions necessitate a reduction in force, the agency shall attempt to arrange transfers to either another position or another location for all employees who are affected. The agency shall assist those employees adversely affected to obtain other employment.

When specific jobs are eliminated or a general reduction is necessary, the Executive Director and Program Director(s) shall review the complete records of those in the affected work groups and determine who is to be displaced, considering the following factors:

- the specific work which must be continued by the program;
- the flexibility of employees as determined by the transferability of their skills, training, knowledge, and experience to perform essential work;
- the quality of performance of the individuals as documented by formal performance appraisals and their overall work record;

- Seniority, if work record and performance evaluations are equal.

.. If there is no distinguishable difference in the performance of incumbent employees affected by modification and/or elimination of existing positions, individuals in the adversely affected group shall be selected for termination in the following order:

- Trainees
- Temporary employees
- Employees who have not completed their probationary period part-time employees
- Regular, full-time employees with the least seniority.

Supervisors shall give notice to affected employees at least two weeks before the effective date of termination. In addition to notice, supervisors shall inform employees of the reason for the termination and refer the individual to the Executive Director's designee for outplacement assistance.

Unless the reduction in force is designated as permanent, recall to positions for which employees may be qualified shall be made of full-time employees within one year from date of reduction before employment of others.

Employees who are recalled within a ninety day time period shall be reinstated with no break in service. If re-employed after the ninety day time period or after a permanent reduction, there shall be a break in service and employment shall start over.

Recall decisions will be based on the same factors used in determining which jobs are displaced. Employees will be recalled in the reverse order of layoff or termination. Notice of recall shall be sent by registered mail, return receipt requested, to the most current home address furnished by the employee to the personnel department.

Seniority and length of service credit for retirement benefits will continue to accumulate during any layoff of thirty days or less. Employees laid off for more than thirty days and subsequently recalled within one year from the date of layoff shall be credited with the years of service and seniority accumulated at the time of layoff.

No sick leave, personal leave, or days of paid absence will be earned during layoff i.e. during summer. When an employee returns to work following recall, however, he may use any personal leave, or other days of paid absence accumulated at the time of layoff.

Any reduction in force must be authorized by the policy council (s) of affected program(s) and the Board of Education if the reduction in force requires a change in the work program it must be approved by the applicable funding source prior to implementation.

The employees who are terminated by a reduction in force must be notified in writing of their termination and their right to appeal under the agency's appeal procedure.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 28: Retirement

Page 1 of 1

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program that employees are eligible for normal retirement on the first day of the month following the month which they reach age 59. Employees, with certain exceptions, who desire to continue working past age 59, may do so provided their job performance is satisfactory. Employees may elect early retirement on the first day of the month following the month in which they reach age fifty-five, or any time after that, or at such time they become permanently disabled, by submitting written notice to the Director.

Upon qualifying for retirement under this policy, an employee becomes eligible to receive benefits in accordance with the provisions of the agency's employee benefits plans.

HANCOCKCOUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 29: Attendance and Punctuality

Page 1 or 1

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to encourage good attendance habits on the part of its employees. The agency recognizes that circumstances beyond an employee's control may cause an individual to be absent from work for all or part of a day or report late to the work station. However, unauthorized absences or tardiness is not tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

Excessive absenteeism and chronic tardiness are patterns of behavior that are easily identified. Supervisors are trained to be aware of these behavior patterns as they develop, to make every effort to discover the reason for this behavior, and to assist the employee in correcting the problem. It is equally important that these behavior patterns be documented, a responsibility of the supervisor. The terms "excessive" and "chronic" shall be interpreted to mean the following: three or more consecutive occurrences in a consecutive seven day period; or six or more non-consecutive occurrences in a calendar month; or twelve or more non-consecutive occurrences in a six month period of time.

An employee reporting to work late is tardy. Tardiness occurs when the employee has not arrived within fifteen minutes after the scheduled starting time. Chronic and/or repeated late arrival for work without acceptable reason may be cause for appropriate disciplinary action.

An absence is the failure of an employee to report for work prior to or within sixty minutes of the starting time for the shift the employee is scheduled to work.

An excused absence occurs when an employee notifies the supervisor of absence prior to or within sixty minutes of the employee's scheduled starting time and/or if permission is granted by the supervisor for reasons of personal illness, death in the family, sickness in the employee's immediate household, annual leave or other such causes that qualify for paid short-term absence. Excused absences will not result in disciplinary action unless they become chronic.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 30: Rules of Conduct

Page 1 or 4

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program that certain rules and regulations regarding employee behavior are necessary for the efficient operation of the program and for the benefit and protection of the rights and safety of all. Conduct that interferes with operations brings discredit on the agency or is offensive and/or abusive to clients or fellow employees will not be tolerated.

Behavior

All employees are expected to conduct themselves and behave in a manner which is conducive to the efficient operation of the program. The following types of conduct are examples of prohibited behavior, but are not intended to be all-inclusive, and will subject the individual involved to disciplinary action and including termination:

Attendance

- Unexcused absenteeism;
- Excessive excused absenteeism; Tardiness;
- Failure to report absence to immediate supervisor within a reasonable period of time; Failure to report to work after expiration of leave of absence;
- Working overtime without approval.

Poor Performance

- Unacceptable quality of Work
- Excessive errors;
- Insufficient quantity of work;
- Excessive waste of time and/or materials.

Misconduct

- Violation of formal work rules;
- Appearance contrary to the program's dress code;
- Disorderly conduct on program premises, such as fighting, excessive practical jokes excessive horseplay, etc.;
- Damaging the program's reputation;

- Gambling on the premises;
- Possession, use or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on program property or when operating program equipment of vehicles;
- Possession of firearms or other weapons on program property without authorization;
- Refusal by an employee to follow program's or supervisor's instructions concerning a job- related matter;
- Theft or misuse of program property or of another employee's property;
- Falsifying any agency record, document, or report;
- Willful or careless damage to any program property;
- Leaving department, job, or office premises during working hours without proper authorization;
- Immoral or indecent conduct;
- Threatening, intimidating, coercing, or interfering with fellow employees;
- Using agency equipment, materials, or facilities for purposes other than program business without authorization;
- Giving confidential information to other employees or an outside individual or agencies or discussing confidential information in public areas where the conversation could be overheard by an unauthorized individual;
- Giving information to the news media without prior authorization;
- Engaging in any form of sexual harassment including making unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical expressions of a sexual nature to other employees or clients;
- Smoking in restricted areas;
- Soliciting contributions without authorization;
- Unauthorized distribution of literature or written or printed matter of any description on program premises;
- Unauthorized or excessive personal use of telephone;
- Sleeping while on the job;
- Use of abusive, profane, and/or obscene language or gestures;
- Using unacceptable words and/or conduct which evidence abusive behavior and/or neglect of children or others;
- Using corporal punishment, total isolation, or extended isolation in disciplining children in the care of the agency;
- Treating clients, visitors, and fellow employees discourteously.

Safety

- Failure to observe safety rules and regulations;
- Failure to immediately report an accident, including personal injury, and/or damage to agency equipment or vehicle;
- Failure to observe established fire, safety, or civil defense rules or established safety practices;
- Disarming any security or safety devices, or interfering with their ability to perform; removal, duplication or transferring possession of keys to agency facilities or vehicles;

- Failure to maintain cleanliness and orderliness in work place and work area; failure to report to management suspicious, unethical, or illegal conduct by fellow employees, clients, visitors, or suppliers.

Personal Appearance

- Inappropriate departures from conventional dress or personal grooming; wearing provocative or revealing clothing to work;
- Wearing clothing which would offend the public or create an unfavorable impression for the agency;
- Dress or grooming which interferes with safety or sanitation standards.

Employees dress and grooming should be appropriate to their work station. Every office employee has some contact with the public and therefore represents the agency in both appearance and actions. Accordingly, employees are expected to dress in a manner that is normally acceptable in business establishments. Employees who work in locations other than the office should choose their clothing with regard to the job they perform, comfort and safety, and with good taste.

If an employee reports for work improperly attired or groomed, the supervisor shall instruct the employee to return home to change clothes or to take other appropriate corrective action. The employee will not be compensated for the time away from work, and repeated violations of this policy will be cause for disciplinary action.

PP 30: Rules of Conduct

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 31: Conflicts of Interest

Page 1 or 1

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to prohibit its employees from engaging in any activity or practice in conflict with the interests of the agency or its clients.

Employment with vendors to or competitors with the program: No employee shall accept full-time, part-time, or temporary employment in any organization which does business with the agency or is a competitor of the program.

Personal Gain: No agency manager or policy maker or member of their immediate family may have a financial interest in a firm which does business with the agency whether or not the interest is sufficient to affect the employee's decisions or actions.

Gifts and Gratuities: No employee of this program (members of the employee's immediate family, or members of the Board of Education or policy groups of the program's shall accept gifts, money or gratuities from:

- Any person or firm doing or seeking to do business with the agency under circumstances from which it might reasonably be inferred that the purpose of the gift might be to influence the employee in the conduct of agency business with the donor; (such gifts should be returned with a note of explanation;)
- Any person receiving benefits or services under any program financially assisted by the agency;
- Persons who are otherwise in a position to benefit from the actions of any employee or Board or policy group member.

Employees, Board and policy group members are not prohibited from accepting advertising novelties or other gifts of nominal value when circumstances clearly show that the gifts are offered for reasons of personal esteem and affection.

When any employee has a question concerning a possible conflict of interest, it is expected that the employee will request advice from the immediate supervisor or other top management official with the agency.

For the purposes of this section, members of the employee's immediate family are, including step-relatives: parent, spouse, child, brother, sister, grandparent, mother/father-in-law, brother/sister-in-law, daughter/son-in-law, and grandparent-in-law.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 32: Nepotism

Page 1 or 1

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to prohibit employees from using their positions for any purpose that is or gives the appearance of being motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, particularly those with whom they have family, business, or other ties.

No individual may be employed by Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start or any of its programs if a member of that individual's immediate family is employed in an administrative capacity in the agency or is a member of the governing board of the agency or a policy group or the program in which the individual desires employment.

The term "immediate family" means wife, husband, significant other, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, sister, grandparent, or relative by marriage of comparable degree. The term "administrative capacity" means a position having responsibilities relating to the selection, hiring, or supervising of employees. *Significant other* means an adult of the same or opposite sex sharing living quarters in a non-platonic relationship.

It is also undesirable that individuals with these relationships work in the same center or location, even if one does not serve in an administrative capacity with regard to the other. If the agency cannot adequately staff positions without hiring or placing such an individual, the Executive Director may approve deviation from this policy for programs where policy group approval is not required for hiring. Where policy group approval is required for hiring, the appropriate policy group must approve this deviation from standard policy. However, employment records must provide evidence that no other individual within the service area is as highly qualified and available for the employment.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 33: Confidentiality Regarding Clients and Agency Affairs

Page 1 of 1

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program that the business affairs of the agency should not be discussed with anyone outside the organization except when required in the normal course of business. The business affairs of the agency refer to client or supplier specific information and the program's internal operations.

The operations and clients of the agency should not be discussed with outsiders. Access to secret, confidential, or sensitive information and operating procedures will be limited to those employees who need to know. Unauthorized employees are prohibited from attempting to obtain or observe this information.

Information concerning the activities or operations of the agency's suppliers or clients must be treated as confidential. Employees handling confidential information are responsible for its security. Extreme care must be exercised to insure that it is safeguarded to protect the agency, its suppliers, and its clients.

Subjects such as the costs of the agency's products and services, and the names of the agency's clients should never be discussed with the directors, officers, or employees of competing organizations.

In the course of performing their duties, employees may receive confidential or sensitive information about the agency or its clients. Employees are prohibited from disclosing such material inside information to anyone outside the organization unless and until such information has been made available to the public by the agency.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 34: Sexual Harassment

Page 1 or 2

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start to prohibit sexual harassment of its employees in the workplace by any person and in any form. Sexual harassment is unacceptable behavior and a violation of the law and will not be tolerated or condoned by the agency.

Each supervisor has an affirmative duty to maintain his workplace free of sexual harassment. This duty includes discussing this policy with all employees and assuring them that they are not required to endure insulting, degrading or exploitive sexual treatment.

No supervisor shall threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the employee's employment, evaluation, wages, advancement, assigned duties, shifts or any other condition of employment or career development.

Other sexually harassing conduct in the workplace, whether committed by supervisors or non-supervisory personnel, is also prohibited. Such conduct includes:

- unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions;
- verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- sexually suggestive or other erotic comments about an individual's body;
- sexually degrading words used to describe an individual; and
- The display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures.

Any employee who believes that he or she has been the subject of sexual harassment should report the alleged act immediately to his supervisor. Supervisors should make every effort to ensure that complaints of sexual harassment are resolved promptly and effectively.

If the employee is not satisfied with the action taken by the Director, the employee should discuss the complaint to the attention of the Executive Director. The complaint will be investigated by the Executive Director and the employee will be advised of the findings and conclusions. If the complaint is against the Executive Director, the matter may be taken to the Chairperson of the Board of Education.

All actions taken to resolve complaints of sexual harassment through internal investigations shall be conducted confidentially. Any supervisor, agent, or other employee who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have engaged in sexual harassment of another employee will be subject to appropriate sanctions, depending on the circumstances, up to and including termination.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 35: Drugs, Narcotics, and Alcohol

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to prohibit the use, sale, or dispensing of drugs, narcotics, and alcohol on agency premises. This policy covers all illegal drugs, alcohol, and legal drugs which impair an employee's ability to perform his job. The agency recognizes the harmful effects of drugs and narcotics and alcohol abuse on the individual user, abhors the unacceptable role model such persons present to the clients we serve, and will not tolerate or continue the employment of drug addicts or users or alcohol abusers.

An employee reporting to work under the influence of drugs, including alcohol will not be permitted to enter agency premises. If an employee is discovered under the influence while on the job, he will be required to leave the premises and may be escorted home or to a treatment facility in an emergency situation.

Staffs who observe unusual behavior patterns on the part of other employees which may be the result of drug or alcohol use should report such individuals and their unusual behavior to a supervisor at once.

Staff should not attempt to provide counseling services to suspected drug and alcohol users or addicts since diagnosis and rehabilitation are the functions of qualified experts.

The possession, sale, or use of a controlled substance other than a drug prescribed by a physician is detrimental to the health of employees, to their job performance, and to the reputation of the agency. Any employee found to be selling or distributing unauthorized drugs will be subject to immediate termination. In other cases of drug or alcohol abuse, management will consider the employee's work record and his willingness to undergo treatment before deciding whether termination is required. An employee willing to undergo treatment may be eligible for a leave of absence and may return to work upon successful completion of treatment or with the recommendation of the drug or alcohol treatment professional.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 36: Direct Action

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to advocate on behalf of its clients, including self-help involvement of the poor leading to such direct activities as peaceful and lawful assembly to obtain redress of grievances from those believed capable of alleviating them.

Other forms of direct action which by threatening law and order aggravate the alienation of the poor from the rest of society or interfere with orderly democratic processes, are antagonistic to the purposes of the agency. Therefore, employees of Hancock County Head Start/pre-K Program are prohibited, in connection with the performance of their duties from participating in, planning, or otherwise assisting in any picketing, protest, or other forms of direct action which is unlawful, i.e., a violation of federal, state or local law or ordinance or an outstanding injunction of any federal, state, or local court.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 37: Public Statements

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K Program that statements of policy arising from decisions of the Board of Education are issued only by the Chairperson of the Board of Education, an authorized spokesperson of the Board of Education, or the Executive Director of the agency. Likewise, statements arising from decisions of policy groups of programs within the agency are issued only by the chairperson or authorized spokesperson of that group, the appropriate Human Resource Director, or the Executive Director.

Other employees may not act as spokesperson for the Board, the agency or a policy group unless they are duly authorized.

Employee authorized to represent Hancock County Head Start or any of its programs in an official capacity must notify their supervisor prior to a public appearance or statement. Publicity releases and policy statements must be reviewed by the appropriate Human Resource Director and approved by the Executive Director.

All employees have the responsibility when expressing opinions in any public forum to make clear whether the opinion is a personal one or the employee is acting as a representative of the agency. When acting as an agency representative the employee must follow the provisions of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start policy on Participation in Community Affairs.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 38: Participation in Community Affairs

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to fulfill its responsibilities to the community it serves by encouraging all employees to participate in civic affairs and to practice good citizenship.

If employees write letters to newspapers and public officials concerning issues of general interest and/or accept invitations to speak before civic groups and if any such communication might be construed as representing the agency's position on any subject, prior approval must be obtained from the Director and Executive Director. Employees have a responsibility when expressing opinions in a public forum to make clear whether the opinion is a personal one or one representing the program.

The program may identify certain community agencies in which it wants to be represented and designate the employee(s) it will sponsor for participation or membership in such organizations. Employees so designated will represent the agency in the organization and will be expected to promote the agency's interests. Under these circumstances, time spent on the community activity will be considered hours worked for pay purposes.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 39: Memberships in Clubs and Civic Organizations

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start to encourage its employees to become members or non-partisan community and civic organizations.

The membership of employees in non-partisan community and civic organizations enhances the agency's image in the community and promotes agency goals and objectives. All employees are encouraged to seek membership in such clubs and organizations regardless of whether they are eligible for reimbursement of expenses under this policy.

An employee may propose membership in a non-partisan community or civic organization as an agency membership: Such a request must be approved by the employee's Director and the Human Resource Director and submitted to the Executive Director for review and approval/disapproval. If the program has a membership in a non-partisan community or civic organization, an employee may be reimbursed for travel expenses associated there with based upon the following considerations:

- the nature and purpose of the organization;
- the benefit to be derived by the agency from the employee's participation;
- the extent to which the agency is already represented in the club or organization;
- the level of responsibility and length of service of the employee requesting travel; and
- The cost to the agency and availability of funds to support such activity.

Except in unusual circumstances, only supervisory and executive personnel will be reimbursed for travel expenses in conjunction with community programs and civic organizations. Reimbursement of travel expenses shall be governed by agency policy.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 40: Participation in Professional Organizations

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start to encourage all employees to participate in professional organizations which relates to their position, professional training, and/or the mission of the agency.

Employees are encouraged to apply for membership and take active interest in professional associations. Time spent in such activities normally should be outside of the employee's working hours and will not be considered hours worked for pay purposes. However, time spent participating in professional organizations at the agency's request or under its direction or control shall be considered hours worked for pay purposes.

Attendance at training required for the employee's job and offered by professional associations may be considered hours worked for pay purposes if the employee obtains prior approval for the activity and provides the agency of a written record of attendance at said training.

Subject to prior approval by management, the agency will reimburse employees for registration fees and reasonable expenses to attend meetings and conferences of professional organizations, if program management requires or requests such employee participation or approves an employee request for such.

Employees are encouraged to contribute articles, present papers or workshops, or give presentations at professional associations and their group publications. However, if any such communication might be construed as representing the agency's position on any subject or involves information which might be confidential, prior approval must be obtained from the Director, Human Resource Director or Executive Director.

Employees who are invited or seek to serve in any official position in a professional organization must obtain approval of agency management before accepting. The agency will reimburse these employees for reasonable expenses incurred in attending to their duties, in addition to compensating them for working time lost. Prior approval of the employee's immediate supervisor will be required for all time away from work.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 41: Participation in Political Activities

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Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start affirms the Constitutional right of an employee to participate as an individual in political activities.

If any employee engages in any political activity, the employee must do so as an individual and not as a representative of the program. Campaigning, fund raising, and other partisan political activities must be conducted as individuals on an employee's own time and make no representations otherwise. In no case will an employee's political activities be permitted to interfere with his job performance or to conflict with the agency's organizational interests.

Any employee acting as an individual and not as a representative of the program may:

- register and vote for the candidate(s) and/or political party of the employee's choice;
- express opinions on political subjects and candidates, as an individual, but not as a representative of the agency;
- be a member of a political party or club;
- Make voluntary contributions of time or money to a political campaign or party; participate in educational efforts relating to issues and to political processes;
- as long as this is not conducted in a politically controlled or motivated manner.

Activities permitted during non-working hours include, but are not limited to:

- Being a non-partisan candidate for office, as defined in SC 1503: "Being a candidate in any election if none of the candidates to be nominated or elected at such election is representing a party any of whose candidates for Presidential elector received votes in the last preceding election at which Presidential electors were selected."
- Soliciting or handling political contributions from other than employees covered by this manual or other persons associated with or receiving substantial benefits from the agency;

Employees of this program are not prohibited from running for or accepting any partisan political office while employed by Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program.

Employees must comply with all federal and state regulations covering political activity of public agencies. They are responsible for knowing and abiding by the specific provisions of all such regulations.

The program does not make contributions or expenditures in connection with any election to any political office, or in connection with any primary election, political convention, caucus, or general election held to select officials or candidates for any political office.

Candidates meetings, even if all rival candidates for one or more political offices appear, shall not be sponsored or conducted with program funds or facilities.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 42: Personal Finances of Employees

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program that all employees are expected to discharge their financial obligations promptly so that creditors will not have to ask for the agency's assistance in collecting amounts owed to them.

Whenever the agency is served with a writ of garnishment or attachment, a notice of levy by the Internal Revenue Service or other taxing authority, or any other similar order requiring payment of a portion of an employee's compensation to someone other than the employee, the agency must immediately refer the matter to the Personnel Department for appropriate action, and notify the employee and his Human Resource Director in writing. Failure to act promptly may render the agency legally liable for the employee's debt.

In the event that garnishment or similar proceedings are instituted against an employee, the agency will deduct the required amount from the employee's pay check. The amount deducted from an employee's earnings will not exceed that permitted by law.

Compliance with write of garnishment and similar orders imposes an administrative and financial burden on the agency. In addition, the failure of an employee to meet his financial obligations does not reflect favorably on the agency and frequently has an adverse effect on the employee's job performance.

No employee will be terminated by reasons of the fact that his earnings have been subjected to garnishment for one indebtedness. When the program is notified of the garnishment, the employee will be referred for financial counseling.

The program will not deny employment to or terminate the employment of any person solely because that person has filed a petition for bankruptcy. Repeated filings may result in disciplinary action, depending upon the circumstances of the case.

Only at the written request of the employee or upon receipt of a subpoena or other court order will the agency provide information about an employee's salary and length of service to a creditor or potential creditor. If an employee wishes that this information be given, he must inform the Personnel Department in writing, indicating what information may be divulged and to what parties.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 43: Personal Telephone Calls and Mail

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start Program that telephone and mail shall be available during working hours for effective communication with the agency's clients and business associates. Accordingly, the program's facilities should not be used for personal telephone calls or personal mail except in cases of emergency.

Use of the agency's telephone lines should be confined to business calls. Personal telephone calls should be limited to those which are absolutely necessary and should be as brief as possible. This restriction on the use of telephones also applies to making unnecessary personal calls to fellow employees within the program.

When necessity requires that an employee make a personal long distance call, the call must be charged to the employee's credit card, placed through the telephone company operator and charged to the individual, or placed collect.

In order to avoid adding to the increasing volume of mail, employees should not use the agency's address in receiving personal mail.

Program stationery may not be used for personal correspondence. Since any communication sent on program stationery might be considered an official communication, employees must limit its use to official business purposes.

Employees may place personal, stamped or postage paid mail in the program's outgoing mail for pickup. However, only official program correspondence will have postage paid by the program.

Corporal Punishment

Hancock Public Schools prohibits the use of corporal punishment by all employees. Corporal punishment includes any consequences that results in physical pain or harm to students. On rare occasions, physical force may be necessary to restrain a person or to prevent injury. When such force is used, it should be applied without anger and as a restraint rather than retaliation. Employees who find it necessary to use physical force with students should immediately provide a written report of the details to the director of the program.

Falsification of Records

As with your job application, if you willfully submit false information on attendance records for an individual employee or student, etc., you are subject to disciplinary action and criminal action.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 44: Property and Security

Page 1 of 1

It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to provide security for its property, its employees, and persons visiting the premises. It is also the policy of the agency to assist its employees in safeguarding their personal property while at work. However, the agency cannot be responsible for the loss or theft of personal belongings, and employees are advised not to carry large sums of cash or other valuables with them when they come to work.

Visits to the agency by friends and acquaintances of employees are not encouraged, and personal visitors are not permitted in work areas or in areas where clients are being served. Should it be necessary for a friend or relative to speak with an employee during working hours, the individual must wait in the lobby or in an employee rest area.

Any employee having his own office may invite the visitor to his office. For employees sharing offices, they have the responsibility to ensure that their visitors do not interfere with the work of their office mates. Personal visits should not exceed fifteen minutes. Excessive time spent with personal visitors shall be reason for disciplinary action including disallowance of such visitation. An employee is responsible for the conduct of his visitor while that individual is on the premises. If an employee is unable to control the behavior of his visitor, he should immediately contact his supervisor who will take action necessary to remove the individual from the premises.

The program may be entered outside of normal working hours only by employees who have been authorized to do so by their supervisor.

The program will attempt to protect employees and their property while on the agency premises. However, employees must exercise reasonable care for their own protection and that of their personal property. It is expected that employees will exercise reasonable care with respect to their wallets, handbags, and brief cases. Under no circumstances should wallets or handbags be left unattended in clear sight.

Security Clearance

Besides providing the required paperwork, you must be fingerprinted and have an accepted criminal background check to receive security clearance. The employee is responsible for paying the fee for the fingerprinting and background check via money order. Employee Services will schedule your fingerprinting. Employee fingerprinting and background checks must be repeated every five (5) years. Contact the Human Resources (706) 444-5775.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 45: Communicable Diseases

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to maintain a healthy work environment and to minimize any opportunity for the transmission of communicable diseases or conditions within the work setting. If an employee, volunteer, enrollee, client, or the public is known to be infected with a communicable disease or condition for which a reasonable probability for transmission exists within a work setting (including regular client service and child care), that individual should be excluded from the setting. The time period for exclusion shall be in accordance with generally accepted medical standards which shall be obtained from consultation with a physician, the local health officer or the Georgia Department of Health Services. Classification of a disease as communicable in this work setting shall be determined in consultation with the local health officer, Georgia Department of Health Services, or Centers for Disease Control.

It is the responsibility of agency employees to use sound judgment regarding their own attendance at work, if they have a communicable disease or condition. If sound judgment is not exercised, the supervisor should make the initial determination as to whether or not the individual should attend work or, if present, remain in the work setting. Employees excluded from the work setting because of a communicable disease or condition by their supervisor or of their own volition will be on sick leave, personal leave, or if either of these is not available, leave without pay, until their approved return. A Program Director is not required to approve leave without pay for an employee who has exhausted his sick leave and personal leave. Although reasonable accommodation must be made for employee illness, inability to perform job functions due to any illness or condition may be grounds for suspension or termination.

Employees who are responsible for the supervision of clients who participate in agency programs in its offices, centers, or other facilities are also responsible to determine whether or not the client should attend or, if present, remain in the facility, if they are known or suspected to have a communicable disease or condition likely to be transmitted within that setting.

The Human Resource Director or, in the case of the Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program, the Health Coordinator should be notified by the supervisor if an individual is known or suspected to have a communicable disease or condition for which a reasonable probability for transmission exists in the work setting. The individual should then be excluded from the work setting for a time period in accordance with generally accepted medical standards. Knowledge that an individual has a communicable disease or condition will be confined to those persons with a direct need to know. Those persons will be provided appropriate information concerning such precautions as may be necessary, but are expected to maintain full confidentiality.

Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start may provide information to employees and clients regarding a communicable disease or condition which may be transmitted through work setting contact confidentiality will be maintained regarding the identity of the infected individual; however, information concerning mode of spread, symptoms, incubation and contagious periods, reporting requirements, and are may be provided to anyone who may have been exposed.

At the direction of the Human Resource Director or Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Health Coordinator, supervisors may require a doctor's statement, provided at the individual's expense, certifying that the individual's return to the work setting will not endanger the health of that individual or others with whom he may come into contact.

It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure sanitation and take measures to aid in infection control. Hand washing is the cornerstone to infection control. Good practice mandates that employees and volunteers always wash their hands after using the toilet, after helping with toileting or diapering, after wiping runny noses, when preparing to eat or assist with feeding, and after accidental contact with blood or blood-tinged fluids. As protection against blood-related modes of disease transmission, employees and volunteers should adhere to the precautions defined in the agency Exposure to Blood-Borne Pathogens Control Plan.

Training will be provided to agency employees and volunteers to ensure sanitation and measures to aid in the prevention of infection and communicability of contagious diseases and conditions. Strict adherence to the universal precautions prevents exposure to blood-borne pathogens including HIV and Hepatitis B.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 46: Drug Free Workplace

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It is the policy of Hancock Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to maintain a workplace which is drug-free and which complies with the Drug-free Work Place Act of 1988 (PL 100-690, Title V, Subtitle D). No employee of the agency shall engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance in any agency place of work or extension of an employee's work site (e.g., home visit, field trip, distribution site, client residence, etc.). This policy further requires any employee who is using a prescription drug during work time or taking a drug whose effects remain during working hours to notify his supervisor of the prescription or provide a doctor's statement identifying the medication and certifying that the drug does not impair the individual's ability to perform his job. Finally, it bans the use of alcohol at the workplace by any employee, enrollee, or volunteer. Drug and alcohol use on the job that affects job performance is expressly prohibited through this policy. Its purpose is to ensure workplace safety, employee health, and high quality service to clients, and professional and collegial interactions among employees.

Any employee with a criminal drug statute conviction for a violation in the workplace must notify the Executive Director within five days. Within thirty days Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start must take appropriate actions. Employees found to be abusing drugs, but not convicted of any drug statute violation, will be subject to appropriate personnel action up to and including termination, or are required to participate in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes at the employee's expense.

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 requires contractors and grantees of federal Programs to certify that they will provide drug-free workplaces and is a precondition of receiving a contract of grant from a federal agency. It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start that each employee must certify each year that he is aware of the requirements of and is in compliance with the provisions of the Act and sign a form assuring compliance. That form shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

prior to bringing such medications to or using them at the workplace. The supervisor will, in turn, provide the information to the Human Resource Director. The employee may choose to provide a certification from his doctor which indicates the type of medication and assures that use of the drug at the workplace does not impair the individual's ability to perform his job. In the absence of such certification, Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program may require such assurance if there is any question about the effects of the drug. In addition, employees should be aware that the use of such medications will be revealed through any required random drug testing, and only prior reported and verified physician/dentist-prescribed drugs will be excused.

Any employee abusing drugs or alcohol, but not convicted of any drug statute violation, will be subject to appropriate personnel action depending on the nature, magnitude, and frequency of the offense. Based upon these Personnel Policies and Procedures, that action may be up to and include termination. The employee may also be required to satisfactorily complete a drug abuse counseling, assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes. The Community Resource Guide lists approved programs in and near the agency's service area. The employer is not required to pay for this treatment, and may require that the employee bear the full expense of counseling and rehabilitation. Participation in an employee assistance program is confidential and will not jeopardize employment or advancement. However, that participation will also not protect the employee from disciplinary action for continued unacceptable job performance or rule violations.

Program Requirements:

Hancock County Head Start program employees shall be advised of the following mandated legal requirements upon the program and its employees pursuant to the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988. The law requires:

- publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace; establishing a drug-free awareness program;

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PP 47: Smoke-Free Environment

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It is the policy of Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to maintain a smoke-free environment for children and adults who participate in their program, to eliminate exposure to tobacco smoke by children, parents, other clients, employees, volunteers and others in the agency, and to adhere to the provisions of the Pro-Children Act of 1994. Through this policy the agency seeks to protect individuals from the deleterious effects of smoking and environmental tobacco smoking, i.e., exposure to the smoke given off by burning cigarettes, cigars and pipes and the smoke exhaled by someone who is smoking.

All tobacco products are prohibited at all times within any indoor facility owned or leased or contracted for and utilized by Hancock County Head Start Program. This includes classrooms, staff offices, kitchens, restrooms, parent and staff meeting rooms, hallways, outdoor play areas, and vehicles used for transporting children and other clients. This policy is enforced twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

This prohibition shall **not** apply to agency services provided in any private residence, such as home visits. However, under no circumstances shall agency employees or volunteers smoke while providing service in any private residence i.e. home visits.

The agency shall designate smoking areas at each facility. Smoking is allowed only in these designated outdoor areas, no closer than ten yards from building entrances or open windows. Under no circumstances, indoors or out, shall use of tobacco products occur in the presence of children.

In facilities shared with other occupants, a smoke-free zone shall be established which reduces the exposure of children, parents, other clients, staff and others to smoke from other sources in the building. To reduce any exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, the agency will, when possible, modify ventilation and alter traffic patterns.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

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PP 48: Use of Cellular Phone

It is the policy of the Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to prohibit the use of cellular phones by all staff during normal work hours unless it is expressly authorized by the Director, under the direction of the Executive Director and Hancock County Board of Education.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

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PP 49: Corporal Punishment

It is the policy of the Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to prohibit the utilization of corporal punishment and isolation as discipline. The Hancock County Board of Education and Administration of Children and Families (ACF) have enacted a zero tolerance for staff utilizes corporal punishment in any form and for any reason. Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical force to body includes, but is not limited to spanking, slapping, hitting with the palm of the hands or another object and includes threats by words or an object. Such actions may be grounds for immediate dismissal. Rules governing discipline:

- a) No child shall be subjected to any form of corporal punishment by the owner, operation, director or staff of any Head Start facility. For purposes of this rule, staff mean any regular or substitute employee of Hancock County Board of Education, any auxiliary and voluntary personnel.
- b) No child shall handled roughly in any way, including shaking, pushing, shoving, pinching, slapping, biting, kicking or spanking. Children may be appropriately restrained, if necessary, for health, safety or emergency reasons.
- c) No child shall ever be placed without an adult in a locked room, closet, or other object.
- d) No discipline shall ever be delegated to another child.
- e) Discipline shall in no way be related to food, rest, or toileting.
- f) No food shall be withheld or given as means of discipline.
- g) No child shall ever be disciplined for lapses in toilet training.
- h) No child shall ever be disciplined for not sleeping during rest period.
- i) Verbal abuse, inappropriate comments and other negative forms of communications (vulgar and/or profane language, obscene gestures, insults and shouting) toward children will not be tolerated.

Employees violating this policy are subject to discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

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PP 50: Weapons

It is the policy of the Hancock County Head Start pre-K Program to absolutely prohibit the presence of weapons on the property of the Hancock County Board of Education. The Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program recognizes a Zero Tolerance Weapons policy. The following guidelines are in force:

- No staff, child, volunteer, parent and/or visitor shall possess, handle, transmit, carry or have under his/her control any firearm or any other offensive or defensive instrument vying for contending against another while on Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start premises and/or vehicles.
- No child shall possess or use any weapon on the Hancock County head Start/Pre-K premises and/or vehicles.
- Staff shall not supply, possess, handle, use, threaten to utilize or transfer any weapon or any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting bodily injury.

Staff which violates this policy will result in immediate termination. Parents, volunteers, consultants and/or other visitors will be referred to local police and/or sheriff departments.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

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PP 51: Use of Vehicles

It is the policy of the Hancock County head Start/Pre-K Program to provide vehicles, when available, to licensed employees, recognizing the following conditions. It is a further policy of the Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to provide transportation for employees to conduct official business in the event the employee does not hold a valid driver's license.

Use of Vehicles:

- All Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start employees must hold a valid driver's license in the State of Georgia.
- Grantee and other agencies usage will be expressed through written requests and final approval will remain on the premises unless permission is acquired through the Director.
- All authorized staff will be required to complete a travel log.
- All Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start vehicles will remain on the premises unless permission is acquired through the Director and/or Executive Director.
- Under no circumstances are the Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start vehicles to be utilized for personal and/or private use.
- Any misuse of Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start vehicles will result in suspension and/or immediate termination.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

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PP 52: Parties and Holidays

It is the policy of the Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to ensure that food is not used as punishment and/or reward; food safety is ensured; nutritional and special needs of the children are met, and that cultural, religious and racial differences are rejected. The following will occur:

- Parents and staff will develop simple and nutritious menus to observe holidays and monthly birthdates.
- For parties, staff and parents will have a designated day once monthly to celebrate.
- Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start lunchroom staff will prepare the menus.
- No food will be accepted from outside sources.
- All party and holiday celebrations will adhere to nutrition standards and Child and Adult Care Food Programs Regulations, promote health and safety guidelines, contain low fat and sugar content and meet $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the children's daily nutritional needs.
- All religious, racial, cultural and medical concerns will be addressed.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

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PP 53: Travel and Mileage

It is the policy of the Hancock Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program to define the travel and mileage guidelines. Hancock County Board of Education serves as the grantee for the Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Program. All regulations regarding travel for any Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start employee will be the same as any employee on travel status for Hancock County School System. Employees will complete request for authorization of official travel. Purchase orders will be completed by employees for hotel accommodations and registration fees. When check is needed, it will be specified on each purchase order. Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Spark Visa card will be used only for hotel reservations. Requests and purchase orders must be approved by Director and Superintendent.

Upon approval, the requests will be submitted to bookkeeper. Checks will be mailed to designated places and/or taken by designated staff. Cost of meals which normally would be eaten before departure or after returning from travel status will not be allowed. Generally, lunch is always reimbursable if it is away from headquarters overnight. However, lunch is always reimbursable if it is an integral part of the scheduled meeting. Reimbursement for meals will be based on the following criteria:

- Breakfast reimbursement will not be allowed unless staff departs from Head Start/pre-K and/or approved designation prior to 6:30 a.m.
- Lunch is always reimbursable if staff leaves Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start and/or designation before 11:00 a.m. for an overnight stay or returns to Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start and/or approved designation after 1:00 p.m. from overnight stay.

Staff will not be reimbursed for dinner unless arrival at approved designated and/or Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start after 7:30 p.m. staff will be reimbursed for dinner, lunch, and breakfast provided staff was away from home on work assignment for more than 13 hours. Maximum allowable reimbursement amount for meals:

- Overnight stay: away from home for at least 13 hours: \$28.00 per day
- Breakfast \$6.00
- Lunch \$7.00
- Dinner \$15.00

Receipts are not required; however, staff must complete an expense form with documentation of travel in order to receive reimbursement for meals. Staff involved in local and out of town travel will complete required expense form. Mileage will be paid at the rate of \$.575 per mile. Taxi and limousine fares and parking fees will be reimbursable upon receipt. Mileage recorded on travel forms will be totaled and signed by individual staff, Director, and Superintendent and submitted to bookkeeper by the 10 of each month.

Incomplete or incorrect travel forms will be returned to Director. When this occurs, travel reimbursements will be received by the 15th of each month.

Bookkeeper will verify travel and calculate amount of total travel reimbursement and provide check. Staff must attach copies of itineraries of workshop/trainings to travel forms. Staff must submit proper documentation for local travel: i.e. home visits. Advance travel must be approved by Director and Superintendent. Governing bodies and parents will follow the same procedures for travel reimbursement. Staff, governing bodies, and parents incurring expenses while performing Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start duties will complete and sign expense form. Forms will be approved by the Director and Superintendent. Checks will be prepared for individuals according to travel and reimbursement procedures.

HANCOCK COUNTY HEAD START/PRE-K & EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

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PP 54: Family with High Income Status

It is the policy of the Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start program to provide comprehensive health care services to all Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start eligible children. Hancock County Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start staff will determine each child's health status through professional screenings and link each child to ongoing sources of continuous health care. Ongoing monitoring and the release of information documentation will provide Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start with opportunities to assist Head Start/Pre-K eligible children by providing their families an available Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start payment option. Since some of Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start families' income status will not allow them to receive Medicaid/Medicare and/or other governmental insurances, Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start will assist with providing an available payment option for children whose families have personal insurances.

In order for families to obtain this available option, Head Start/Pre-K staff will document evidence for resources and funding search; therefore, families will be provide a limited number of payments for co-payments for Head Start/pre-K mandated health care services. In order for Head Start/Pre-K eligible children's families to benefit from Head Start/Pre-K available option, families must:

- Submit signed receipt from Georgia Licensed/Certified Health Care Professionals
- Signed a release of information documentation
- Present receipts to Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start Director

Upon receiving families' co-payment receipts, families will receive reimbursement for Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start mandated health care services. Families must provided Head Start/Pre-K & Early Head Start with a "release of information" document for monitoring initial and follow-up individualized health care services.