



# FOOTHILLS

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## EDUCATION CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

*"Providing students an opportunity to earn a high school diploma"*

A State Chartered Special School

# Faculty Handbook

Dr. Sherrie Gibney-Sherman, Superintendent

Central Office: 706-795-2191

Fax: 706-795-5104

[www.foothillscharter.org](http://www.foothillscharter.org)

Established by the Georgia Board of Education 2015

Established as a State Chartered Special School 2015

Accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission-Fall 2015

Foothills Education Charter High School High School is an equal opportunity employer.

(Revised June 2016)

## **Foothills Education Charter High School Governing Board (Foothills)**

- Dr. Allen McCannon, Madison-Foothills,  
Madison County School District Superintendent, Foothills Chairperson
- Dr. April Howard, Jackson-Foothills, \  
Jackson County School District Superintendent, Foothills Vice Chairperson
- Ms. Shirley Aaron, Madison-Foothills community representative,  
Madison County Mentor Program
- Mr. Brione Burrows, Baldwin-Foothills community representative,  
Faculty Central Regional Technical College
- Mr. Valdon Daniel, Clarke-Foothills community representative,  
Former Clarke County School District middle school principal
- Dr. Buster Evans, Correctional System, Assistant Commissioner,  
Georgia Department of Corrections
- Dr. Keith Everson, At-Large Community,  
Executive Director, North East Georgia Regional Educational Center (RESA)
- Dr. Marcy Hunt-Harris, Correctional System community representative,  
Director of Student-Support Services Monroe County
- Dr. Philip Lanoue, Clarke-Foothills,  
Clarke County School District Superintendent
- Dr. Noris Price, Baldwin-Foothills,  
Baldwin County District Superintendent
- Dr. Chris McMichael-Barrow-Foothills,  
Barrow County School District Superintendent

### **Advisory Committee Members**

- Mr. Michael Williams, Jackson-Foothills community representative,  
Director of Jackson County Boys & Girls Club
- Mr. Spencer Breedlove, Barrow Foothills community representative,  
Pastor of Statham Church

## **Foothills Education Charter High School (Foothills)**

### **Vision**

Foothills Education Charter High School strives to be an accessible high quality high school option that is flexible and responsive to the needs of the people of Georgia and its communities.

### **Mission**

Foothills Education Charter High School is a community and state resource for students who want to earn a high school diploma in order to be successful in post-secondary and career options.

### **Guiding Principles**

Students learn in different ways and at different rates. Foothills will accommodate these differences when possible.

Students learn more when they are responsible for their learning and behavior.

Students are most successful when provided a safe and secure environment in which to excel and learn.

Students are most successful when teachers and staff have high expectations and are highly qualified and coexist in a collegial environment.

Foothills Education Charter High School will be more successful with ongoing communications and outreach to partner school districts, the Department of Corrections, and other community partners.

Foothills Education Charter High School will be most effective with consistent review of policies and procedures in order to ensure the highest quality work possible.

## **Criminal Background Checks**

A criminal record check will be conducted at or prior to employment on every person who is employed by the Governance Board for the first time to fill either a full-time or part-time certified or classified position with Foothills Education Charter High School (Foothills). For this purpose, the applicant shall be fingerprinted as required by state law for all public school employees.

Subsequent criminal record checks will be conducted on all personnel in accordance with state laws, state board rules, and rules of the Professional Standards Commission. All certified personnel whose employment is continued with Foothills shall have a criminal record check made upon any certificate renewal application to the Professional Standards Commission. All classified employees whose employment is continued with Foothills shall have subsequent criminal record checks on a periodic basis, not to exceed every five years, using procedures and schedules to be determined by the Foothills Site Director/Superintendent or designee.

The cost of such record checks for all certified/classified employees shall be paid by the applicant.

## **Termination**

Employees under contract may have their contracts terminated only by following the procedures as set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-940. Certificated employees do not earn any rights to continued employment as set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-942. All employees not under contract are employed at the will of the Board.

Any employee may be suspended without pay by the Governance Board pending a decision regarding termination. Any employee may be placed on administrative leave with pay by the Superintendent at any time.

## **Staff Attendance**

All employees are expected to report to work as scheduled. If extenuating circumstances exist which would cause an employee to be late for work, the site director/designee must be informed in order to insure that student coverage is assured. Should an employee be required to be absent during a scheduled work period, that employee must inform the site director/designee and, if appropriate, insure that another employee works in the place of the absentee.

The site director/designee must be informed when an employee arrives or departs the school. Part-time employees must sign in and out upon entering and leaving the school. Part-time employee monthly time sheets must be completed and signed by the employee, and submitted at the pre-determined monthly cut-off date.

## **Schedule**

School hours for Foothills students are Monday through Thursday from 4:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. June and July hours 4-8 p.m.

## **Hourly Employee Pay**

Certified/classified hourly employees will be paid an hourly salary as set forth in the position advertisement. A few administrative positions are salaried positions but are still considered part-time positions. The only full-time employees at this time are the system registrar, site registrars and office managers. All other personnel are part time.

## **Leaves and Absences**

This handbook shall apply to all full-time and part-time employees of the Foothills Education Charter High School.

### **Accrual of Sick Leave & Absence for Medical and other Related Reasons**

Each full-time employee of Foothills shall be entitled to sick leave, with full pay, computed on the basis of one and one-fourth (1 1/4) working days for each completed month. All unused sick leave shall be accumulated from one fiscal year to the next up to a maximum of forty-five (45) days. Sick leave accumulated by a certified full-time employee from another public school system is transferable to Foothills up to a maximum of 45 days.

The leave provided for under this handbook is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness in the employee's immediate family.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the site director or designee shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties. In the event that sick leave is used to care for a member of the immediate family, the site director shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is needed to care for the sick family member.

For the purposes of absences for medical and related reasons, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, sisters, brothers, grandparents, grandchildren, and in-law equivalents of the same or other relatives living in the household.

- **Bereavement Leave**

Death in immediately Family – In the event of a death in the immediate family (as defined above) of a full-time employee, a leave of absence will be granted to a maximum number of five days in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Governance Board and such leave will not be charged against sick leave.

## **Personal and Professional Leave**

Full-time employees may take three (3) days of personal/professional leave if prior approval of the absence has been given by the employee's immediate supervisor and if the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for effective school operation. A leave form must be filed and approved by the site administrator prior to leave.

Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought but may be required to state whether the absence is for "personal" or "professional" reasons.

Professional leave for training and/or professional meetings attended at the request of the site director shall not be counted against an employee's sick leave.

## **Observance of Religious Holidays**

Full-time employees may use personal leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. If an employee desires to take leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays in excess of the days allowed for personal leave, the employee may take unpaid leave for such purposes provided that such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

## **Jury and Witness Leave**

Each person employed by Foothills shall be allowed leave with pay for the purposes of serving as a juror in any court or when attending a judicial proceeding in response to a subpoena. Jury and/or witness leave shall not be deducted from an individual's accumulated personal, professional or sick leave. No employee utilizing jury and witness leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute to serve during his or her absence for such leave. Employees who serve on juries or who are subpoenaed for reasons arising out of their employment with Foothills may keep the jury/witness pay they receive.

## **Military Leave**

All employees of Foothills are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen days in any one federal fiscal year for the purpose of complying with ordered military leave duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the militia or reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia. Employees also are entitled to leave not exceeding thirty days in any one federal fiscal year if ordered to duty as a result of the declaration of any emergency by the governor or the appropriate officials of the United States armed forces. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the site administrator or designee annually and shall cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of Foothills.

## Family and Medical Leave

### A. Eligible Employees

Employees who have been employed by Foothills for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months are eligible to take 12 weeks of unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"). As to the interpretation of this handbook, Foothills employees should look to the Act itself and its regulations.

An eligible employee may request leave for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Birth of a son or daughter and to care for the newborn child;
2. Adoption or foster placement of a son or daughter with the employee;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent, if that person has a serious health condition; and
4. Serious health condition of the employee that prevents the employee from performing his/her job functions.
5. Any qualifying exigency arising from the fact that the employee's family member (the covered military member) is on active duty or has been notified of an impending deployment in support of a contingency operation. Qualifying exigencies are defined as short-notice deployment (seven or less calendar days); military events and related activities; childcare and school activities; financial and legal arrangements; counseling; rest and recuperation (up to five days per instance); post-deployment activities; additional activities where the employer and employee agree that the leave is an exigency and agree to both timing and duration of the leave; and
6. Military caregiver leave to care for a covered service-member with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service-member.

In the event of the birth, adoption or foster placement of a son or daughter, all leave must be completed within twelve months after the birth, adoption or foster placement.

### B. Definitions

"Covered Active Duty" means, for members of the regular Armed Forces, duty during deployment to a foreign country; for members of a Reserves component of the Armed Forces, duty during deployment to a foreign country under a call or order to active duty pursuant to federal law.

"Covered Service-member" (for military caregiver leave) means the employee's spouse, child, parent or next of kin who is (1) a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness; or (2) a veteran who was a member of the Armed Forces at any time

during the five years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes such medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

“Covered Service member” (for qualifying exigency leave) means the employee’s spouse, child or parent under a federal call or order to covered active duty.

"Instructional employee" means an employee whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or an individual setting.

“Next of Kin” of a covered service-member means the nearest blood relative other than the covered service-member’s spouse, parent, son or daughter, in the following order of priority: blood relatives granted legal custody, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, unless the covered service-member has specifically designated in writing another blood relative for purposes of FMLA caregiver leave.

“Outpatient Status,” with respect to a covered service-member, means the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to either a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient; or a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients.

"Parent" means a biological parent or one who acted in place of a parent when the employee was a child. The term “parent” does not include parent “in law.”

"Serious Health Condition" means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

“Serious Injury or Illness” means, an injury or illness incurred by a covered service-member in the line of duty on active duty (or that existed before active duty and was aggravated by line of duty active service) that may render the service-member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member’s office, grade, rank, or rating. In the case of a veteran, “serious injury or illness” means a qualifying injury or illness, as defined by the Secretary of Labor, incurred during or aggravated by active duty during the five years before undergoing treatment, recuperation, or therapy, and that manifested itself before or after the member became a veteran.

"Son or daughter" means a biological, adopted or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee acts as a parent. The son or daughter must be under age 18 or, if the son or daughter is age 18 or older, he/she must be incapable of self-care on a daily basis due to a mental or physical disability.

"Spouse" means a husband or wife.

### B-C. Amount And Type Of Leave Taken

Except as provided below, an employee may take a total of 12 weeks leave during any twelve-month period. A "rolling year" shall be used to determine the twelve-month period during which the twelve weeks of leave entitlement may occur. That is, each time an employee takes FMLA leave, the remaining leave entitlement would be any balance of the 12 weeks that has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months.

If both spouses work for Foothills and both are eligible for FMLA leave, they are authorized to take only a combined total of 12 weeks leave during any one 12 month period to care for a newborn or adopted child, a child placed with the employee for foster care, or a parent with a serious health condition. Both spouses are authorized to take leave to care for a spouse or child with a serious health condition for twelve (12) weeks.

An eligible employee is eligible to take up to 26 weeks of military caregiver leave during a "single 12-month period." The "single 12-month period" begins on the date the employee first takes military caregiver leave and ends 12 months after that date, regardless of the method used to determine the leave entitlement period for other FMLA reasons.

If both spouses work for Foothills and both are eligible for FMLA leave, they are authorized to take only a combined total of 26 weeks during the "single 12-month period" described above for military caregiver leave or a combination of military caregiver leave and leave taken for other FMLA reasons.

The Governance Board will require that any accumulated paid leave be substituted for all or a part of the otherwise unpaid FMLA leave.

### D. Intermittent Or Reduced Leave

An employee is not permitted to take leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule unless it is medically necessary or necessary because of a qualifying exigency. The Board will require a certification, in the form described in Section G below, to document the necessity of such intermittent leave.

### E. Notification Of Leave

If the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, an employee requesting leave must provide at least 30 days advance notice to the Site Director. If such advance notice is not possible, the employee must give notice to the Site Director as soon as practicable, ordinarily within one or two working days of learning of the need for leave. When planning medical treatment, the employee should make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment, subject to the approval of the health care provider, so that any corresponding leave will not disrupt unduly the operations of Foothills.

Employees must provide sufficient information for Foothills to reasonably determine whether the FMLA may apply to the leave request. When an employee seeks leave due to an FMLA-qualifying reason for which Foothills has previously provided FMLA leave, the employee must specifically reference either the previous qualifying reason for leave or the need for FMLA leave.

#### F. Benefits And Return To Work

Employees will be eligible to maintain health care benefits provided by Foothills while on FMLA leave. The Governance Board will pay the employee's portion, if any, of such benefits. The employee will pay the same portion, if any, of such benefits as the employee paid before beginning the leave.

The Governance Board may recover any health care benefit premiums paid on behalf of an employee if the employee does not return to work after the leave period has expired, unless the employee did not return due to a serious health condition of the employee or the employee's spouse, parent or child, or other circumstances beyond the employee's control. The Governance Board may require certification from the health care provider that a serious health condition of the employee or family member prevented the employee from returning to work.

With the exception of paid vacation, personal, medical or sick leave required to be substituted for unpaid leave under Section C above, the employee's absence during leave will not alter benefits which the employee accrued before taking leave. Any accrued benefits will not be lost during the leave.

Upon return from leave, the employee is entitled to be reinstated to a position equivalent to the one the employee held when he/she left on FMLA leave, with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment. Upon proper notice, however, the Governance Board may deny reinstatement under this handbook to an employee whose salary is in the highest 10% of the employees employed by Foothills if such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the district's operation, as determined by the Governance Board.

#### G. Required Certification And Reporting

The Governance Board requires that a request for leave due to a serious health condition of an employee or family member or a serious illness or injury of a covered service-member be supported by certification by the appropriate health care provider of the eligible employee, family member or covered service-member on a form to be provided by the Governance Board. This certification must include (1) the date on which the serious health condition commenced, (2) the probable duration of the condition, (3) if the purpose of the leave is to care for a son, daughter, spouse or parent ("family member"), a statement that the

employee is needed to care for the family member and the estimated amount of time needed for such care, and (4) if the leave is due to the employee's own serious health condition, a statement that the employee is unable to perform his/her job functions. Foothills may require that the eligible employee obtain subsequent recertification on a reasonable basis as requested by the Governance Board.

The Governance Board, at its own expense, may obtain the opinion of a second health care provider of their choice, if the Governance Board should choose to do so. If a conflict exists between the opinion in the certification and the second opinion, the Governance Board may, at its own expense, obtain a third opinion from a health care provider upon which the Governance Board and the employee jointly agree. Such a third opinion as to the necessity for the leave is binding on both the Governance Board and the employee.

Upon an employee's return to work after leave for the employee's own serious health condition, the Governance Board may require the employee to obtain certification from his/her health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

Foothills may require that a first request for leave because of a qualifying exigency arising from active duty or a call to active duty be supported by a copy of the covered service-member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military. A certification form requesting the required information to support a request for exigency leave will be provided by Foothills upon request.

The Governance Board may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically to his/her immediate supervisor or designee on the employee's status and intent to return to work.

#### H. Special Provisions

When an instructional employee seeks intermittent leave or leave on a reduced schedule in connection with a family or personal illness that would constitute at least 20% of the total number of working days during which the leave would extend, the Governance Board may require the employee to elect to take leave in a block (not intermittently) for the entire period or to transfer to an available alternative position within Foothills that is equivalent in pay, for which the employee is qualified, and which better accommodates the intermittent situation.

If an instructional employee begins leave more than five weeks before the end of a semester, the Governance Board may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if

- (i) the leave will last at least three weeks; and
- (ii) the employee would return to work during the three-week period before the end of the term.

If an instructional employee begins leave for a purpose other than the employee's own serious health condition during the five-week period before the end of the semester, the Governance Board may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester if

- (i) the leave will last more than two weeks; and
- (ii) the employee would return to work during the two-week period before the end of the term.

If an instructional employee begins leave for a purpose other than the employee's own serious health condition during the three-week period before the end of a semester, and the leave will last more than five working days, the Board may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the semester.

## **Employee Benefits**

All full-time employees, as determined by the Governance Board, will be eligible for participation in the Georgia State Health Benefit Plan, the Teacher's Retirement System and other benefits available to Georgia school educators. Contact the site administrator for further information.

### **Annual Leave**

Full-time employees will work 184 (10 hour) days out of a possible 192 days each year. The eight days not worked will be 8 (10 hour) annual leave days. Annual leave will be forfeited if not used by the end of the fiscal year (June 30). These employees may also observe the following holidays without any reduction in pay, if the school is not in session:

Labor Day	July 4
Thanksgiving Holiday (2)	Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday
Christmas (3)	Memorial Day
New Years Day	
Easter Holiday (2)	

## **Child Abuse/Neglect**

State Board rule mandates all employees be briefed annually on identification and reporting procedures for suspected child abuse/neglect. All Foothills employees will immediately report all suspected cases of child abuse/neglect to the counselor and/or site director who will in turn report the incident to the proper authorities.

## **Classroom Management**

Student behavior that prevents a teacher from teaching or a student from learning will not be permitted. Behavior of this nature will result in the student being removed from the class/school. The student will be taken to the office for appropriate administrative action.

## **Student Supervision/Duty**

Students are to be supervised at all times. Employees are expected to assist each other in ensuring adequate supervision. Faculty and staff are responsible for monitoring student behavior during scheduled breaks.

## **Emergency Operations Plan**

The Foothills sites operate under the Emergency Operations Plan as prepared by the respective school system of residence in cooperation with local and state emergency agencies (GEMA). This plan details emergency procedures for a variety of situations such as bomb threats, hostage/terrorist situations, tornado, fire, hazardous materials, etc.

Each site's local plan is available for review at the site director's office.

## **Faculty Dress Code**

Professionalism and good taste should dictate the dress of faculty members. Professional dress by employees sets the tone for how students perceive and act/react to the educational environment.

## **Drug Free Workplace**

The Governance Board declares that the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of controlled substances, marijuana and other dangerous drugs in an unlawful manner or being at work under the influence of alcohol, controlled substances, marijuana or other dangerous drugs is a serious threat to the public health, safety and welfare. With this in mind, the Governance Board declares that its work force must be absolutely free of any person who would knowingly manufacture, distribute, sell or possess a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug in an unlawful manner. This prohibition specifically includes, but is not limited to, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol in the employee's workplace. This prohibition also includes, but is not limited to, an employee being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while on duty.

Any employee who is convicted for the first time, under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be subject to disciplinary action. At a minimum, such an employee shall be suspended for a period of not less than two months and shall be required to complete, at his or her own expense, a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the Governance Board. At a maximum, such an employee may be terminated from his employment with Foothills. Any employee who is convicted for a second or subsequent time under the laws of this state, the United States, or any other state, of any criminal offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug shall be terminated from his or her employment and shall be ineligible for employment for a period of five years from the most recent date of conviction.

If, prior to an arrest for an offense involving a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug, an employee notifies the Site Director or designee that the employee illegally uses a controlled substance, marijuana or a dangerous drug and is receiving or agrees to receive treatment under a drug abuse treatment and education program licensed under Chapter 5 of Title 26 of the Official Code of Georgia and approved by the Board, the employee shall be entitled to maintain his or her employment for up to one year as long as the employee follows the treatment plan. During this period, the employee shall not be separated from employment solely on the basis of the employee's drug dependence, but the employee's work activities may be restructured if practicable to protect persons or property. No statement made by an employee to the Site Director or designee in order to comply with this code section shall be admissible in any civil, administrative or criminal proceeding as evidence against the public employee. The rights granted by this handbook shall be available to an employee only once during a five-year period and are intended to be and shall be interpreted as being the same as those minimum rights granted pursuant to the Georgia Drug-Free Work Force Act and any subsequent amendments thereof.

As a condition of employment, each employee must abide by the terms of this handbook and must notify the Governance Board or Superintendent within five days after any arrest on any drug-related criminal charge and further notify the same entities within five days of any conviction of a drug-related offense.

The Governance Board shall not consider for employment any applicant who has been convicted for the first time of any drug offense as described above for a three month period from the date of conviction nor shall the Governance Board consider any applicant for employment who has been convicted for the second time of any drug offense as described above for a five year period from the most recent date of conviction.

For purposes of this handbook, "conviction" refers to any final conviction in a court of competent jurisdiction, specifically including acceptance of a plea of guilty, nolo contendere, or any plea entered under the First Offenders Act of Georgia or any comparable state or federal legislation.

This handbook is not intended and shall not be interpreted as prohibiting Foothills from taking appropriate disciplinary action against any employee where there exists evidence that an employee uses, distributes or sells illegal drugs even though the employee has not been convicted of any criminal offense or where there exists evidence that an employee is under the influence of alcohol while on duty, except that Foothills may not use the statement of any employee to the Site Director or designee requesting treatment as described in this handbook. Foothills shall provide such staff development as required by state or federal law to inform employees of the dangers of drug abuse, the availability of employee assistance and drug counseling and treatment and the terms of this handbook.

### **Tobacco-Free Workplace**

In accordance with the "Georgia Smoke Free Air Act of 2005", smoking shall be prohibited at any time in any school building or property owned or leased by Foothills, or at any time in any Foothills-owned vehicle. In addition, this prohibition includes the use of other tobacco products by employees at all times when on duty for Foothills, including when such employees are directly instructing or supervising students.

Foothills employees who violate this handbook may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including reprimand, suspension with or without pay or termination.

### **Harassment & Discrimination Policy**

It is the policy of Foothills that racial, sexual, or other forms of harassment or discrimination are strictly forbidden. Any student or employee who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or discrimination by other students or employees of Foothills based upon his or her race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or sex should promptly report the same to the site administrator or designee.

If the alleged offending individual is the site administrator, the complaint should be made to the Site Director/Superintendent. If the alleged offending individual is the Site Director/Superintendent, the complaint should be made to the Governance Board chairperson.

## **Computer and Internet Use**

The Foothills Education Charter High School (Foothills) recognizes that electronic media, including the Internet and electronic mail, enhance the quality and delivery of education in our schools by providing access to unique resources and opportunities for collaborative work. Any electronic communication that uses Foothills computer resources, hardware or software, may be subject to review and there should not be any expectation of privacy other than that which is required by law. Use of electronic systems shall be in support of, and consistent with the vision, mission, and goals established by Foothills and for the purpose of instructional and administrative support.

The use of electronic technology is a privilege, not a right, which may be discontinued at anytime. Foothills reserves the right to examine electronic mail messages, files on all types of Foothills computers, logs of websites visited, and other information stored on or passing through Foothills networks or stand-alone systems.

Unauthorized usage includes, but is not limited to visiting "chat" rooms, access, transmission, storage, or display of offensive materials or messages including those that contain sexually explicit information; ethnic slurs or racial epithets; defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, and/or threatening language; encouragement of the use of controlled substances; or illegal material. If an employee accidentally accesses an inappropriate website, the employee must leave the site immediately and report the inadvertent "access" to his/her immediate supervisor.

All data accessed, stored, or transmitted by employees via Foothills electronic resources shall be used in a responsible, ethical, and lawful manner. Any unauthorized use or any failure to comply with national, state, local and Foothills provisions relating to the use of electronic resources will result in the loss of electronic network access and/or the imposition of disciplinary actions up to and including suspension or expulsion or termination of employees.

Employees may not share passwords with others or allow students to use computers that are signed on under the employee's password.

The computers at Foothills are for instructional and record keeping purposes only. Personal passwords or locked files are prohibited.

## **Communication**

The site director should approve all correspondence leaving the school. This includes correspondence to parents or community.

# **PERSONNEL PROCEDURES**

## **GENERAL**

Site Directors are responsible for ensuring that these procedures are followed at their site. These procedures define the administrative requirements and chain of command that must be followed for all personnel matters.

The Human Resources Department will post open positions at the direction of the Superintendent on the online job board through the hiring software, TalentEd. Site Directors will have access to all jobs open at their respective site and all interested applicants.

## **HIRING PROCESS**

Site Directors will review interested applicants for the open positions and conduct interviews to select the most appropriate candidate to hire. Applicants must have at least three completed references before being hired. Site Directors will then submit a “Request to Hire” through TalentEd in order to alert the Superintendent of the pending new hire. Site Directors will ensure that all items required on the Hiring Checklist are scanned into the “Confidential Attachments” section of TalentEd. Applicants will not be hired until all items on the checklist are submitted.

The Superintendent will review the recommendation for hire. Once approved, the recommendation to hire will be forwarded to the Human Resources Department for processing. An email will be sent to the Site Directors requesting they give an employment packet to the new employee and get the criminal background check form to Human Resources as quickly as possible.

When the employment package and criminal background checks are complete, the Human Resources Director will recommend the applicant for hiring to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will tentatively approve or deny the hiring of the applicant, subject to final board approval, after reviewing the employment package with the Human Resources Director.

After the hiring decision has been made, the Superintendent will contact the Site Directors to inform them of the decision. The entire applicant’s required documents must be complete and in their personnel file before they can start to work.

The Human Resources Department will work with the Superintendent to ensure all new hires are placed on the next board meeting agenda for final approval.

## **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK**

A criminal background check will be obtained by the Human Resources Department prior to employment on every person who is employed by Foothills Education Charter High School. The Human Resources Department will report the results of all criminal backgrounds checks of concern to the Superintendent.

## **PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE**

Previous experience may be considered for employment reasons but pay for all employees will be based on the amount listed on each job application. For many administrative positions, the rate is salaried. For other positions, it is hourly. Check employment applications for rate of pay.

## **CERTIFICATION**

It is the responsibility of the employee to inform the Human Resources Director of any certificate upgrades or renewals not completed through Foothills Education Charter High School.

## **PERSONNEL CHANGES**

In the event that an employee is assigned a new or different job responsibility, the Site Directors will be responsible for submitting a Personnel Change Request Form to Human Resources. After the necessary departments approve the request, the changes will be made in all software systems. The Human Resources Director will inform the Site Directors of the approval and changes made.

In the event that an employee will no longer be working for Foothills Education Charter High School, it is the responsibility of the Site Directors to inform Human Resources as soon as possible. In addition, the Site Directors will be responsible for sending detailed information regarding the separation to Human Resources in order for all necessary reporting to be completed. Human Resources will inform all necessary administrators and departments of the separation.

## **INFORMATION AND FORMS**

Site Directors may access all current hiring information, procedures, and forms through the Personnel Department webpage at <http://www.foothillscharter.org>. Please ensure that you are using the most up to date Hiring Checklist, Consent Form, and Verification of Employment as requirements and costs can change frequently.

## **Professional Conduct**

The Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators applies to all staff.

## **Staff Development**

Appropriate staff development will be provided for all Foothills employees in accordance with information in the Professional Learning Handbook.

## **Student Support Team (SST)**

A student support team is a group of professionals assembled by the Site Director who identify, plan, and recommend alternative instructional/behavioral strategies for students who are failing to make adequate progress. Such students may be served through SST plans. Should this plan fail to be effective, a referral for psycho-educational evaluation may be warranted in order to determine whether the student has a disability. In these cases, contact with the Special Education Teacher should be initiated.

## **Special Education**

Foothills provide students with disabilities with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). An Individualized Education Program is developed for all eligible students.

## **Compliance Director**

Foothills will utilize the Compliance Director module from Pioneer RESA to make sure all employees go through proper training. Each employee will be required to complete this complete module before the first day of school at their individual site. The website will be available to all employees beginning August 1, 2016.

## **Parental Notice of Right to Know Teacher Qualifications**

As required by law, LEA's are required to notify parents that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teachers or paraprofessional, including the following:

Whether the teacher has met state certification criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.

Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status through which state certification has been waived.

The degrees earned by the teacher and the field of certification or degree.

Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Parents may contact the site director to request such information.

## **Confidentiality of Student Records**

All Foothills employees shall comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as outlined in the Student Handbook. Grades of students should never be discussed with or made available to anyone except the student and the student's parent/guardian/caregiver or educators with a legitimate need to know as defined by FERPA. Teachers will not allow students to see the grades of others.

## **Equal Opportunity**

Foothills Education Charter High School does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, or disability in its employment practices, educational programs or activities.